

# **Friends of Casco Bay Community Engagement Committee meeting minutes**

Monday, April 1, 2019, 5-6:30 PM

Gulf of Maine Research Institute, Second floor conference room, Portland, ME

In attendance:

**Board:** Seb Milardo (Chairing Committee on behalf of Sandy Marsters); Malcolm Poole, David Kaufman, Derek Pelletier

**Staff:** Will Everitt, Sarah Lyman, Intern: Allie Mills

## **LD 1284**

Staff found out late Thursday that LD 1284, “An Act to Create the Science and Policy Council on the Impact of Climate Change on Maine’s Marine Species,” our priority bill this legislative session, was scheduled for hearing tomorrow. Staff dropped everything, working quickly to get an action alert out to our email list on Friday. We sent another email reminder just before this meeting. By the time the committee meeting happened, forty members have told us they have sent an email; probably many more did so because not everyone likely notified us. The reminder went out to our entire list of more than 7,500 people, and it thanked those who had already taken action. Normally, we would segment the list and remove those who had emailed us letting us know they had taken the action. Unfortunately, with the short timeline and staff illnesses, we could not do this.

## **Casco Bay Matters events**

**April 9<sup>th</sup> –Last chance to attend – Curtis Memorial Library, Brunswick, 5:30-6:30 pm**

Since this event is the last *Ocean Acidification, Climate Change, and You!*, we hope to see many Board Members. Please consider taking a postcard to share the event with others.

The talk is a prime example of how our science informs our advocacy. The 20-minute presentation covers Climate Change, Acidification, and the Climate Change Council Bill, followed by Q &A. Getting ready for these events has been a team effort. We have followed a detailed plan for communications for these events, which has included promotions through Facebook (including paid Facebook ads), emails, community calendar postings, including the Maine Public calendar, and media alerts, leading to articles in Bangor Daily News and Portland Press Herald. We also sent postcards to a targeted list of 2,500 people. That list consisted of existing and potential donors for whom we do not have an email address. Next time we do these events, Cathy suggests we consider budgeting for a mailing to everyone; we’ll assess the effectiveness of this year’s approach. We will continue to do electronic invitations, which can be forwarded to potential attendees. Malcolm invited at least 150 people this way, and at least a dozen have joined us at the events as a result.

## **Debrief and prepare for Board discussion at April 16th meeting**

The Casco Bay Matters events have been well-attended and have provided great visibility for us. The South Portland event had around 120 people in attendance, and the Portland event had around 100. Malcolm shared that the South Portland event had a more balanced feeling between the presentation and the Q&A. The program and follow-up exchanges got people energized, whereas he felt that the Portland Public library event seemed a little short on Q&As.

Board Members suggested we consider doing more Casco Bay Matters events in the future because they have been so successful. Committee members suggested that we think about the ideal frequency and timing for them. Sarah shared that Cathy has been emphasizing that we will continue them if and when we have an important topic that will move our work forward. The timing of this year’s events is working really well to educate and prepare people to take action on LD 1284.

## **Pumpout Boat naming contest**

The new pumpout boat will be delivered on April 17 for sea trials. The boat, like our entire Pumpout Program, is 90% paid for through the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and a federal grant program. We will pay for 10% of the cost of the boat. A donor and pumpout customer, Elizabeth Chapman, spoke with Will at the Portland Casco Bay Matters event. She shared that she wanted to make a large gift to make an impact on our work. She decided to donate \$17,000 to pay for that 10% of the boat's value we have to cover. She encourages us to continue to move forward with the boat naming contest as planned, using it as a way to garner visibility for the Pumpout Program and organization. [Note: [We have since launched the contest and you can see all about it here.](#)] The deadline for submissions is 11:59 p.m., Monday, April 15. This allows time to choose a name and get it stenciled on the boat. Malcolm pointed out that this is an important step, since the name of our Research Vessel *Joseph E. Payne* (the Baykeeper Boat) was not on the boat when it was launched and is not currently on the vessel.

There will still be a fundraising component to the pumpout boat naming contest. After folks suggest boat names, we will reach out to them with an opportunity to give and support the Pumpout Program. If this creates an excess amount of funds for the new boat and launch, per Elizabeth Chapman's request, we will put the remainder of her gift towards the Climate Change and Casco Bay Fund campaign.

