

Friends of Casco Bay Community Engagement Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 1, 5-6:30 PM
GMRI, second floor conference room, Portland, ME

In attendance--Board: Sandy Marsters (Chair of Committee), Malcolm Poole, Jack Thomas, Seb Milardo
Staff: Cathy Ramsdell, Mary Cerullo, Will Everitt, Sarah Lyman

Film Festival (Saturday, November 3)

Sponsorships raised through this year's event are now \$12,300. We have sold lots of tickets, only 70 left. [Update: We have since sold out.] We are netting about \$1 more per ticket due to the fact that we are selling the tickets through our website, and database, rather than Brown Paper Tickets. We also know we will be able to resell some tickets, increasing the ticket sales. Folks who purchase and then end up not being able to attend, give their tickets back and we sell them at the door for \$35, \$5 more than advance sales. So if you get asked about tickets, let folks know that they should be able to buy them at the door the day of the event. Doors open at 3 p.m.

Raffle items needed in hand by Wednesday, October 24

The raffle is an important part of the Film Festival--and having items in hand by 10/24 allows us to process, group, and prepare the materials. Need ideas? Think about anywhere you go regularly, whether that is Ricetta's, or a bookstore, or Casco Bay Lines, or a farm you frequent. Last year Lori secured a lovely basket of fresh vegetables from her favorite farm. It is nice to have an array of things that we then assemble into grouped packages.

Community events debrief

Coastal Cleanup at Bug Light Park, Sept. 15

At this International Coastal Cleanup Day event, we had seven Volunteers who picked up almost 1,000 cigarette butts and lots of other very small pieces of trash. Sandy was a great ambassador, inviting two folks to become members, and Sarah connected with a new corporate volunteer partner.

Take Action Portland & Color by Numbers, Sept. 23

Five Volunteers from Take Action Portland joined us for our first group Color by Numbers training. We met at Becky's upstairs room, introduced Friends of Casco Bay generally, then introduced Color by Numbers, and then registered folks to participate. As a group we then collected measurements in the field. It is hoped the folks participating will then measure in October independently.

South Portland Organic Field Day, Sept. 29

This event was put together by the City of South Portland with a large gift of support from Stonyfield Farm through their [StonyFIELDS campaign](#). Mary Cerullo and Pat Ianni covered this event. Other participants included Cumberland County Master Gardeners and tons of landscapers, there to show attendees their organic methods. Event planning was done primarily by Jesse O'Brien, a local landscaper who serves on South Portland's Pest Management Committee; originally he was against the ordinance but has since come around. You will be able to read about him in our newsletter later this month. South Portland is dedicating one acre of Bug Light Park to organic management. This event allowed us to deepen relationships with important people around this issue. The South Portland group that worked on the pesticides ordinance is looking to consider a fertilizer ordinance.

Update on Annual Fund

All the Annual Fund letters have been printed and will be distributed to Board Members later this week. Cathy shared a big thank you to all the Board Members for writing notes on all of these.

Board resources on our website

We are creating a page on our website called Board Resources, which will be password protected. You will be able to access it anywhere with any internet-connected device, even a smartphone. It will have the current month's Board Meeting Materials, grouped in 3 sections: Agenda and Consent Agenda Items for Review, Meeting Supporting Documents for Review and Discussion, and Homework (if any) for the next meeting. In addition, this site will have past talking points, Board Minutes, previous Community Engagement Committee Minutes, Financials, the current Strategic Plan, Trusteeship Resources, Operating Plans, and more.

Gift Acceptance Policy

Discussion from Board review of the Policy

This document is a few years in the making, and it has been vetted by a paid outside professional. It is an important document, describing which kinds of more complicated gifts we may accept, and the processes that we will use to evaluate gifts. For this reason, and as we further explore the possible campaign, this policy is important to put in place at this time. Because Planned Gifts (we often think of them as given when someone passes away, but they include any gift that takes more planning than simply writing a check) are more complicated, both the donor and the organization need to do a little extra work around them. The donor needs to ensure that their wishes are captured correctly, and the organization needs to set up a process to consider the gift. Depending on the complexity and type of gift, the document outlines who is responsible for assessing the gift's acceptance [in some cases the Executive Director, in some cases the Executive Committee, while in other cases, such as real estate, the whole board].

