



CRC MEETING MINUTES
02-28-23BOARD MEETING - 3 Shore Rd & ZOOM

IN ATTENDANCE: Board Members; Michelle Pratt –President, Scott Snyder-Perusse-Vice President, Mike Orszulak -Treasurer, Corinne Pooler-Secretary, Deb Herath-Emeritus, Associate Board Members; Linda Champagney, Sharon Jones, MaryAnn Philo, Penni McEleney ,Ginny Graves, Kevin Maloney
Absent: Jerry Crane-Emeritus, Associate Board Members; none absent

DISCUSSION:

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm

Michelle announced Mrs. Judy Saunders (Kurt Saunders beloved wife) had passed this past week. As most of the members know. Kurt & Judy have contributed so much over the years. We appreciate everything they have done for the CRC. We discussed options and voted; that as individuals whom belong to CRC board can send our own donations notating from your friends at CRC. The donations will be sent to the D'amour Cancer Center at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield, Ma.

Mike reviewed the Treasurers Report. And will follow up presenting our operating budget for our next board meeting. Currently there is \$ 21,932.70 in the checking account, \$16,792.70 in the savings account, \$45,008.12 in the investment account (with an increase of about \$4,000 since last meeting), and \$0 in the PayPal account (all monies were transferred from PayPal to checking). Penn mentioned that we previously approved (10-11-22 board meeting) to move money from checking and savings to either the brokerage account or something that could make more money last meeting. Treasury bills are an option their currently up around 5%. With a duration of about 6-12 months. Or add to the brokerage account. The amounts approved previously from checking is \$13,000 & \$11,000 savings to be moved for investment. After discussion. All in favor of moving the approved total of \$24,000 into treasury bill. Mike will contact our investment advisor at Commonwealth to move forward with the treasury bill.

Deb is still receiving mailings from the state. If something requires payment it should be deferred to the treasurer. Also the account for domain name renewal & payment info will be sent to the treasurer. And we also need to put reminders on our calendar for any state filings we need to renew. Deb has been working with a CPA for our tax filings. Someone needs to take over & organize our tax nightmare. We need a CPA to do that. Deb said that our CPA who did our last 2 years. And also our change of year this year. Said he is willing to work with Deb to help us again. He will charge us a small fee. Deb is going to get in touch with him to proceed. Maybe someone can accompany Deb to meet with him.

Membership drive- Returned letters. Mike forwarded the returned /undelivered membership letters to Maryann. In total there were about 25. We will review the mailing list.

Memberships fees were agreed by all to stay the same. They are as followed; Household- \$30 Captain's Club - \$100 Commodore's Club -\$250. We agreed to make a few changes to membership form to include our QR code , a statement that we haven't raised dues for some time, and include meeting dates. There are also some repeating statements on the form. We agreed to amend those.

We discussed where else we could publicize the organization. Currently we utilize Facebook, word of mouth, mailers. Do we want to put something in Southwoods? Channel 15? For Southwoods do we want to have an article or our membership flyer? There is a cost for advertisements. They could be expensive. Maybe a CRC logo, 2023 meeting dates, our website, also our QR code. Deb is going to contact Southwoods. Michelle asked if Suffield had some thing similar. Ginny said the Suffield Observer. She will reach out to them.

Our website does need a lot of updating. It looks very dated. And not user friendly. We are missing opportunity to reach a broad audience. Also our social media sites. We will continue to discuss.

CRC won 1st place in the Trunk or Treat contest!! We had a borrowed pontoon boat from Mr. Beaudin. Everyone did a great job decorating. We were dressed in pirate garb. So many family's visited our display. The kids loved the candy and tattoos. There were ton's of awesome displays. Thank you to all that helped.

The lights were designed for new buoys. It is supposed to be all one piece. They were ordered. We were assured they would be ready to install for this spring. Chief Landis told Michell he will check on the project. We did offer to help in anyway possible to expedite the process. Penni asked what did we commit to the buoys? Scott said we committed (by vote) to pay for 4 buoys @ \$450 each. But that possibly could be different due to the new design.

