

Saw Mill River Audubon
June 6, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes (taken by Bill Kellner)
Meeting held at Senasqua Park, Croton-on-Hudson, NY

Present (in bold type): Erik Andersen, **Cary Andrews, Ginger Bernardin, Louisa Gagliardi, Mitchell Goldfarb, Phil Heidelberger, Rik Kaufman, Suzanne Kavic, Bill Kellner, Valerie Lyle, Michael Madias, Jr., Tom McEnerney, Ken Novenster, Steve Rappaport, Tom Ruth, Lynn Salmon, Richard Saravay, Jean Sparacin, Jenni Stern, Larry Trachtenberg, Debbie van Zyl, Kathleen Williamson.** Executive Director Anne Swaim and office manager Barbara Daniel were also present.

Absent: Erik, Rik

Meeting started at 6:54 PM.

President's Report—Valerie Lyle

Valerie noted that a quorum was present.

Cary moved that the board of directors approve the minutes for the board of directors meeting held on May 2, 2022. Phil seconded this motion. The motion approving the minutes was adopted unanimously.

Valerie thanked the board for writing personal PS comments on the Annual Fund Drive letters. Board members will be notified if anyone on their assigned list donates \$100 or more.

Valerie read the slates of candidates for directors and officers of the Audubon Council of NYS. The following directors of the Council board have been nominated to the Audubon Council of NYS for a term of two years to run from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2024: Susan O'Handley, Martin Van der Grinten. The following directors of the Council board have been nominated for an additional term of two years for the period July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2024: Michael Bochnik, Larry Federman. Nominees for officers of the board of directors for an additional term of two years for the period July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2024 are Secretary—Alison Kopek; Treasurer—Jim Brown.

Ken moved that the board approve the slates of candidates as read by Valerie. This motion was seconded by Tom R. The motion was approved with all board members present voting affirmatively.

Anne took the floor and outlined proposed changes to the bylaws of the New York State Ornithological Association (NY-SOA). These are focused on having meetings electronically and also not requiring conflict of interest statements for committee members, only committee chairs, officers and board members. For the changes to be implemented, approval by NYSOA member clubs is needed. Bill moved that, as a NYSOA member club, SMRA approve the changes to the NY-SOA bylaws as explained by Anne. Kathleen provided a second for this motion. The motion was approved with all board members present voting affirmatively.

Valerie introduced Barbara Daniel, SMRA's new Office Manager, to the board. Retiring Office Manager Ellen Heidelberger, who has been training Barbara, will be working two more Fridays this month.

Valerie discussed the new page on the SMRA website that Anne created to highlight the gardens at Pruyn Sanctuary. We are looking for volunteers to help in the garden; the new page will facilitate volunteer signups. We are also looking for a higher level of expertise to assist with managing the gardens. In that vein, Hallie Wolfe and landscape architect Mark Magel have been helping out.

Development Committee Report—Valerie Lyle

[Reference Membership and Donation Report as of June 1, 2022]

Total membership numbers are slightly ahead of those reported in May, 2022. With the current 630 SMRA chapter member households and 531 joint NAS/SMRA member households, total membership stands at 1,161.

Year-to-date we have received a total of \$17,807 in donations. This includes \$8,520 Annual Fund donations.

Finance Committee—Phil Heidelberger

As of June 1, 2022, the endowment portfolio balance was \$1,342,560, a \$109,648 (7.6%) decrease below the January 1, 2022 balance of \$1,452,208 and a \$4,132 (0.3%) increase for the month of May. There have been \$12,000 in withdrawals from and \$44,701 in additions to the portfolio so far during 2022. As of June 1, 2022, we are \$138,766 (91.1%) above our guideline to maintain two years of budgeted withdrawals in highly liquid assets such as checking and money market funds.

Treasurer's Report—Tom McEnerney

[Reference Report: Operating Revenues and Expenses for the Five Months Ended May 31, 2022]

Tom referred to his handout and reported that operating revenues for the first five months of the year were slightly ahead of budget. Operating expenses for that period were slightly over budget. The resulting net deficit of about \$31,600 was very close to budgeted expectations.

