

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

Present (in bold type): Cary Andrews, Sarah Hansen, 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 Novenstern, John Phillips, Nina Romanoff, Tom Ruth, Richard Saravay, Jean Sparacin, Larry Trachtenberg, Debbie Van Zyl, Kathleen Williamson. Anne Swaim and Roger Garrison were also present. Joanne, Nina and Richard ABSENT

Meeting started at 7:22 pm. Minutes of February 6, 2017 Board Meeting were approved by all present voting in the affirmative. Sarah Hansen noted that her name was misspelled in the February minutes; the recording secretary issued an apology to Sarah for this error.

President's Report– Valerie Lyle

Val will send note to board on Education outreach. Barbara's list of major donors needs fleshing out. A target list of donors for individual board members to adopt will be created. Val passed out board handbooks to new members. She also passed around a draft of the board roster for members to check the accuracy of their entries. May board meeting changed to Monday, April 24.

Finance Committee– Philip Heidelberger

The SMRA portfolio balance on March 1, 2017 was \$947,930 representing a 2.4% (\$22,239) increase for 2017 and a 1.2% (\$10,865) increase for the month of February. There have been \$11,000 in withdrawals from the portfolio in 2017, including \$3,000 for the Garden fence. We are 18.3% (\$28,001) above our guideline to maintain two years of budgeted expenses in highly liquid assets such as checking and money market funds.

Treasurer's Report– Tom McEnerney

Tom has no formal report because it is too early in the year. Results for the first two months of the year were similar to last year, except for about \$5,000 of expenses relating to Pruyn House and the \$3,000 removed from the Garden Endowment to pay for about half the cost of the new Pruyn Garden fence.

Tom passed out a written report on SMRA's insurance policies. He is suggesting consideration be given to increasing liability and personal property coverage and raising limits on volunteer injury coverage. Tom will check with our agent to see what other chapters do on general liability and property coverage. Karalyn stated that our current coverage seems inadequate. Premiums (about \$9,000 per yr.) have had annual increases averaging about 3%.

Tom stated that SMRA should consider making claims under the homeowner's policy on the Pruyn House should additional problems arise or damage occur. Ken asked whether we should we have guaranteed replacement value coverage on the homeowner policy. Tom will get quotes. Phil asked about claims arising from accidents that might occur when carpooling to a field trip. Tom said he would check on this.

Tom handed out a written summary of revenues, expenses and profits from bird seed sales covering the period from 2006 through 2016. For the most part, net profit has been between \$8,000 and \$12,000.

Development Report– Robert McCrillis

Annual Dinner: Robert asked board members to please sign up and tell Jean what they plan to bring. Anne will email details to the board on those who have signed up to date. Robert passed out a written Membership and Fund Drive Report. As of March 6, 2017 total membership is at 1,029 (535 joint NAS/SMRA and 494 chapter).

Robert noted that SMRA's annual PS party is scheduled for May 15 at Croton Point Nature Center.

Robert asked whether a date has been set for the planned event at the Weinstein's. Anne said that the Development Committee will come up with a date and let the board know.

Pruyn House Report– Robert McCrillis

All ongoing jobs have been completed. The upstairs bathtub problem cost \$700 (Twin Belle Plumbing) plus \$165 to snake out the drain. Upcoming issues include the sinking driveway drain (\$500 estimate to fix). The overhang over the office door has been removed. We may leave it off permanently. Robert suggested consideration be given to painting the interior and exterior of Pruyn House. Tom M. suggested postponing budgeting expenses like painting at the present time as it is early in the year and we may have unexpected expenses. Ken said we should get two estimates on painting. Robert mentioned that the roof will need replacement at some point but that the sinking driveway drain is first priority. Robert raised the issue of mice in the shed. He said Danny may be able to handle repair of mice damage. Rik suggested looking into getting a shipping container to hold the shed's contents.

Bird Seed Sale– Ken Novenster

Sales were between \$500 and \$600 in February. The mild winter has hurt sales. We have 120 bags of 20 lb. special mix left. Board members are urged to buy seed. The final third Saturday seed sale will be in April. We may have a reduced profit this year.

Executive Director's Report– Anne Swaim

Anne read letter of thanks from Teatown's Executive Director Kevin Carter for SMRA's participation at EagleFest. We added 50–75 names to the SMRA email list at EagleFest.

Max Kogut has been awarded an SMRA scholarship for the Coastal Youth Birding Camp at Hog Island, ME. A second scholarship application from Hannah Mirando is complete except for a reference still to come in. She is awaiting word on her application to the Cornell Lab Young Birders program.