The police boat house is supposed to be finalized very soon. And hopefully be constructed this year. We offered to help out. Possibly have CRC signage on boat house.

The Winter party was super fun. Sharon, Thank you for your hard work. There was a great turn out. Everyone enjoyed the band Acoustic Thunder. We are very grateful they do not charge us much. But they are booked out through 2023. It was suggested maybe we should check on the previous band we had at St Ann's (Cold Shot) or maybe some other entertainment. Sharon will touch base with Acoustic Thunder for their availability. Penni will get in touch with Cold Shot for dates and prices. They will check for the 2nd and 9th (first 2 Saturday's in December). The venue was better this year. We had a few issues with seating. That was resolved this year. Sharon will contact Jen Nolasco for venue availability.

Michell got a last minute request for a letter of advocacy for plans for Bathymetric mapping for the lake. It looks at the lake depths and possibly show the level of muck density. Similar to how a sonogram looks. It is extremely helpful in order to make plans for potential dredging shallow sections and other treatments that might need to be done. Its a good up to date point of reference. The limnologist Ken Wagner added his expertise to back up the need for this study. It was finalized and sent to the state. There is no cost to us.

Updates from Michelle-

The plans are still moving forward for the dredging. LMC is working with the Army corps of engineers. Things are looking more promising for the potential of it happening. It would be astonishing for the lakes. Deb stated one contract was signed for a company to make a plan for their survey. There will be a

second company to try for the survey bid. The good news their on board and it won't be any cost to us. The whole idea is that our pond flows into the Ct River, which then flow into the ocean. That is a water quality concern. Thanks to Dick Grannels & LMC for working so hard on this. Its a project that costs Millions of dollars. Its a huge deal.

Pat Biardi grew up here in Southwick. She going to do a presentation on the history of Smiths Beach. She is really interesting. We are looking forward to her visit.

Dr Eric Mueller did a presentation on the All about Southwick show. It was excellent. He spoke on many topics. He will do the lake update for us again. Maybe we can include his tv show for his visit.

Everyone has been talking about the goose and beaver issues. There's a new owner of TRI PBJ Marina. They are trying to work with the town in regards to the beaver lodge. We do have a diverse organization and everyone has a voice. There will be varying opinions on the issue. Basically they have to submit for a permit to the state. There has to be an assessment to determine what the impact will be. It also matters if any beavers currently are occupying the lodge. If live beaver are there they have to apply for a permit. Then hire a licensed trapper trap them and then kill them. Beaver cannot be relocated its not legal. The owner wants to move the docks over after the lodge has been removed. They would gain a few slips. The growing lodge has been encroaching on the slips. It seems they haven't been adding on recently. This also could make navigation better through the north pond tunnel. That could be positive for lake safety.

Regarding the geese, We are still trying to get more movement from the town, board of health & select board to figure out a solution for the possibility of them contributing to the ecoli. We would like to ask if the ecoli is only a problem in the shallow waters vs. deeper water. Also we asked to have the ecoli tested to determine where it came from. If is from humans or geese? In Southwick around north pond many houses haven't been connected to the sewer system. Michelle mentioned in the master plan survey, many people expressed that the lakes are a very important part of the open space and recreation section of the master plan. They invited Michelle to a subcommittee meeting for Open Space & Recreation. We used to have a Open Space & Recreation committee and some how it was dissolved around 2 years ago. No one was informed of it. The pioneer valley planning commission is assisting with it. Also in attendance was a representative for Friends of the Rail Tail, conservation commission, Sabrina Pooler -ConCom & CPC, Burt Hansen - Community Garden and others. We discussed the pressing issues; Identifying Different areas, possible barriers, accomplishments, & opportunities. To get an over all picture of what everybody's cares and concerns are. We also discussed the importance of the lake from both a recreational prospective as well as an environmental prospective. And the different threats they pose. It was a good first step. Maybe we can have Norm Cheever give us a update as a CRC meeting topic.(Norm is the rep. from Lmc for the master plan committee)

