

**Friends of Casco Bay  
Community Engagement Committee  
Meeting Minutes**

Monday, September 9, 2019, 5-6:30 PM

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

In attendance

Board: Sandy Marsters (Committee Chair), Malcolm Poole, David Kaufman, Seb Milardo, Bud Higgins, Derek Pelletier, Pat Ianni, Jack Thomas, Joanie Samuelson, Ann Thayer

Staff: Cathy Ramsdell, Will Everitt, Mary Cerullo, Sarah Lyman

**Cumberland House Party Debrief, August 7**

Thank you to Jack for connecting us with Brian and Carolyn Clement! The consensus was that everyone had a good time. Attendees made deeper connections with us and their neighbors because of the weather (as we all crammed together in the house and collectively returned to the tent as the rain cleared). When everyone packed into the house it led to talking and joking. This may have generated the deep focus that attendees seemed to have for the presentation, which they loved. One guest shared that he learned a lot about what we really do; he didn't realize everything *Friends* does, even though he's lived in the neighborhood for 20 years. Jack shared that the Clements loved hosting the event.

Many members renewed through the party, and we also received new members. We raised \$10,160 in cash donations (updated, 44 gifts) related to the event thus far. Some invitees sent donations when they RSVP'd, even when sending regrets. Some donated at the event, and some afterwards. One donor sent in \$250 with his RSVP and then sent an additional \$2,500 after attending! This event will likely cost two to three times the cost of last year's event. This is due to the cost of rentals, and higher printing and postage costs. We had direct costs just over \$7,000 (updated). We know support from the event will grow, as House Party results have long legs. These events deepen our relationships and increase giving in various ways over the years following them.

While there is much that goes into planning house parties, we have a great template for them, including timelines and tasks lists. House parties are customized for the hosts and the venue. The size of the venue, the location, and if we can include a tent determines the size of the guest list and the expenses. At each event, we consider the audience as we prepare our presentation and messages. We do weigh many factors when considering house parties, including covering different locations around the Bay. The most important factor is having willing hosts.

House Parties remain an efficient way to meet with 100 people at once. Attendees hear the same message and get to chat directly with Board Members and Staff. There is a magnetism when other neighbors are involved in the events. There is something about the host and the neighbors coming together that really inspires giving. And the conversations are more genuine.

**Suggestions for Summer 2020 House party sites:**

The LaBauves have offered their home in Cape Elizabeth, across from Fort Williams on Little John Road, for an event for next year. Staff will work to get that event planned.

We are looking for an additional venue as well. If any come to mind, please let us know. The Brunswick or Harpswell area would be great. We will also keep our minds and ears open about nontraditional audience

ideas, possibly building on relationships Board Members have with executive level management at local corporations.

## **Allagash Surfboard Raffle**

Allagash Brewing, Grain Surfboards, and Neto Shapes once again teamed up to create a one-of-a-kind surfboard, which was raffled off to benefit our work. 151 people bought 599 tickets. A local surf instructor won. The raffle raised \$5,130.

## **Film Festival Update, Sat., Nov. 2**

**Board member sign up:** Sarah shared the opportunities for Board Members to take part in the event. Many Board Members have signed up, and the remaining opportunities will be shared at the September Board meeting.

**Raffle items:** We need raffle items! Will will send around the raffle donation request letter. Please consider asking 8-10 businesses you frequent to support the event by donating an item. Bringing the postcard along can be helpful. Consider gift certificates to restaurants, shirts and fleeces from your favorite stores, or rain barrels, just to name a few ideas.

**Sponsorships:** Lots of returning and some new sponsors this year. Total cash sponsorships: \$11,800. We've received an additional \$49,160 in in-kind sponsorships.

**Tickets:** 328 tickets spoken for. 255 tickets have been sold and 73 sponsor tickets have been distributed.

**Postcards & Posters:** Please distribute them widely. PDF printer friendly postcard coming via email.

## **Passive Skimmer Distribution**

The committee learned from Malcolm about the passive skimmers, which absorb oil and other pollutants in the bilge of boats. They are great for boaters and for the health of the Bay. The skimmers are made from a Smart Sponge developed by AbTech Industries. Staff asked the committee to consider: How can we use these to get boaters involved? What's the best way to leverage the opportunity? Let's generate some ideas, without getting too attached to any one idea.

The Committee discussed ways to give them out to boaters, fishermen, and yacht/boating clubs. Staff will continue to move this project forward, having it ready for next spring's boating season.