Unbudgeted revenues of \$39,700 were much higher than usual due primarily to \$34,000 of Gaspé trip deposits. These deposits will be expensed over the next two weeks as the trip occurs. On May 31st, however, the balance in the SMRA checking account was about \$ 18,000 higher than at the beginning of the year due to the Gaspé deposits and \$12,000 in withdrawals from the endowment.

Bird Seed Sale—Ken Novenstern

Ken reported that our remaining inventory of seed will be available for sale at a 50% discount. We are especially hoping to clear remaining supplies of suet. Anne reported that the Seed Sale Committee will meet in June to assess proposals from seed suppliers for our fall 2022 offerings.

Executive Director's Report—Anne Swaim

Anne reported that the June 4th program in Croton Point Park featuring James Eyring and his birds of prey was successful, with 127 attendees (including many new faces). While donations did not cover the program's costs and we did not expect them to do so, instead underwriting these costs with the Mertz education gift, we did receive \$356 cash donations at the door and an additional \$150 in gifts online.

In mid-May, the Executive Committee approved an emergency expense of \$600 to remove a tree that was leaning across the common fence line between the Prun Sanctuary and the neighbor at 283 Millwood Rd. Westchester Tree Life felled the tree and placed it on the SMRA side of the boundary.

Recent education programs have included Connect Kids to Parks events with students from the Ossining, Rye and Larchmont school districts. Plans to add the Peekskill district with a visit to FDR State Park by kindergartners fell through but we are hoping to accomplish this when school resumes in the fall.

Cary hosted our second annual fundraising Birding Tea at her home on May 21. The event was a great success; donations received totaled \$580.

Phil raised the question of whether pre-registration should continue for SMRA bird walks. Anne responded that we are looking to increase the number of open bird walks. Valerie noted that walks requiring pre-registration are necessary for some venues (like Teatown) where the number of attendees needs to be limited.

Advocacy Committee Report—Tom Ruth

Tom reported that Jenni attended the Audubon Council of NYS meeting held on May 22. Jenni has written a detailed recap of this meeting. It was distributed with the other digital documents prior to tonight's board meeting. Board members are encouraged to read Jenni's summary, which details, among other things, Audubon NY's legislative advocacy and individual chapter accomplishments. Tom called attention to Jenni's coverage in her recap of National Audubon's Bird Friendly Buildings program that was discussed by NAS' Bird Friendly Buildings coordinator Connie Sanchez at the Council meeting.

Tom described a site visit that he made along with Bill to the Hunterbrook Preserve in Yorktown under the auspices of H2H. Hosts from the Westchester Land Trust described efforts to remove invasive plants from the preserve and to miti-

gate the loss of a critical ash forest due to infestation by the emerald ash borer. The ash trees helped to stabilize the Hunter Brook, which bisects the preserve. It is hoped new plantings will keep the stream from migrating across the floodplain, threatening infrastructure including a substantial bridge linking trails on either side of the stream.

Tom represented SMRA at the recent Federated Conservationists of Westchester County (FCWC) meeting. In addition to SMRA, approximately 30 other FCWC member organizations participated. County Executive George Latimer addressed the meeting, noting the critical role played by FCWC member groups and urged them to publicize their successful efforts to preserve environmental quality in the County.

Sanctuaries Committee Report—Michael Madias, Jr.

Michael reported on discussions with the Boy Scouts. We are looking forward to the Scouts helping with planting sessions in the SMRA sanctuaries.

The invasive plants task force of the Lower Hudson Partnership for Invasive Species Management is planning to work in Brinton Brook Sanctuary September 16–19 to assess past efforts to control invasive hardy kiwi and implement further mitigation measures if necessary.

Newsletter—Jenni Stern

The deadline for the fall issue is August 1. Richard proposed that Jenni's report on the Audubon NY Council meeting be turned into a newsletter article and that all Council meetings should be reported on in the newsletter. Jenni said she would be happy to do these write-ups.

New Business—Valerie Lyle

Valerie reminded board members that a board meeting has been scheduled for August 29.

Adjournment—Valerie Lyle

Cary moved that Valerie adjourn the meeting; Lynn seconded this motion. With all present voting in favor, Valerie adjourned the meeting at 7:46 PM.