

Minutes Friends of Covehead Brackley Bays Board Meeting Wednesday 24 January 2018

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Present were Wanson Hemphill, Gerry Lajeunesse, Troy MacKenzie, Michael Hewitt, Tom Hinsperger, Lou Watts, Robbie Shaw, Jim Jenkins, Verner Smitheram, Barry Cudmore, and Coordinator, Justin Walsh. **Regrets** from Emily Van Toevere

1. Chair Verner called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm

Welcome to our newest Director Tom Hinsperger. He was invited to introduce himself to the board members. He talked about his environmentally sensitive farming philosophy and the reasons for moving from Ontario to PEI two years ago.

Troy updated the meeting on Facebook activity with demonstrations and statistics. He indicated that Nancy Smitheram has been doing most of the postings. The number of likes has been mounting steadily. The communications plan passed by the previous board is being gradually implemented.

Vern reviewed the FCBB series of letters to the Minister of Community, Land and Environment re irrigation ponds where we requested that better management practices be adopted by the department and become regulations within the Water Act for the benefit of both the farmer/builders of these ponds and for the environment. Our concerns were forwarded to the PEI Watershed Alliance. The Alliance has adopted our recommendations and sent a letter on 2 January to CLE using our letters as a basis for requesting that the Minister adopt regulations instead of the current guidelines. (See **Appendix A below**)

2. Election of Executive for 2018: Wanson assumed the role of Chair to conduct the election of the executive. Verner (Chair), Jim (Vice-Chair), Gerry (Treasurer) and Barry (Secretary) were nominated to similar roles as the last board. There were no other nominations and the executive was acclaimed unanimously.

Verner assumed the Chair

3. The Minutes from the 30 August 2017 meeting were presented, moved by Barry and seconded by Michael. Minutes were accepted and passed.

a. Michael 's update on the **photo contest**. To date 21 photos submitted from nine entrants.

b. Verner reviewed our stance with the North Shore Council on its **Covehead Bay Sustainability Plan**. In a letter to the Council it was stated that the watershed will work with the Council on projects that will benefit the environmental health of the bays and streams within the council territory in accordance with our mandate. According to Council Chair Gordie Ellis, the letter was well received by Council.

4. Treasurer's Report: Gerry reported that the balance as of January 11th, 2018 was \$8,313.21 with the expected grant from the community council of \$1,750 to come. Revenues for the last 2 years have been down \$6000 to \$7000. Expenses have been up. We have become complacent. We have to take a better look at our revenues and pay more attention to the detail in our grants several of which have changed in orientation recently. It was moved by Gerry and seconded by Robbie that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. Motion carried.

5. Critical Path Planning Cass' Pond Project: Justin updated a critical path for the restoration of Cass's pond using a sophisticated computerized model that *details all the actions required and the sequence of activities*. He presented a Powerpoint on the history and the deteriorated conditions of the pond and estuary. The critical phases would be 1) the re-establishment of the estuary channel; 2) upgrading the fish ladder; 3) enlarging the common area; 4) dredging the pond and 5) installing new silt traps for sediment prevention in the future. He proposed that the project start at the estuary upper end of the pond. We need to identify potential funders for each phase. Completion of the project could take several years depending on access to funding sources.

6. Justin gave a report on the work completed 2017.

- Organized Bay Clean-up along Covehead and Brackley Bay
- Planted 500 long-lived trees and food shrubs with hare protection
- Spring Run-off Survey completed
- Removed blockages to migrating fish in 5 rivers (60 km) from the upper springs to estuaries
- Deployed HOBO dissolved oxygen meter in Brackley Bay
- Monitored the bays and estuaries for anoxic events
- Used our Nitrate Photometer and conducted weekly nutrient testing at 6 locations
- Weekly water testing at 10 (16 in total) additional locations (pH, temp, oxygen, TDS, Conductivity, etc.)
- Erosion monitoring (calculated 2017 erosion rates at the 10 locations selected in 2012)
- Information booth display on Canada Day
- C.A.M.P. for DFO at six locations
- Maintenance on 8 rock check dams in a drainage ditch along Bell's Creek to reduce run-off
- Hosted annual Youth Eco-Learning and Adventure Day
- Constructed new 15 brush mats
- Annual Nitrate testing at the same 9 ground water spring locations established in 2009
- Heavy Rain Event Erosion Monitoring Survey
- Improved connectivity in Bell's Creek at Gurney Bridge
- A lot of effort put into the planning of the Cass' Pond Project

7. Educational Event Planning Committee: There was a discussion around who we are and what we are. It was felt that there was need for an education committee to improve our outreach to the community we serve. **Moved** by Verner and seconded by Michael that an **Education Committee 2018** be established to manage our education program this year. Motion

carried. A brain storming session followed to consider possible projects. Vern recorded the input from this discussion. He will prepare a **survey to gauge Board educational Interests**. He was pleased to announce that Emily has offered to work on the committee with him.

8. Possible Projects for Funding 2018: There was discussion on possible projects for future funding for 2018 and beyond. Wanson suggested work in the bay to establish more tidal flushing. He suggested as well a sea lettuce harvesting project to determine the nutrient value of sea lettuce. Barry suggested excavation of the toad pond in Brackley Beach and taking efforts to mitigate the damaged caused by beavers at the head of MacCallum Creek. All of these will be taken into consideration as we plan the 2018 activities.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 pm.
Minutes prepared by Barry and Verner

Appendix A: PEI Watershed Alliance Letter to Minister CLE based on FCBB requests

January 2, 2018

Hon. Robert Mitchell Minister, Community Lands and Environment

PO Box 2000 Charlottetown, PEI C1A 7M8

RE: PEIWA Position regarding Regulations governing irrigation pond construction

Hon. Minister Mitchell:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the PEI Watershed Alliance to express our support for the establishment of **regulations** governing the construction of irrigation ponds.

As you will no doubt recall, this request was initially raised by the *Friends of Covehead Brackley Bays Watershed Management Group* in their letter to you on Jun 5th, 2017 (FCBB REQUEST FOR REGULATIONS GOVERNING IRRIGATION PONDS) to which you responded on Jun 15th highlighting the recommended management practices that had been developed to guide construction of these irrigation ponds.

This matter was further raised at the fall meeting of the PEI Watershed Alliance by representatives of the same watershed group, and subsequently followed up with a second letter on November 27th reiterating their initial concerns:

Further to our letter of 5 June 2017 on this topic, we wish to reiterate our concern (1) that construction standards are vague and incomplete; (2) that recommendations do not offer the advantages of monitoring and enforcement that regulations demand, and (3) that both farmers and watershed groups will benefit from our request.

The Alliance agrees with the concerns that the lack of specific construction standards for irrigation ponds exposes both watershed groups and farmers to potentially significant risks. We also feel strongly that the establishment of specific and clear construction standards, monitoring, and regulations will assist both farmers and watershed groups in meeting their objectives.

Under your leadership, Minister, you began the dialogue between the Watershed Alliance and many Provincial departments to establish a “Hub” for improving communication and building understanding between departments and watershed groups. I wonder if this concern, which impacts on both the Agriculture and Environment portfolios, is an example the type of issue that this hub was envisioned to address?

The Watershed Alliance would welcome an opportunity for further collaboration on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Mike Durant

Chair, PEI Watershed Alliance

Cc Verner Smitheram, FCBB Chair Jim Jenkins Vice Chair