

Saw Mill River Audubon
December 5, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes
Held at Croton Point Park Nature Center, Croton-on-Hudson, NY

Present (in bold type): Phil Heidelberg, Rik Kaufman, William Kellner, Brian Kluepfel, Karalyn Lamb, Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Joanne McAuley, Christine McCluskey, Robert McCrillis, Tom McEnerney, Ken Novenstern, John Phillips, Nina Romanoff, Tom Ruth, Richard Saravay, Ponie Sheehan, Jean Sparacin, Larry Trachtenberg. Anne Swaim was also present. Absent: Christine, Ponie.

Meeting started at 7:30 pm. Minutes of December 5, 2016 Board Meeting were approved by all present voting in the affirmative. Ken motion, Phil 2nd.

President's Report– Valerie Lyle

Jan Bass has resigned from the board. Now we have four vacancies, two in class of 2017, one each in classes of 2018 and 2019. Nominating committee to be appointed: Bill Kellner, Chair along with Ed Mertz and David Watson. Suggestion to Nominating Committee is to recommend 3-4 people to be appointed by board to interim appointments in January. These people would then be on required ballot for April annual meeting. That ballot needs to be finalized by Feb 1 for inclusion in the March/April newsletter. Rik made motion. Robert 2nd. Nominating Committee approved by all present. Names under consideration are: Cary Andrews, Kathleen Williamson, Debbie Van Zyl, John Cavallero, Sarah Hansen. It is unknown if all are willing and available. There was additional discussion about how the review and invitation of candidates would or should occur. The Nominating Committee will now consider the candidates and next steps.

Bylaws review: Val and Richard attended session at Audubon New York Council meeting on needed revisions to be in compliance with NYS law changes. Val suggests review of SMRA bylaws to ensure compliance, with the assistance of Pro Bono Partnership, which provides free legal services to environmental nonprofits in the metro area and has already provided such services to other NY Audubon chapters. A committee of 2-3 board members is needed to work with PBP. Tom M is willing to chair committee. Phil and Larry to join committee also. Val: 2/3 vote by board needed to amend bylaws. SMRA membership must be notified by newsletter after changes have been adopted by the board.

Finance Committee– Philip Heidelberg

For our official quarterly report, as of October 1, 2016 the portfolio balance was \$965,526 a year-to-date increase of 6.2% (\$56,368) above the January 1, 2016 balance of \$909,158. The year-to-date, one year and three year investment rates of return were 6.4%, 9.7% and 6.1% respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of 5.2%, 6.9% and 3.9% for the same periods.

The balance on December 1, 2016 was \$922,496 representing a 1.5% year-to-date increase. The approximately \$43,000 decline in value between October 1st and December 1st was primarily due to \$45,700 in withdrawals from the portfolio during October and November to cover expenses, including Pruy House repairs. There have been \$53,700 in withdrawals from the portfolio and \$6,300 in additions to the portfolio during 2016.

Treasurer's Report– Tom McEnerney

Tom referred to a 4-column spreadsheet included with these minutes to discuss results for 2016. Revenues for 2016 are expected to be about \$16,000 over budget due primarily to \$10,000 in various one-time donations. Expenses for 2016 are expected to be slightly under budget. Salaries and Benefits and Barbara Campbell's charges will be over budget but Seed Sale costs and Sanctuaries will be under budget. Tom then referred to a second handout showing projected endowment withdrawals will be about \$65,500 (7.4%) for 2016, better than budgeted withdrawals of \$79,280 (9%). Also, the average annual endowment withdrawal for the past two years is about 5.4%.

Tom then referred to the 4-column spreadsheet to discuss the proposed budget for 2017. 2017 budgeted revenues are about \$4,800 higher than this year's budget while budgeted expenses are about \$2,200 higher than 2016 expenses. The budgeted withdrawal from the endowment is \$76,630, or about 8.6%.

Treasurer's Report– Tom McEnerney cont'd

However, the target withdrawal is 5% so everyone needs to continue their efforts to increase revenues. After further discussion, Tom moved to approve the proposed 2017 budget, seconded by Larry and approved unanimously by the board.

Development & Membership – Robert McCrillis

Robert, Val and Barbara met after the Budget Committee meeting to consider a shift in focus of Barbara's work in 2017 to focus on researching and approaching potential SMRA major donors. Annual dinner and SMRA field trips have brought in new people. Budget has been met. Effort needs to continue.

Development Committee will meet early in 2017 and develop plan. Val, Tom R., Tom M., Phil, Ken, Richard. Additional members are welcome. Board members are encouraged to consider additional contacts they may have for new donors and donors who may be interested to support us with increased giving.

Refer to Membership and Fund Drive Report. We are ahead of where we were in 2015 at this point. Richard: see *NY Times* article on fund raising approaches for big donors. Val: need to cultivate relationships for ongoing donations on a consistent basis. Anne: Barbara has formatted an email for year-end giving. Pyramid of giving: we have broad-based support but not too much on high-end. Rik: Adding \$612,000 to endowment would make us self-sufficient. We are vulnerable to a market decline. Phil: cash position covers 2-year operating expenses.