## **Volunteer Metrics**

### **Water Reporter**

**Metrics:** 184 members, 760 Posts in the watershed since launching last year

### **Bayscaping/Water Reporter Socials**

In August, at Wolfe Neck Center Agriculture & Environment, we had 4 attendees at a social that covered both BayScaping and Water Reporter. Later in August, Mary and Sarah did a similar presentation at Orr's Bailey Yacht Club for 28 attendees. Mary also did a BayScaping presentation in Portland for Sunrise Rotary. Mary left this Community Engagement Committee meeting early to give a BayScaping presentation to the Cape Elizabeth Town Council.

### **Coastal Cleanups metrics so far this year:**

18 Cleanups, 240 Participants

575 estimated lbs. of trash collected

4 additional events planned

**Storm Drain Stenciling metrics so far this year:**

4 events, 46 participants

322 storm drains stenciled

Steve Bushey is doing a Stenciling Project this month.

**Development Metrics**

Will will be doing a development update at the Board Meeting. The committee reviewed the metrics at a previous CEC meeting. Will shared that he has since updated a few items, noting what development activities Board Members are most closely involved in. He also shared a financial report Cathy created, the contributed income section from our supplemental budget (which accompanies the operating plan each year). Cathy and Will encouraged committee members to think of the development metrics as how we raise money (the effort – Will's report) and to think of the contributed income as the actual money raised (the result – the "actuals" report Cathy prepared from the supplemental schedule).

Will asked, in preparation for the Board Meeting, "Are there questions you think other board members who are not present tonight, might have? Anything to highlight for the rest of the Board? Is there anything deeper you want to know? What jumps out at you that is notable in these metrics?"

Committee members shared some ideas: including simplifying the metrics in visuals shared with the full board, agreeing with Will that pulling out stories from the data is essential, and highlighting the importance of the development database and the staff's use of it to grow our fundraising. There were also suggestions to focus on the Annual Fund and Membership metrics, since Board Members are directly involved in them, and the tradeoffs of the Calendar Island Circle.

There was also the suggestion that Will may implement in an upcoming Annual Fund, reaching out to summer residents with customized language: "We know you summer along the Bay. Remember Friends of Casco Bay is here year-round protecting this place that is special to you."

Another possible area to highlight: the percentage of Portland residents who are members is small. Maybe many live in the suburbs, but with all the expensive condos going in, it could be explored as an area to take action and grow membership. Another idea to explore: Is there an opportunity to reach visitors who come back year after year, but do not live here, such as Airbnb users.

**Climate Change and Casco Bay Campaign Update**

We are 55% of the way toward our \$1,500,000 goal: \$823,500, with 10 gifts. The average gift is \$82,350. The reception of the case statement has been very positive. We are sharing the case statement with potential donors ahead of the meetings with them. Looking ahead to the more public phase of the campaign, Cathy is considering using the case statement as part of the larger mailing we will do to wrap up the campaign, as it likely will more than pay for itself including the printing and postage costs. One person who made the large planned gift early on, after seeing the new case statement decided to make a \$50,000 additional donation in cash over the next four years. Staff were stunned!

Cathy shared how moved she has been by the generosity of the early donors. Cathy and Will are continuing to meet with the rest of the Board and other donors. We are continuing to share the message that we are here and making a difference.

The media coverage that the Gulf of Maine Research Institute received about their climate change work was discussed. You can read the Portland Press Herald Article [here](#).

They are hosting an event about it at Gulf of Maine Research Institute on Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019 from 5:15 – 7:30 pm. [More info here: https://mailchi.mp/gmri/climate-september-836417?e=aaeed15b72](https://mailchi.mp/gmri/climate-september-836417?e=aaeed15b72). This will be an opportunity to get a better understanding of what a partner in the community is working on and look for ways we can continue to do collaborative work with them.

## **Report on items that were not covered at the meeting:**

### **Newsletter/Annual Fund**

Mary has been working away on the newsletter. It will go out the second week of October and the Annual Fund will be mailed two weeks later. The Annual Report will go out later this Fall.

Board members will receive Annual Fund letters to add a note to in mid-October, and they will need to be returned to Development staff by Monday, October 21. We have volunteers coming the following morning to assemble them. All Board Members have the important role of penning notes on Annual Fund letters. This is essential to our success rate with these mailings.

### **Pumpout Boat Update**

As of August 26<sup>th</sup>, Captain Jim Splude had already pumped out 15,520 gallons. He has done 453 pumpouts with the new boat!

Committee members left the meeting saying that it is inspiring to see the work that is being done.