

**Friends of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes - March 10, 2020**

Parker River National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters
6 Plum Island Turnpike
Newburyport, MA

Board Members Present: Ellie Bailey, Secretary, Doug Chickering, Vice President, Ron DiCola, Weston Forsblad, Bill Gette, President, Kaytee Hojnacki, Lynette Leka, Treasurer, Dave Williams

Board Members Absent: Mary Margaret Halsey

Parker River Staff Present: Sharon Weare, Acting Refuge Manager; Jean Adams, Recreational Planner

Members Present: Ted Olsen, Jim Major

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President Ball Gette at 6:00.

Secretary's Report: The minutes of the Jan. 21, 2020 and the 2020 Annual Meeting were accepted.

Treasurer's Report: Lynette Leka presented the financial report (attached). She emphasized that the Friends are in a strong financial position. Memberships are at 220 with renewals on a monthly basis as they become due.

Parker River Manager's Report: Sharon Weare reported as follows.

*The staff is planning for the summer season and hiring seasonal help. Positions include maintenance, gate house, visitor services, education and biotechnicians plus GOMI interns.

*Sharon, Jean Adams and Mary Margaret Halsey will attend the Peer-to-Peer Workshop on March 28.

*Construction on the Hellcat Trail is going well. Carpenters have begun working on the Marsh Loop this week.

It was moved and voted to allocate \$6,000 for the education intern position for the summer of 2020.

President's Report: Bill Gette reported as follows.

1. Maintenance Projects - At Headquarters the rebuilding of the deck, boardwalk, steps and rails by a volunteer committee is nearly complete.

2. Beach Clean-up Planning: Bill led a planning session for the March 28 Beach Clean Up with the following results.

*Lynette will check on the dumpster and if Jean needs to order one, she will let her know. If necessary trash bags can be left on the highest dune where Jean can collect them on Sunday.

*Ted Olsen offered to coordinate the use of the building at Parking Lot 1 for sign-in. He will also contact local high schools.

*Katie Hojnacki will publicize the event via Facebook and also make a flyer.

*Kate Murray will post the flyer.

*Bill Gette will contact David Moon at Joppa Flats, inform him of the event and ask him to pass on the information to any interested volunteers.

3. Beach Sign Youth Art Contest: Prizes will be awarded on Earth Day, April 18. Kate Murray volunteered to help with a raffle and information table at this event.

The Board voted to donate \$100 for prizes should Refuge biologist, Nancy Pau, coordinator of the contest, need financial support.

4. Proposed Change in Duck Stamp Contest Guidelines for Art: Bill explained that the rule change, if adopted, would require a hunting symbol on every design submission. He is opposed to this change and has sent a personal comment via the Federal Register. The Board discussed this change. Members felt, like Bill, that while hunters are often great conservationists, a hunting focus is too narrow and that they (members) prefer a conservation focus as more inclusive. The Board agreed that Ellie Bailey, secretary, will submit a comment prepared by Bill Gette from the Board as a whole. Members may also submit on their own comments.

Memorial Committee Report: Bill Gette reported that \$1500 in unrestricted donations has come in, \$435 has been contributed to the internship program with \$400 from "Premium memberships." Bill encouraged the Board to contribute.

Technology Committee Report: Weston Forsblad reviewed changes to the Friends' website, i.e., minutes are posted, events are archived, there is a Photo section and an Activities/Calendar section. After some discussion it was decided that

*Katie will send a good photo of interns in the field to post over "Internship Fund."

- *The Home page can change and be redesigned regularly to reflect immediate needs.
- *The flyer will be edited to add newburyport.com.
- *The Plover Blog will continue and Weston will add a closure date
- *Katie will send a revised owl logo.
- *Members will contact Weston with further suggestions.

Brief Review of Annual Meeting: Feedback from the Board was positive on the format. Having a speaker drew a larger audience. It might be worth revisiting publicity before next year's meeting.

Program Calendar: Kate Murray explained that on April 30, the Museum of Old Newbury and the Friends will co-sponsor a lecture by the author of *Massacre on the Merrimac* at the Visitor Center. The speaker has requested that attendees be able to pre-order books. Manager, Sharon Weare spoke to this request saying that we can not legally allow sales and even a preorder would give the appearance of impropriety. Her suggestion was that the bookseller offer interested buyers an email address or link.

Fund Raising:

1. Jim Major, a member of the Friends with extensive non-profit experience offered to do grant applications for the Friends. The following projects came up as possibilities for grant funding: Internship Program, Augmented Reality Sandbox and the Once and Future Salt Marsh. Kate Murray will summarize these projects in an email to Jim and Bill will get a "scope of work" for the biology intern position from Nancy Pau and forward it to Jim. Discussion focussed on the Internship Program as the Friends priority, so Jim will research criteria from several funding sources and report back. Lynette Leka will make a wish list for the garden and it will be posted on the website.
2. Bill announced that the \$1,190 gift will go towards operations for more flexibility.

New Business: Doug Chickering will coordinate the following with Sharon.

- *Maintenance of the area in front of the blind.
- *Setting up marker rods on the dyke
- *Providing another viewing area on Stage Island initially by mowing.

Next Meeting Dates: April 7, May 12, June 2.

