

MRBA Meeting Minutes Thursday April 6th, 2023: MRBA Office

Attendees: Cynthia Scott, Craig Cimmons, Brian Jerose, John Little, Paul Stanley, Wendy Scott, Kate Donlon, Sarah Lunn, Lindsey Wight; Ellen Fox joined via zoom.

- 1) Meeting began at 6:34pm with greetings and introductions
- 2) Review of March meeting minutes: PS motioned to accept, JL seconded. All in favor; minutes accepted as written.
- 3) Review of March events: VT Flower show - Kate and Wendy reported on the Flower Show held at the Essex Expo. It was a good opportunity to talk to folks and share information. Lindsey will send a thank you to the nursery that allowed us to have their booth space. Ideas for future years (if we have the opportunity): "how to make a raingarden" (FWR had this?); a sign-up for our newsletter/ mailing list; map of the watershed (but with place markers! LCA's map lacked those).

Open House - very well attended. Could we/should we do something like this annually?

Tomorrow (4/7/23) we will host a meeting of our "Missisquoi Basin Partners" in our new office space - a chance to show it off to partners. [side note: at one point this group of partners was called Northern Waters Partners - could be a good name for the Partners brochure? Lindsey will bring this up with the group tomorrow.]

Soiree - well attended and good food - though someone commented that all the attendees were the usual suspects - would have been great to have more people from each town and more groups (didn't get many road/selectboard/clerks). Similar to the comment about the map at the Flower Show: our maps were hard to visualize; need more place-making information. Brian pointed out that there was a lot of discussion about river access (e.g. stewards of swimming holes, access points) - bring in discussion from VYCC, CCCNVT, NFCT for a talk during one of these. An idea for recognizing our river community: send a thank you to the landowners, like VAST does - "Thank you landowners; keep it clean". Corrina will provide a summary of comments and data collected at the soiree. Discussion about having a third soiree focused on the lower section of the river: Sheldon, Franklin, Highgate, Swanton. Do during the workday? - then might get Town Clerks, and don't need to provide dinner (cuts expense). Possibilities of where to have it: The Abbey, The Tyler Place - partner with FNLC? Talk with Kent, then approach Chad? Idea: could we do a forced seat switch every 15 min - force mingling? Or have high tops, not tables (but may need some seating). Ask ANM to do a land acknowledgement?

4) Administrative business

- Writing checks – we discussed the best way to go forward with our accounts. Paying bills, signing checks, keeping track of our accounts. We have a bookkeeper, but still need a treasurer. JL made a motion to allow Lindsey to write checks (less burdensome for treasurer), and to provide a warrant* for checks - and we'll soon get to the point where we can use Quick Books to write checks. Board signature would be required (on Lindsey-written checks, and on the monthly warrant). PS seconded. Motion passed.

*warrant system: lists the checks that need to be written and the amounts; this gets signed by a Board member and that authorizes the check writing.

Also discussed the possibility of changing our accounts system, or even switching banks. Currently have money market (savings) account and checking account. - get some details about what the rates are for the account types that we have/want (and any fees, interest earned, overdraft fees).

We will keep this topic on our agenda regularly until we feel the system is smooth.

- 2023 Budget: First quarter check-in - Cynthia provided a quarterly report for us one more time, can be provided by request; Lindsey aligned our Budget and Actuals for the first quarter: so far have received ~23% of our expected income and spent ~11% of our expected expenses.
- Board Recruitment: discussion of a few interested parties, but also our needs/targeted recruiting. Do we want to get more bodies or targeted members who have skills like fundraising, accounting etc? Do we want to have members from other sections of the river? Do we want to have Abenaki representation? Paul suggested a few specific people to ask to be on the board (Sarah Cushing? Carissa?). Craig will make some possible contacts at Jay Peak. He will also finalize a letter to go out to folks we think might be interested in joining.

Also discussed membership vs mailing list. Should we create a “member” program with perks?

- 5) Office Needs: should we put our “office needs” list up on FPF again?
- 6) Communications/volunteer opportunities: May blog topic? Tree planting - ask Corrina to write something. Tree planting opportunities in April! Look to plant the week of April 24th; let us know if you want to join! Also water sampling begins April 18th.
- 7) **Saved for next meeting** - Organizational Planning: strengths and weaknesses overview; next steps
- 8) Grants update: received funds for Community Water Walks; partnering with Lake Lessons (MOU with SAM); **will discuss more next meeting.**
- 9) **Saved for next meeting** - 2023 events
- 10) Other business: FCNRCD’s workshop at Paullin Dairy had 10 attendees; got ~1000 willow stems in the ground!
- 11) Next meeting - May 4, 2023 at the office - come early to load the rest of the old office stuff into trucks to take to the dump?

Meeting adjourned at 8:41pm.