



## Friends of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge

### Board of Directors Meeting Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2020 6:00 p.m. Remote via Zoom

Present: Ellie Bailey, Secretary; Doug Chickering, Vice President; Weston Forsblad; Bill Gette, President; MaryMargaret Halsey; Kaytee Hojnacki; Matthew Hillman, Refuge Manager;

Absent: Ron DiCola; Lynette Leka, Treasurer; Dave Williams; Jean Adams, Recreational Planner; Sharon Ware

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 by President Bill Gette.
2. Secretary's Report: The minutes of the Sept. 15 meeting were accepted as presented. Ellie will send the August and Sept. minutes to Weston for posting on the website.
3. Refuge Staff Update: Matt Hillman reported as follows.

Tom Rurak, a well respected member of the staff, has died and will be missed by all.

Luke Stunts, a new salt marsh intern, has begun work and in January a maintenance intern will begin.

There has been an audit of the Fish and Wildlife's oversight of Friends Groups. Our 50C3 status and Partnership Agreement should have been checked this year. Bill will look to be sure this was done.

The Beach clean-up was "great." The beach looks "fantastic," and the public was thrilled to help.

Friday, Oct. 10, the Ribbon Cutting for the Hellcat boardwalk will be held at 10 a.m. Due to covid restrictions, only Bill and one other board member can attend. Doug volunteered to go and pass out membership brochures. The public has been very enthusiastic about the new boardwalk. Signs and benches will be installed soon.

In response to a question, Matt stated that a "no bikes" sign is coming and that bikes are not allowed on the boardwalk. MaryMargaret reported that there are problems with bikers and a lack of signs at both the Pines and Stage Island trails. Matt will look into this problem. She also

asked about a crosswalk between Parking Lot 1 and the boat ramp. Matt replied that there should be one and he will check on it.

#### 4. Board Reports

A. Treasurer's Report. Lynette Leka submitted a finance report for Oct. 3 prior to the meeting.

#### B. President

Beach Clean Up: Bill Gette reported that Carlos Amaral donated both a dumpster and disposal services for the clean up. He and Lynette suggested that Mr. Amaral be given a corporate membership and it was moved and voted to do so. Lynette will add him to the roles and Bill will send the Amaral logo to Weston for the website.

Volunteer Work Group: The group has installed a mailbox at Headquarters and will help with Hellcat sign installation. They will also be working on elevating the blind at Bill Forward.

#### D. Technology Committee

Weston Forsblad reported that he has updated the homepage. He will remove the beach closure notice and upload the minutes for Aug. and Sept. as well as the Amaral logo. He will add information about the Oct. 10 - 18 opening of the dike trail from the tower to Subheadquarters.

#### 5. Purple Martin Project

Doug Chickering reported that so far he has raised \$400 from personal solicitation. At some point he will work with Lynette to ask members for support via email. He will wait until the Martins come to ask for volunteers. Sue McGrath will help train them.

A site has not yet been chosen. Both the old site at Parking Lot #3 and Headquarters were discussed as possible sites. Doug said that he favors the Lot #3 site as a "restoration," and that donors expect this. Kaytee noted that because of competition from House Sparrows at Headquarters, the island site is better. Matt added that Nancy Pau, staff biologist, favors the Headquarters site. She has said that the Parking Lot #1 site is not at capacity and that archaeological considerations make digging for new poles rather complex. Doug replied that existing poles at Lot #3 might be usable and that he will look at them. Matt will help facilitate a meeting between Doug and Nancy, Doug will get a price on the necessary equipment, and Kaytee will speak with Nancy and deal with an archaeological survey, if necessary.

#### 6. Program Calendar

Plans for Bill's Ducks Workshop were finalized. Weston will co-host. Kaytee will have the brochure ready by the weekend. (Oct. 10)

#### 7. Parker River Winter Birding Challenge

Bill and Dave Williams final plan for the event was reviewed. Prizes will be \$200 rather than \$150. Board members can participate, but can not win. The scope, time, and scoring are

different from what MA Audubon has done and there is no attempt to compete with their Super Bowl of Birding. It was moved and voted to hold this event as planned.

More planning ensued: Dave and Bill will run the event and, at MaryMargaret's suggestion, a member will be recruited to help. She will do the recruiting. Weston will post the event on the website. Bill, with input from Matt, will create a banner advertising the event to be hung on the Refuge gate house. Bill and Dave will contact the Brookline Bird Club regarding the event and MaryMargaret will contact the Essex County Ornithological Society. Lynette will publicize the event to Friends members via email.

#### 8. Fundraising Discussion

MaryMargaret Halsey reported that she has prepared a draft brochure for membership and fundraising for both the Purple Martin project and the Internship Program and feels that these efforts should be promoted in tandem. She volunteered to be at the Refuge on a Saturday or Sunday when the dike trail is open to promote membership. The draft brochure will be discussed further in Nov.

#### 9. Other New Business

##### Road Safety Problem

Matt reported that the staff is aware of the road safety problem at the Refuge and has placed cones, signs, and speed bumps in the past but enforcement is also necessary. Solar powered radar units are coming and will flash "slow down." A transportation fellow, Ella Webber, has come to the area for eighteen months. She will analyze problems at refuges and make recommendations. Bill reminded Board members that we can give feedback to the staff on what we observe at the Refuge and also act as advocates for the staff when we meet the public.

##### Stage Island Pool Observation Platform Relocation

Because of tree growth in the view area, this fall the platform will be moved to a new location with an unobstructed, 120 degree view of the pool, mud flats, ducks and migrants.

##### Announcement

Kaytee announced that she will be stepping down from the Board at the end of her current term.

#### 10. Confirmation of Next Meeting Dates

Nov. 17 at 6:00. Annual Meeting Planning will be a focus.

Dec. 15 at 6:00

Jan. 12 at 6:00

Jan 16, 2021 for Annual Meeting

#### 11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:38 p.m.