Robert McCrillis –Pruyn House Update

New furnace and new chimney completed along with rehab of both bathrooms. Anne: Stove roof vent is okay per Danny Ferguson but new problem with kitchen walls behind sink and stove discovered likely due to intermittent leak in drain line from kitchen sink to dry well in front yard. Robert: this is an unknown expense to repair. Possible 2017 Pruy House projects include: replacement of overhang over office, drain in front of garage, possible handrail along office walkway. Danny Ferguson has redone flagstone walkway to office. Roof replacement is likely in coming years. Additional attic insulation not needed. Windows are original and not double-paned but Robert not recommending replacing windows. More discussion to come in 2017.

Executive Director's Report– Anne Swaim

New plans for 2017 include a young birders club. Grant to fund a staff person to handle these walks has been submitted to Aud. NY. Age group is likely age 8-middle school. Families of students would be asked to pay small amount. Walks to occur on weekends. SMRA will host NYS young birders group Jan. 15 at Mariandale Retreat Center in Ossining. Expect 35-40 kids plus parents. Karalyn: newcomers to area from NYC are potential for family outreach. Anne: NYS Parks Connect Kids to Parks grant will pay up to \$750/class for field trips to state parks for Title 1 schools. FDR & Rockefeller will allow SMRA to be the program provider, for guided field trips to the parks with payment to SMRA from school. School payment for program and bus reimbursed by State Parks. Good potential for SMRA. Anne is contacting schools. Richard: what about liability. Anne: has not been an issue.

Anne will be meeting with Jo Lunetta this month about the \$1625 memorial gifts received in Don Lunetta's name and designated, by family, for Pinecliff Boardwalk. Our suggestion would be increasing store of TriMax boards for ongoing boardwalk repair but we also need to hear what the family might have in mind.

Ken: Weinstein attorney spoke to Anne & Ken. Ken has re-requested cost estimate for maintenance expenses of property and we are awaiting those figures. Attorney will contact the Weinstains' accountant. Martin and Gerry Weinstein have asked their attorney to get things moving on formalizing the future donation of their property to SMRA. Weinstains are aware of need for additional funds to come with the property to provide for those expenses.

Sanctuaries Committee– Michael Madias, Jr.

Six work days scheduled for 2017 – listed in meeting agenda – plus two at Brinton Brook: Trees for Tribs planned in fall and native wildflower planting in meadow on Croton Earth Day. We had low turnout for Turkey Mountain walk 11/25.

Sanctuaries Committee– Michael Madias, Jr. cont'd

Anne: Brinton Brook bowhunters harvested five deer this year. 2nd Sat walk is this Sat.

This Wed. Michael and Anne will be meeting with Hudson National Golf Course manager Ryan Oliver and Croton Village Trails Committee chair Jan Wines to review suggested temporary village trail closing during construction of driving range on Brinton border.

Advocacy– Karalyn Lamb

Hydrilla meeting this Wednesday 6:45 pm in Village of Croton on treatment plan for Croton River. Hydrilla is now the major aquatic invasive in the river at Black Rock -- has undergone rapid increase. Meeting will discuss 5-year management plan. John, Karalyn, Michael to attend. Post-treatment monitoring at Brinton for Hardy Kiwi has been good with little recurrence.

Anne: Rabid coyote killed in Ossining at Mystic Point neighborhood. Ossining PD has been doing good coyote education. Rabies in coyotes is rare.

Advocacy– Tom Ruth

The SMRA Advocacy group met in Nov. and focused on Hudson River anchorages and work plan from fall retreat. H2H is planning next phase -- we are discussing activities for spring. Parent H2H is looking at future plans. Karalyn to attend planning meeting of H2H partners Wed. 12/7. SMRA may want to participate in some of these initiatives -- like educating people about pollinators.

Advocacy– John Phillips

Call to action statement sent via email blast about comment deadline (12/6) on Hudson River anchorage proposal. Goal of comments is to have Coast Guard do full environmental review. New administration may impact what happens. USCG has received 8,400 comments. Riverkeeper website has a surprising number of comments in favor of USCG plan but USCG site has mostly anti-anchorage comments. USCG has withheld posting some comments -- 5,300 on site. Hudson River Waterfront Alliance -- an alliance of Westchester river towns -- has developed formal oppositional document (released 12/1). Anne: SMRA comments are on SMRA website as well as comments posted from other chapters and Aud. NY. (Link sent post meeting: www.sawmillriveraudubon.org/HR) SMRA has also signed on Aud. NY comments.

Advocacy– Richard Saravay

Aud. NY fall council meeting was held on Long Island in October: meeting focus on shoreline issues re birds and offshore wind farms planned for Atlantic south of LI. Aud. NY will monitor siting and potential harm to pelagic birds. Aud. NY is asking for study of potential bird hazards.

Programs and Field Trips – Christine McCluskey

Anne reported for Christine. Noted upcoming field trips and programs. Noted the paper copies of a draft volunteer survey distributed to all at the meeting. Developed with ideas from Brian and the Education & Outreach group at the fall retreat. Edits and suggestions invited. (Link sent to the board following the meeting: <https://goo.gl/forms/EZWG8lHa4bkKfCZr1>)

Newsletter– Brian Kluepfel

Feb.1 is deadline. Brian will restart his Examiner column on birding.

Bird Seed Sale– Ken Novenstern

Sat. 12/17 sale volunteer sign-up sheet was circulated.

Hospitality

Thanks to Jean, Bill and others.

New Business: None.

Meeting ended at: 9:14 pm. **Next meeting:** Jan 9, 2017.

Minutes taken by William Kellner