

**Saw Mill River Audubon  
February 1, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes  
Held at Croton Point Park Nature Center, Croton-on-Hudson, NY**

**Present:** Valerie Heemstra, Phil Heidelberger, Rik Kaufman, Bill Kellner, Karalyn Lamb, Donna Lassiter, Michael Madias, Jr., Robert McCrillis, Tom McEnerney, Ken Novenstern, John Phillips, Nina Romanoff, Tom Ruth, Ponie Sheehan, Jean Sparacin and Larry Trachtenberg. Anne Swaim was also present.

Meeting started at 7:30pm. Minutes of January 4, 2016 Board Meeting were approved

**President's Report – Robert McCrillis**

Robert reviewed plans for the 2016 Annual Dinner and urged board support for the Quilt Raffle fundraiser. Raffle tickets were distributed to board members. The Development Committee meeting scheduled for Monday, March 14, 7:00pm at Robert's house was highlighted.

**Community Relations and Development – Robert McCrillis**

Report submitted by Barbara Campbell and Ellen Heidelberger. January donations were positive.

**Finance Committee – Philip Heidelberger**

For our official quarterly report, as of January 1, 2016 the portfolio balance was \$909,158 a year-to-date decrease of 4.2% (\$40,332) below the January 1, 2015 balance of \$949,940. The year-to-date, one year and three year investment rates of return were -0.9%, -0.9% and 7.7% respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of -2.2%, -2.2% and 4.6% for the same periods.

There were \$31,984 in withdrawals from the portfolio during 2015 and \$600 in additions to the Larry Light Scholarship fund during 2015.

After a volatile and mostly down market during January, the portfolio balance on February 1, 2016 was \$876,172, a 3.6% (\$32,986) loss for the month.

Phil noted that another non-board member was needed for the Audit Committee and moved that Judy Lavenberg, an SMRA member and recently retired CPA, be appointed. Seconded Tom McEnerney. Passed.

Phil explained that Valerie Lyle, nominated for Board President, is currently an approved signatory for investment accounts in her role on the Finance Committee and, according to our Control of Funds guidelines, cannot also be a signatory on the SMRA checking account. Phil moved for an exception to the Control of Funds guidelines providing for Valerie Lyle to retain investment account signatory status and for Robert McCrillis to retain SMRA checking account signatory status following his expected change from President to Chairman of the Board instead of Valerie assuming this status. Seconded and passed.

**Treasurer's Report – Tom McEnerney**

Tom did not distribute a written report since only one month has passed in 2016 budget year. He noted that there were no unusual expenses in January and income is good for the month with a good level of donations, especially a \$2,500 special gift from a client of Larry Trachtenberg.

Tom also summarized discussion at the January Finance Committee regarding the proposed Pruy Garden fence project which would exceed what is considered a "prudent" level of withdrawal from the Pruy Garden Endowment. Donna Lassiter discussed the need for this fence and the process undertaken to obtain quotes. Instead of withdrawing this expense from the Garden Endowment, the decision was made to pursue a grant.

**Executive Director's Report – Anne Swaim**

The EagleFest volunteer sheet was circulated and we are now at full staffing for all three of our venues.

Anne noted that SMRA was added to three issue sign-on letters recommended by Audubon NY regarding New York State environmental and park funding.

**Executive Director's Report** (continued).

Since both Ellen Heidelberger and Anne Swaim will be on the SMRA Cuba Birding trip, the office email and phone will carry the message that the office "is closed to public access" from Friday, February 20 through Wednesday, March 3. Tom McEnerney said he will be stopping by for mail. Danny Ferguson will also be asked to help with the bird feeders. Rik Kaufman also volunteered to stop by for house checks.

Anne overviewed the 2016 Larry Light Scholarship candidate, Mack Meller, and asked for board support to fund his attendance at the Audubon Coastal Birding Teen Camp at Hog Island in June. Moved by Tom Ruth, seconded by Nina Romanoff and approved.

SMRA will offer another Trinidad birding trip from June 21 to June 26, five nights at the Asa Wright Nature Center timed to include evening beach visit to observe sea turtles. Limited to 12. SMRA donation will be \$200/person and price will include guide/driver tips for a cost of \$1395/person.

**Advocacy**

Tom Ruth updated the **Hudson to Housatonic Conservation Initiative**. Tom, Bill Kellner, Karalyn Lamb and Anne Swaim attended a gathering of all H2H focal areas at the Westchester Land Trust office on January 26. Plans are underway to follow up with interested landowners by offering property surveys to encourage native plantings and bird habitat improvements. Anne noted that our February 14<sup>th</sup> bird box building event is also intended to encourage landowner involvement.

**Sanctuaries Committee – Michael Madias, Jr.**

Michael reported on his meeting with Choate neighbor Lauren Coates who is willing to become the Choate Sanctuary Keeper and monitor sanctuary conditions. A section of boardwalk near her house was moved by Michael and his brother Greg to a wet area of the trail near the main entrance. Michael is getting a large number of evergreen tree seedlings to add to various sanctuaries.

Karalyn Lamb reported that a second round of grant support from the Lower Hudson Partnership for Invasive Species Management is being pursued to continue eradication of invasive Hardy Kiwi in the Brinton Brook area.

**Programs and Field Trips – Anne Swaim**

Anne Swaim highlighted upcoming programs and field trips since Christine McCluskey was unable to attend tonight's meeting, having just moved over the weekend to new home in Ossining. It was suggested the public transportation options be explored and publicized for the March 5<sup>th</sup> Warbler Event.

**Newsletter**

In Brian's absence, Anne noted March 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for the April/May newsletter

**Bird Seed Sale - Ken Novenster**

Saturday February 20<sup>th</sup> is the next Third Saturday Bird Seed Sale at Pruyn and a signup sheet was sent around for volunteers to work that Saturday. We still have quite a bit of seed to sell.

**Hospitality**

Robert McCrillis thanked those who brought meeting refreshments.

**New Business:** None.

**Meeting ended at:** 8:30 pm **Next meeting:** March 7, 2016

Minutes taken by Anne Swaim substituting for SMRA Secretary Joanne McAuley