

**Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association
Board of Trustees Meeting
Meeting Minutes
November 20, 2014**

Attending: Alan Desbonnet, Hellen Drew, Walt Galloway, Pete August, Chris Fox, Jennifer MacKenzie, Tom Boving, Mal Grant

Excused: Kim Coulter

Not in Attendance: Grace Lentini

1. Call to Order 6:35 PM H. Drew

Guest introductions were made. Antonia Bryson attended as a prospective Board Member. Soni Pradhanang attended the beginning of the meeting. She is new to the area and has experience with Water Quality Monitoring. Chris will follow up with her to see what the best role will be for her in the organization.

Alan proposed a correction to the August 29, 2014 minutes to remove G. Cunningham as the person who proposed changes to the July Minutes and replace it with Walt Galloway. Peter 2nd. Approved.

Reports

2. Treasurer's Report

Peter handed out the Q3 P&L (without special projects). He is pleased with performance thus far this year and indicated there are no areas of concern. He noted that all financial reports are available on the board website. The 2013 Audit went very well. The only recommendation concerned dual control of funds coming in. This is a consistent recommendation and cannot be improved upon due to staff size. There are no irregularities. 2013 Taxes were circulated to board members. No comments came in. They were submitted.

3. ED Report

a. Annual Appeals Letters sent out – C. Fox

The annual appeals letters were sent out to members. This year a focus was put on kids and education (based on the INE's recommendation). Initial feedback was good.

b. RI Conservancy – Wood Pawcatuck Dam Project – C. Fox

Chris reviewed the project and expressed 4 areas of concern. (Owner, Cherenzia Access, Press and Paddlers). Under the grant the project must be completed by 2016 and they are just going into the design phase. Site access for construction through the Cherenzia property has been made public, but Cherenzia was not consulted nor had they approved. Chris will work with them. Chris is also going to reach out to all Paddle Interests in the area to hold a workshop on the closing of the raceway

c. Member Bequest – Chris Fox and Helen Drew

Helen and Chris met with Bob Gunnip regarding his will. He will bequest between \$100,000 and \$200,000 to WPWA upon his death. He will also bequest his property located on Johnson's pond to be used by WPWA to provide public access. There was no mention during the meeting that there would be any usage limitations on the funds.

4. Strategic Plan Review - Helen

Helen mentioned that a subcommittee was being developed to ensure that the latest version of the strategic plan be understandable to anyone that reads it. Mal, Jen and Alan will work on this committee to finalize verbiage by year end.

Walt requested that anytime any changes are made to any documents the board is circulating that "track changes" be used.

5. Work Plan Review – Chris Fox

Chris commented that the strategic planning process completed at the board level was very helpful and produced a renewed vigor at the staff level for Work Plan Development. In completing the work plan, the staff used the strategic plan as an outline. Subsequently the work plan focused around the following areas: Water Quality/Quantity, Biodiversity, Estuary, Access and Education and Outreach. Review of the Work Plan focused first on the areas where board responsibilities were applied, and, time permitting the board would discuss line items set as staff responsibilities.

Challenges: Staff is not ready to handle electronic communication with a complete overhaul using Bloomerang. In 2015 they will first focus on a living website that will be updated continuously. Communications will focus on schools (ie. Sending notices home in backpacks).

Welcome Center - Chris

Staff is proposing an additional staff member for coverage of the Welcome Center. The cost would be \$6500 per year. The intention is hire a multi-faceted person to work 30 hours a week. (10 of which are offset by the re-allocation of 10 of Heather's hours paid by the Sandy Grant)

The Wild and Scenic Bill - Chris

It is not likely to pass in 2014. In order to promote the bill for passage in 2015, Denise may have to travel to D.C. We will likely ask Save The Bay to foot the bill this time as it was originally their initiative. Cost is likely around \$5000.

Chris asked if we wanted administrative details included in the 2015 Work Plan. After discussion it was decided yes, but it could be included as an Addendum.

