

Saw Mill River Audubon
February 6, 2017 Board Meeting Minutes
Meeting Held at Croton Point Park Nature Center, Croton-on-Hudson, NY

Board Members Present (in bold type): **Cary Andrews, Sarah Hanson, Phil Heidelberger, Rik Kaufman, William Kellner**, Brian Kluepfel, Karalyn Lamb, **Donna Lassiter, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Joanne McAuley**, Christine McCluskey, **Robert McCrillis**, Tom McEnerney, Ken Novenster, John Phillips, **Nina Romanoff, Tom Ruth**, Richard Saravay, Ponie Sheehan, **Jean Sparacin, Larry Trachtenberg, Kathleen Williamson**, Debbie van Zyl. **Anne Swaim and Roger Garrison** were also present.
Ponie, Christine, Brian, Tom Mc., Ken, Debbie, Karalyn, Richard all ABSENT

Meeting started at 7:25 pm. Minutes of January 9, 2017 Board Meeting were approved by all present voting in the affirmative after minor correction: Debbie van Zyl moved to the US 1 year ago.

President's Report- Valerie Lyle

Val welcomed newly appointed board members Cary, Sarah, and Kathleen. Illness prevented Debbie van Zyl's attendance tonight. Val also welcomed Roger Garrison who will be on the ballot for election to the board at the April 2 Annual Meeting. The sign-up sheet for EagleFest was circulated for review and any additional volunteers. Val said that a meeting is still pending for the Education & Outreach retreat discussion group to follow up on ideas from the board retreat. There is also a need to define the scope of that group since SMRA education efforts, overall, include school programming, public programs and public field trips.

Finance Committee- Philip Heidelberger

For our official quarterly report, as of January 1, 2017 the portfolio balance was \$925,591, a 1.8% (\$16,433) increase above the January 1, 2016 balance of \$909,158. The 3 month, 1 year and 3 year investment rates of return were 1.4%, 7.9% and 4.5% respectively, compared to our Morningstar Allocation Fund Index benchmark returns of 0.6%, 5.8% and 2.7% for the same periods. There were \$61,495 in withdrawals from the endowment and \$6,300 in additions to the endowment during 2016.

The February 1, 2017 balance was \$937,047, a 1.2% (\$11,456) increase over the January 1st balance. There have been \$3,000 in withdrawals so far in 2017; from the Garden Fund Endowment to cover the first year's payment on the fence replacement. As of Feb. 1st, we are 31.7% (\$48,608) above our guideline to maintain 2 years of budgeted expenses in highly liquid assets such as checking and money market funds.

SMRA maintains investment accounts at Fidelity, Vanguard, and T. Rowe Price. We can initiate transactions via telephone or the web at Fidelity and Vanguard with Electronic Funds transfer to/from our Chase checking account. For historical reasons, we must initiate transactions by hard copy letters with two signatures at T. Rowe Price and we do not have EFT capability with them. To facilitate easier transactions with T. Rowe Price, I move that the Board approve telephone and web initiated transactions with T. Rowe Price, and Electronic Funds Transfers between T. Rowe Price and our Chase checking account.
Motion seconded by Bill and approved unanimously by the Board.

Treasurer's Report- Tom McEnerney

Tom Mc. was absent; Phil noted that the Treasurer does not usually do a February report.

Nominating Committee- Bill Kellner

The Nominating Committee is recommending that the board approve the following slate of candidates for the 2017 board and officers election:

Board Class of 2020: Joanne McAuley, Kenneth Novenster, Tom Ruth, Richard Saravay, Kathleen Williamson, Sarah Hansen, Cary Andrews, Debbie van Zyl

Board Class of 2019: Roger Garrison

Nominating Committee– Bill Kellner cont'd

Officers (1-year term):

President: Valerie Lyle

Vice President: Tom Ruth

Chairman of the Board: Robert McCrillis

Treasurer: Tom McEnerney

Secretary: William Kellner

Note that we will retain one vacant position in the board class of 2018. Bill expressed the opinion that this is a strong slate of candidates. Our interim appointees bring new strengths to the SMRA board. The Nominating Committee is pleased to recommend that we place them on the ballot for election to full terms along with Roger Garrison and our currently serving board members whose terms are expiring.

Development Report– Robert McCrillis

Refer to the Membership and Fund Drive Report: SMRA has had outstanding 2016 results.

Barbara wants board input on developing a major gift campaign. She is asking board members to supply names of individuals and other organizations as well as annual reports of other 501(c)3 charities to evaluate potential new approaches to large donors.

Annual dinner volunteer signup passed around. Potluck dinner to be held Apr. 2, 2017 at the New Castle Community Center. Please arrive on time to help with the short setup period before the dinner.

Anne: board members each to take a quilt raffle ticket sheet to sell. The beautiful owl quilt was created by Jean. It will be raffled off at the annual dinner.