There was some discussion about whether the Board should approve or endorse the Gift Acceptance Policy. Malcolm acknowledged that the document will be primarily used and maintained by staff. Cathy expressed that, as a best practice, because the Gift Acceptance Policy includes Board work and is such an important document, it should be approved by the Board. This will come up as an action item at the October Board Meeting.

2019 Events

Donor Appreciation Event is Wednesday, November 28, Cumberland Club, with a smaller set of donors.

The Staff recently had a meeting where we started identifying and exploring locations for events we may host in 2019 and 2020. None of the venues and dates have yet been secured and confirmed:

We plan to host three periodic presentations on issues of current concern, though our **Casco Bay Matters** series, which will be free and open to the public. We heard loud and clear from our Citizen Stewards that they wanted to have deeper dives with us. We want people leave with an awareness of a particular issue or problem along with possible solutions to consider. We do not feel it is necessary to offer a single "correct" solution but to educate people and get them thinking about issues impacting the health of the Bay. We will try to find three free or very low cost venues, possibly the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick, Southern Maine Community College, and one other location.

A new event, our **Friends Appreciation Event and Annual Members Meeting**, is a different take on our former Volunteer Appreciation and Annual Members Meeting and some more recent iterations of the Donor Appreciation Event. The difference is that we will thank all of our donors and all of our volunteers at this event, instead of just Major Donors and Water Quality Monitors. We will not be doing our 5, 10, 15 awards. We are hoping this will occur in April 2019 at the Harraseeket Inn.

We hope we will be able to schedule our **Pumpout Boat Launch** in June at Portland Yacht Services. We will need a name for the new pumpout boat and may consider soliciting public participation in that effort.

We are planning to hold **two house parties** next summer, and we will start reaching out to potential hosts. We will plan to do another Donor Appreciation event at the Cumberland Club again in December 2019, and the Casco Bay Matters series, again, in the Winter of 2020.

30th Anniversary

We are hoping to hold a big 30th Anniversary Celebration in April 2020, at Ocean Gateway. We plan to confirm the date and location soon. Knowing this far in advance is key for lining up the catering, recruiting sponsors and building the program. Let us know any ideas you have to help us celebrate our 30th Anniversary, which we can do in many ways for the whole year. Photo contests and celebrating the folks that help us get to 30 years were ideas shared at the meeting.

Fundraising campaign planning

Discussion of the fundraising campaign was tabled at the September Board Meeting. Malcolm has since followed up with an email to the Board inviting a conversation and any questions ahead of the October Board Meeting. As of this meeting, only two Board Members had replied. The four members who were not able to meet one-on-one with Malcolm this summer are those who seem to have the most questions, which makes sense, since Malcolm spoke about the campaign at these individual meetings. Seb shared that he thinks it is important to have a place for the Board to join in, hear about the campaign, and work as a cooperative team, let their creativity around this important campaign work. This will allow the whole board to get solidly behind this. Malcolm agreed that everyone needs to be on board.

Elements of fundraising planning package

Cathy and Will are working on the print pieces that will be shared with potential campaign donors. The most important talking points will be shared verbally in the meeting with the donor. The print materials will provide more information and will be left with donors. Supporting materials include a Case Statement, graphs of data from our current Continuous Monitoring Station, a site map of our current and possible future Continuous Monitoring Stations, financial information, and pledge forms. Will and Cathy have met with a graphic designer to begin the creation of a schematic of the components of the stations.

Cathy shared some rationale for the campaign. Malcolm shared that while staff will be directing the activity of fundraising during the campaign, he would like to have the work of the campaign be reviewed and reported and worked through the Community Engagement Committee. When we launch the public phase of the campaign later on, we would think about forming a “campaign committee” made up of early donors. Cathy is happy to sit down with anyone who wants to see the detailed budget and walk through the rationale. She shared that it is realistic that we could raise this much money. Is it a stretch? Yes, but she and Will are ready to make the asks needed to try to meet this goal. And it is good for the organization to stretch sometimes. We have a timeframe on the campaign.

Case statement and talking points

Malcolm thought it important to give the Board Members a document about the campaign, maybe the Case Statement ahead of the next Board Meeting. It was recognized that siting the placement of the monitoring stations may help in the campaign efforts in different regions of the Bay.

Naming the campaign will likely happen after review of the case statement and talking points. We need ideas and active language. We need a name that is not jarring or distracting, and just a few words.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.