Detailed Review of 2015 Work Plan - Chris

Water Quality/Quantity

It was agreed that an assessment of the program is due.

Chris asked the Board if they felt there is a role for Board Members to promote Climate Change Awareness/Adaptation. Walt suggested that there should be communication between the staff and the board throughout the Sandy Grant Process. Alan and Chris both felt that the board plays a role and if we do another lecture series, Chris can promote it during communications with Municipalities.

Item 2 under Water Quality & Quantity calls for WPWA to advocate for responsible watershed management. It was agreed that Tom plays an integral part in this and this will be tabled until fall of 2015 when he returns from his trip.

Biodiversity

Chris asked what activities the board would engage in to support RI Natural History Survey and RhodeMap RI. It was decided that we would engage in opportunities to support these initiatives as they arose, but we would not necessarily put forth specific effort to create those opportunities. It was agreed that all board members would communicate to the board when they saw them arise.

Estuary

Both the Strategic and Work Plans call for WPWA to establish a meaningful relationships and ongoing dialogue with other environmental organizations such as Save the Bay and Clean up Stonington Harbor. Past attempts at this were unsuccessful. It is recognized that there is a need for coordination to prevent duplication of effort and improve progress on environmental management in the area. Chris suggested that a workshop with representation from other organizations might be helpful. Pete is speaking at the Westerly Land Trust and will put feelers out. It was decided that WPWA will participate in any coordination initiatives but will not organize it. It was suggested that coordination that focused on Educational Outreach may be an easier way to begin the coordination process. Chris suggested that headway needed to be made at the board level before true coordination could occur at the staffing level of these organizations.

Other Business

Annual Meeting - Helen

Staff came up with the idea to change the format of the Annual Meeting so that members could take boats out during the day either before or after the formal meeting. Helen asked board members to reflect on last year's attendance and think of who else they may want to invite. The date of May 30th (the weekend after Memorial Day) was selected in the hopes that the weather would be warmer. It was also decided that Planning Committee for the Annual Meeting should be created by January 2015.

Halloween Party - Chris

In an effort to provide a Halloween venue for kids ages 5-8 in the area, Staff is proposing a Halloween Party at WPWA where activities would include a kayak ride. Kayaks would be tied together and towed by a boat with a motor. Mal expressed serious safety concerns regarding kids on the water at night. Chris and Jen expressed little worry with respect to safety where Denise is concerned. Further discussion was tabled until more details are forthcoming.

Board Member Bios - Chris

Chris asked the board to email him with a list of their participations on other boards and commissions.

Review of Staff Initiatives in 2015 Work Plan - Chris**Access - Chris**

It was confirmed that staff will not engage in any initiatives to create new public access to waterways. They will however, provide basic support to land owners providing access when their expertise is requested provided time is minimal and/or paid for. Staff will continue to be proactive about access sites owned by WPWA.

Water Quantity/Quality - Walt

Walt asked about temperature monitoring. Currently WPWA is the only organization monitoring temperature and the information is uploaded into the database. Denise may hold a workshop to present findings and advocate for the importance of monitoring water temperature.

Freelance Paddles - Chris

Staff came up with the idea to use Freelance Guides to set up Paddles. They would be trained and certified by Denise. Freelance guides would be responsible for organizing, promoting and implementing paddles in the area. They would provide WPWA with a percentage of the proceeds for using the name.

6. Committee Reports**Fund Development Committee – Alan**

The core committee members are Chris, Alan and Jennifer. The first initiative is to get Bloomerang up and functional. Membership data has been transferred over and current issues are not on the WPWA side. There are no immediate dates set for committee meetings and the first fundraising initiative is likely to focus on Watershed Monitoring.

7. Board Meeting Dates for 2015 - Helen

Helen would like to keep the Board Meeting dates set as the 3rd Thursday of every month. The board will have a short meeting on December 18, 2014 to finalize the budget.

8. ED Performance Review - Helen**9. Adjourn 8:50pm**

Minutes submitted by Jennifer MacKenzie and Chris Fox