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Friends of Casco Bay
Minutes, Community Engagement Committee
April 17, 2018 Community Engagement Committee

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Sandy Marsters, *Chair*, Dan Brazeau, Bud Higgins, Pat Ianni, Althea McGirr, Malcolm Poole, Jack Thomas, Cathy Ramsdell, Sarah Lyman, Mary Cerullo

2018 House Parties
Tuesday, July 17   Harpswell, off Rte. 24, hosts: Lew & Liz Incze
We will host a relatively small house party. There is room for 40-60 guests in the house if the weather is bad, but there is no viable site for a tent. We expect that a limited number of staff and board will attend. There is a dock for people who want to come by boat. Bud mentioned that a limited size, similar to the party he and Cheryl hosted on Peaks Island, is great for connecting with all invitees and does generate interest and reward.

Another venue
We would like to find a site for a second house party, ideally somewhere on the water (Falmouth to Yarmouth) where we could put up a tent to accommodate a lot of guests. In order to plan, recruit a host committee, identify the guest list, and send out invitations, we need a minimum 60-day lead time.

At the last Committee meeting, Fort Williams was suggested as a possible venue for a house party or a 30th anniversary event. Will Everitt looked into using Ft. Williams and learned about costly and complicated logistics. Now, Ocean Gateway looks more plausible for a 30th anniversary event in a year or two; SMCC's Spring Point, where we can put a tent and have adult beverages, may also be a possibility worth considering.

Online Communications Metrics Preview
Sarah previewed an overview of our online presence and philosophy. She asked the Committee members to anticipate questions that people may want to have explained at the Board meeting immediately following.

Bud asked, in light of all the concern about Facebook's use of private information, what does Friends do to address these concerns in our own social media? Sarah explained that we have a policy on what we post on our social media. When she was redesigning the website, she researched several examples from other organizations, before developing our privacy policy for our website and emails. Our membership materials have a box that members may check to let us know not to share their contact information; in any case, we have not shared our mailing list with other nonprofits in several years. Our online donations are handled through a service that we have vetted carefully.

Rolling out the Color Initiative—Board Beta Testing on Monday, April 30, meet by noon at Friends
Sarah explained that that staff has done beta testing of our Color by Numbers initiative, which uses a smartphone app to take a photo of the water and compare the color to the Forel-Ule scale. We want to use the Committee to continue to test the instructions to ensure they are written clearly and are easy to follow. Board members will get an email the week before, explaining how to access the app, with instructions to download the Eye on Water app and register their device, before the meeting at Friends. Sarah welcomes feedback on the download process and she will observe and assist you as we test the app on April 30.
This process of beta testing with staff, then board members, then our long-time citizen stewards, should enable us address any problems in using the app before we launch the initiative formally. We want to make sure the instructions are self-explanatory and that we anticipate questions that users may have.

Over time, we hope our "Color by Number" initiative will engage many more people beyond the number we could train individually. Cathy noted that our goal is to gather lots and lots of data. The strength of the data is in numbers, and that, combined with the numbers on the color scale led to the name of our program, Color by Numbers. We will also want to get input on our messaging, rollout, and recruitment.

Committee members recognized that this new volunteer effort will be an important way to measure changes happening in Casco Bay while providing volunteers with an opportunity to do real, meaningful science.