The north pond update is very important. A while back 1 year and a half or so. An individual was using a type of gator vehicle to clear the beach. It looked beautiful. But that is illegal. No motorized vehicles are permitted on the property. Although they meant well. It was a direct violation of the conservation restriction. It was reported. Nothing ever came of it. The state says they are short handed. Until this past November. There was a meeting to discuss the issues at the north pond property with the select board, ConCom, the police department. There are signs of people not staying on the trails, bonfires, probably under age drinking, using the woods as a bathroom in areas. There are a lot of different issues to be addressed. This is usual issues that arise with any kind of property that has been conserved. The trash problem has lessened. It seems if people are just traveling through there will be less residual trash. But if you look at the Granville George its worse. The town needs to figure out how its going to be managed.

The state holds the CR restrictions. They just have to figure it out. Its normal but its a process. Previously, It was discussed the possibly allowing vegetation to regrow on the beach at the November meeting. It seems they want to eliminate people to utilize the sandy beach area. Maybe fence it off. Not allow people to clear any kind of lake weed, leaves or sticks that wash up there. And regrow different types of vegetation around the shore line. According to the State Fish & Game that is to stop erosion from happening and try to restore the shoreline to some type of primitive natural area. Obviously that is going to be a big topic. We should really discuss it. As with Michelle and many, many others that live in town. Whom devoted a lot of time and effort to close the north pond deal. AGAINST A LOT OF ADVERSITY. We voted to preserve the property as too have it open for all for passive recreation. We were told people would be able to fish, swim and hike. Now they are talking of closing the access off and not allow people to utilize that beautiful section of the property. It seems that's very disingenuous. That was never told to us when we decide to vote to spend millions of taxpayers dollars on that property. There isn't an understanding of what benefit that will have to the lake, when that was built as a beach many, many years ago. By trucking in loads of sand. It was not as it naturally occurred. Its understandable they want to correct significant erosion in steeper parts where people are walking down. Maybe there needs to be plantings of shrubs or landscaping ties to help correct the erosion issue. The sandy beach is flat and there doesn't seem to be any visible erosion. Personally we at CRC should determine where we stand on this. And if we will be engaging on advocacy in regard to it. We need to figure out where our stand point will be. I just want everyone to know this is happening. The people from Fish & Wild Life, Southwick Select board Member- Russ Fox, Suffield Select board Member - Collin Mall will be attending our first General Meeting in April. Fish & Wild Life said they will explain the possible plan for usage & access to the North Pond Property. I would like to get more info from Fish & Wild Life as to where their coming from on this? Why they feel the lake is in danger? Also I would like the limnologist's opinion on the boats parking near shore are posing a problem for the lake. Going forward it falls in line with our mission statement; **to preserve, maintain and enhance the environmental, aesthetic, recreational and economic values of the Congamond Lakes.**

So, I think we have some fact finding to do. We just want to give people a heads up that this is being discussed. If we need advocacy. People can be informed and be prepared to advocate if needed. And we will try and figure out what the next steps are going to be.

For the membership drive- We need to figure out who's making the copies? Michelle's students will collate & fold. We have envelopes and other supplies from last year. We will get the mailing list from our data base. Penni & Maryanne will work on getting the membership info.

Penni offered to give 20% of sales of Norwex products as a fundraiser to CRC. A link can be placed on the website. Its environmentally friendly cleaning products. It was discussed. All agreed to put the link on the website.

Natalie Lynch of the Rail Trail Ale House approached Michelle about hosting a corn hole Tournament there. We do not know how to run a corn hole tournament But we can figure it out. Penni mentioned she knows someone who ran corn hole at Copperhill. A FUN-RAISER!!!

Corinne mentions that she knows the Mgr of Old Lyme CC. They are willing to donate a 4 some as a raffle/prize for the golf tournament.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Corinne Pooler- Secretary of CRC

