

**Friends of Casco Bay  
Community Engagement Committee - Minutes  
January 16, 2018**

Sandy Marsters, Chairman, Dan Brazeau, Bud Higgins, Althea McGirr, Derek Pelletier, Malcolm Poole, Ann Thayer, Jack Thomas, Cathy Ramsdell, Will Everitt, Mary Cerullo

Good news: an unexpected \$27,000 gift today, which bring us closer to breakeven before depreciation, a noncash item, for the fiscal year!

**Volunteer Appreciation Celebration – Bring friends**

Cathy will have a script for Dan, Malcolm, and Pat for the annual meeting portion of the event. Cathy and Will did a site visit at DiMillo's Friday, space is U shaped so will do presentation from one corner. For the Volunteer Appreciation part of the evening, Sarah Lyman will present milestone awards for 9 Citizens Stewards. She have available certificates for each person who was an active WQM volunteer who RSVPed to the event. We are giving a Friend of Casco Bay Award to Rick Frantz and Jennifer Fox for their environmental advocacy and community support of the residents, harvesters, merchants, and tourists of Casco Bay. The last time we presented the Friend Award was 2011, to the Bennett Family. It is given only when we find a candidate who is really deserving. Mike will do a presentation on our WQM program evolution, with Ivy speaking at the end of his program about our new citizen science initiatives. Ivy will describe our new effort looking at color and clarity of water using a secci disk and a phone app, which puts data into an international database. Then she will speak about our Observing Network (ON Casco Bay) initiative to encourage volunteers to report nuisance algal outbreaks and other changes they are seeing on the Bay using an app recommended by Waterkeeper Alliance.

**Casco Bay Matters/Champion event**

In the upcoming FY, we are planning for one focused, main event that showcases our most important issue, with three parts:

*Lecture:* our work on nitrogen and algal blooms and what we/you can do about it.

*Champion event:* talking points on the issue, with an opportunity to practice

*Water Reporter app:* demonstration of how to use a special app to record/share information on what our members are observing around the Bay regarding algal blooms and other anomalies in the water.

**Rethinking events: How to celebrate members, volunteers, donors, new members**

We brainstormed ideas on how to recognize our closest partners. Regarding our Donor Appreciation event: more donors have shown up than ever before, but some of our largest donors who used to go to Cumberland Club no longer show up at Harraseeket. Maybe explore more exclusive event at Cumberland Club for *highest donors*. About 75 could fit comfortably at the Cumberland Club. Is there a natural cutoff? Will Everitt will analyze and report back. All agreed it is nice for likeminded members to gather. Bud suggested offering an academic program geared to the high-end donors.

What to do for *a new member*? Volunteer Appreciation? Casco Bay Matters? Focus on how to appreciate our *consistent members*, who have given consistently over the years? We discussed the possibility of a Friends and Members Meeting at Harraseeket Inn – both donor and volunteer appreciation event.

**Preparing for summer house parties**

Will hopes we can do two, one in Falmouth/Cumberland possibly hosted by Brian Clement, and one in Harpswell, hosted by Lew and Liz Inze. As the Inzes are new to the Harpswell community (NOT new to the Casco Bay region), we would put together a strong host committee.

**Ramifications of new tax law on charitable giving**

Yikes! Cathy expects to see some impact at end of this year, but likely to see most impact in giving practices in two years, at end of 2019, particularly from middle class, which now has fewer incentives to give money away. We are trying to figure out with the rest of philanthropy how gauge potential effects and message these changes. Jack says to talk with your tax advisor about donating through IRAs and stock gifts; consider making Friends the beneficiary of your IRA if you don't have kids.

**Development metrics for year-end giving**

Will will present a full analysis after the end of fiscal year. We did a large mailing to a targeted geography, sorted by those who live near the Bay, who have never given to us before. Included coastal zip codes between Cape Elizabeth to Harpswell. We need new members help us grow, even though we have a high renewal rate. Expect we will gain close to 200 new members by end of March, end of fiscal year.

**Website feedback**

Welcome any feedback on content and any glitches you may find.