Pruyn House Report– Robert McCrillis

Upstairs bathtub drain pipe burst when it was being snaked. Extensive damage requires professional demolition. Danny's father may be able to work with plumber.

Garden fence repair is finished as are kitchen repairs. Other repairs have also been finished. Final cost of kitchen repair: \$4,748.

Executive Director's Report– Anne Swaim

Anne had emailed to the board a report of the Young Birders' meeting hosted by SMRA at Mariandale.

Scholarships: Larry temporarily left the meeting room as the scholarship applicant under discussion was his grandson. This candidate (Max) submitted a strong application. \$1,295 was requested for Hog Island camp's coastal ME bird studies program. The board officers, in email review of this application, suggested the scholarship grant fund program costs, only, at this time because we have a pending application from a second applicant for \$600 for the Cornell Lab Young birders' program. If this second applicant does not complete the application or if she is not accepted for that program, or is otherwise not a good match for our scholarship program, it is proposed that we also cover the \$320 transportation costs for Max Kogut. Robert: Why are we considering out of SMRA territory candidates? Phil: we give priority to local applications, but absent them we have in the past funded scholarships for those from out of the SMRA territory. Anne: we need to promote scholarships earlier in the year.

Phil: We have a 5% guideline on annual scholarship disbursements and Tom Mc offered the opinion that we could fund both candidates as above or all of Max Kogut's costs and be within our guidelines with an anticipated \$500 donation to the fund that is received annually.

Motion: Fund both scholarship applications with the understanding that if 2nd application does not go through we will fund Max's program and transportation costs. Cary made motion, Rik second. All approved

Lunettas' project: The Lunettas' gift is \$1,621, which will be used to fund explorer backpack kits which would be checked out from Chappaqua Library. There will be a link to books on a nature reading list. Anne passed around a listing of the proposed contents of the explorer backpacks. Two levels are envisioned—younger

Executive Director's Report- Anne Swaim cont'd

kids and HS-adult. Anne is looking for help on this project. It is hoped that SMRA's New Castle sanctuaries will receive positive publicity as a result of this program. Rik suggested that we explore the possibility of also funding a similar kit for another library in our membership area with fewer resources than Chappaqua. Anne will suggest this idea with the Lunetta family.

Bronx classes (5th grade) will come to Rockefeller SPP as part of the Connect Kids to parks program. Nature studies will include a vernal pool walk. We're having some trouble finding additional schools. Kathleen to explore Jacob Burns Film Center's connections to underserved schools.

Field Trips- Christine McCluskey

In Christine's absence, Anne highlighted some upcoming SMRA events:

Gaspé program presented by Charlie Roberto is Thurs. Feb 16 at Teatown

Dutchess birding trip is being changed to Long Island. See Google calendar.

Ohio trip registrations are coming in. Flyer will be circulated to wider membership in the coming weeks.

Texas-Rio Grande trip Nov 15-20. There will be pre-trip extension Nov 12-15 to the Aransas area.

Sanctuaries Committee- Michael Madias, Jr.

Michael reported on the Pruyn workday during which the deer enclosure was repaired. A workday at Haas Sanctuary is scheduled for Mar. 25. We are planning to clear the meadow to prepare for mowing at Haas. New signs and fences have been put up on the border of Brinton Brook to indicate closure of the white Village Trail during construction of the driving range on the adjacent Hudson National Golf Course.

Michael has purchased plant materials from DEC tree nursery: 375 trees/shrubs for various sanctuaries. It was noted that this is a personal donation from Michael to SMRA.

Pruyn Garden- Donna Lassiter

The garden fence repair has been completed with exception of the budgeted addition of bamboo support poles for the wire fencing within the new post and rail fence. We will likely have extra bamboo poles for future projects. Donna was thanked, with applause, for her extensive work on this project.

Advocacy- Tom Ruth

H2H Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP) meeting was held Feb. 1 at Greenwich Audubon. Tom R., Karalyn and Bill represented SMRA. The meeting was primarily a brainstorming session on creating a mission statement and goals for this new RCP.

Mar 17-19: NYS Audubon Council meeting will be held in Saratoga Springs. Anne will be presenting a workshop on the chapter benefits of using Cornell Lab's eBird program.

Advocacy- John Phillips

Hudson River anchorages proposal is in a dormant phase with no new information to report. An update is anticipated for the next board meeting.

John is leaving board at the end of his current term but will continue to be a SMRA volunteer. The board expressed appreciation to John for his efforts on the board with applause.

Hospitality Thanks to John and Tom R.

New Business- Cary Andrews

Croton Earth Day is Apr. 30. Anne will pass around a signup sheet at the March board meeting.

Val asked board members to come up with ideas for the SMRA table at Croton Earth Day that will attract children.

Meeting ended at: 8:29 pm Next meeting: March 6, 2017. Minutes taken by William Kellner