Mack Meller will report on his week at Hog Island at the SMRA Annual Dinner. Anne has reviewed Mack's presentation and found it to be quite compelling.

Anne circulated an information sheet with pricing on the November 2017 birding trip to Texas. The Ohio trip has 11 people signed up for the first segment and four for the second segment which is enough for this trip to run. Travel to Ohio will be by automobile.

Anne has signed SMRA on to a letter recommended by Audubon New York thanking New York State politicians for approving a strong, pro-environment budget and NYS Parks.

Connect Kids to Parks has been funded for the next school year. We are talking to Pleasantville Schools for fall (Kathleen is assisting with this contact). Bronx and probably Yonkers schools will do the program this spring.

Schoolyard birding with Pete Salmansohn to start soon but, after the first week of May, Pete will not be available to us due to his usual National Audubon commitments. New contract educator Eric Stone of The Rewilding School will be covering both Pinecliff field trips and in-classroom programs on Westchester butterflies.

Sanctuaries Committee– Michael Madias, Jr.

There will be a March workday at Haas. Brinton neighbor Gerry Weinstein noted that a deer fell through the ice in the Weinstein pond and an eagle has fed on the carcass. Next Saturday is the March second Saturday walk. Gerry Weinstein has been connecting with SMRA on these walks through Michael and recently shared some historical materials about the Brinton property from the 1930s.

Advocacy– Tom Ruth

NYS Audubon chapter council meeting will be March 17–19 in Saratoga Springs: Anne will present a workshop about benefits from using eBird on chapter field trips. Richard and Tom R. also plan to attend the meeting.

H2H Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP): The Rivertowns group, in which SMRA participates, is discussing what we will do in the upcoming season. Karalyn Lamb has been added to the H2H steering committee to help formulate policy for this new RCP. This news was greeted with a warm round of applause.

Advocacy– John Phillips– Hudson River Anchorages

Things have quieted down after a lot of activity in the fall of 2016. John communicated with a contact at the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) about the current status of the proposal. Over 10,000 comments, mostly negative, were received by the USCG. The USCG is currently evaluating these comments. USCG will decide if additional anchorages are really needed. More public comment will be solicited. The proposal may trigger environmental review under the National Environmental Quality Review Act.

John reviewed a letter from several NYS agencies, including DEC, to the USCG about the anchorages. This letter stated NYS's opposition to additional anchorages as proposed. Among other issues, NYS is concerned about underwater cables and pipelines at or near the proposed anchorages and how the anchorages might impact short-nosed and Atlantic sturgeon populations. Other potential problems noted were negative impacts to viewsheds and the potential to reduce property values.

Advocacy– Karalyn Lamb

Karalyn will give a presentation at the Croton Free Library on March 14 entitled "Keep Calm and Grow Native" on native plants and birds. The 7:00 pm program is part of the Croton Conservation Advisory Council's Green Living series, coordinated by SMRA Board Member Cary Andrews.

Kiwi vine: Rudy Fasciani is still removing large vines. PRISM funding is no longer available for vine removal but we will monitor for kiwi sprouts.

Field Trips– Christine McCluskey

- Evening Woodcock walks are scheduled for March 11 at Muscote Farm (\$5.00 fee) and March 12 at Croton Point.
- Corey Finger will give a presentation at the Chappaqua Library on March 16 about his recent book, *American Birding Association's Field Guide to Birds of New York*.
- Paul Lewis will conduct a walk to vernal pools and talk about these unique habitats at the Hunt-Parker Memorial Sanctuary on March 19 for Bedford Audubon.

Newsletter– Brian Kluepfel

May 1 is the deadline for the next newsletter. We are now doing four issues per year. Brian has a monthly column in the *Northern Westchester Examiner* and, in exchange, the paper is providing a ¼-page SMRA ad.

Hospitality– Jean Sparacin

Thanks to Ken & Christine

New Business– Phil, Kathleen, Cary, Bill

- Phil: Earth Day March for Science on Sat Apr 22 to showcase the importance of science.
- Kathleen: Films on Purpose will be presenting topical films on social and environmental issues with discussions to follow viewing. It is hoped that SMRA will participate by showing a film and having a discussion about an environmental issue.
- Cary: Croton Earth Day is April 29. We need volunteers to staff our table and ideas that will appeal to kids who attend the event.
- Bill: Discussed the Massachusetts-based radio show, *Ray Brown's Talkin' Birds* and passed out cards with information on how to listen locally to this informative weekly program on birds.

Meeting ended at: 8:34 pm **Next meeting:** April 2, 2017. Minutes taken by William Kellner