## **Friends Appreciation Event & Annual Meeting, April 30**

Our Friends Appreciation Celebration is a public event to celebrate all of our Friends around the Bay; it is not merely a celebration of our volunteers, as it has been in the past. There are so many volunteers, donors, members, and local and state officials and other community partners around the Bay who have made a positive impact on the health of our coastal waters. This event also includes a very short (10 minutes or less) Members Annual Meeting, which is required as a membership organization. [More details and registration can be found here.](#)

### **Invitations**

Please take postcards and distribute them to folks to encourage your circle of influence to attend. This event is the second to last of five opportunities for Board members to introduce friends and neighbors to Friends of Casco Bay before summer. Board members shared that this is a great event to invite others to-- a warm, feel-good event that gets folks more interested in our work. There is a suggested donation to come, which can be made at the RSVP link above, and folks can give at the door. With these donations, they become members, if they are not already. Attendees can also register for free.

### **Choreography**

At the last Community Engagement Committee Meeting, the committee suggested we give our donors and volunteers a very warm welcome, possibly employing a receiving line. The committee talked through the choreography of this and decided it should be discussed in more detail at the April Board Meeting. It will be essential for Board Members to arrive early at the event to go over these logistics. Board Members and staff will start with that very warm welcome and continue that engagement throughout the evening. This will have to be very fluid. The challenge will be when someone you know shows up and wants to dive into a 45-minute conversation, as that keeps you from being able to meet, interact with and appreciate other attendees. The committee identified that the Board's responsibility at this event is to act as hosts and meet and thank a lot of people, which means walking up to that person standing alone, introducing yourself, and thanking them if you didn't get a chance to when they arrived.

We will have name tags that identify clearly who is a donor or volunteer or community partner. This will make it easier to approach and thank attendees.

Committee members suggested sharing highlights from Water Reporter on a projector throughout the evening. Board members emphasized providing time for Q&A. Derek reflected that Portland Trails invites members of the community do short "Pecha Kucha" style presentations, keeping presentations short and snappy while pulling others into the conversation; he thought that a good Q&A time could help us achieve something similar. Committee members suggested that Cathy do a presentation about our work and ways folks can get involved, saying that she does a great job giving a warm welcome and a great overall picture of our work. The Annual Meeting could be first item on the agenda, and short as always.

### **Spring newsletter and Annual Appeal letters**

This month and next month the communications/development staff will be focused on the Newsletter and Annual Fund. We send the Annual Fund twice a year, in May and October. Members and targeted non-members receive our Annual Fund asks. We ask members to make their annual membership donation around the same we did the previous year. They receive their Annual Fund ask at the opposite time of year. We also use the Annual Fund and restricted special appeals to recruit new donors. This results in creating 6 to 10 different forms of Annual Fund letters each round. About two weeks before receiving their Annual Fund asks, our audience will receive our Newsletter. They will have received our Casco Bay Matters and Annual Meeting postcards earlier.

All Board Members have the important role of penning notes on Annual Fund letters. This is essential to our success rate with these mailings. Very soon you will receive a list of potential or current donors. Please indicate on this list who you know that you are willing to put a note on their letter. This provides an efficient way to identify the most personalized requests we can send.

### **Climate Change and Casco Bay Fund campaign**

The Case Statement has been slowed down slightly by staff's focus on Casco Bay Matters, Operating Plan/Budget work, and the end of the fiscal year. Now it is moving forward again. The text has been drafted; it is being laid out, Cathy and Will will be tweaking the design and then getting it printed. To prepare Board Members for the campaign, the June Board Meeting will include a training event where we will share talking points and practice talking about the campaign.

### **Coffee meetings**

Since October, Tuesdays at 9 AM have been a standing time for Malcolm and Cathy to have coffee with potential supporters and to deepen the relationship with those who already support us. A few Board Members have been identifying people to meet with. Malcolm requests that you recommend people you think are special and who should know more about the organization.

At the end of the meeting Malcolm shared that we should be aware of our capacity and resources and what we are taking on at any one time. We should also listen for if we reach saturation with any particular supporters or audiences. We can also continue to think about our relationships with other organizations, especially those involved with climate change, and how we can continue to share information and talking points with them.

### **Upcoming FOCB Events**

**Tues, Apr 30: Friends Appreciation and Members Annual Meeting, Harraseeket Inn, Freeport,  
5:30 – 8 pm**

**Mon, June 10: Pumpout Boat Launch, Portland Yacht Services, 100 Commercial St., Portland,  
Time TBD**