

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

Monday, January 6, 2020, 5-6:30 PM

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

In attendance

Board: Sandy Marsters (Committee Chair), David Kaufman, Bud Higgins, Jack Thomas, Seb Milardo, Steve Bushey, Joan Samuleson

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

## **Mary's Transition**

After 21 years, Mary Cerullo's last day on Staff will be Friday, March 27, 2020. Mary has done so much for *Friends*; we have a dedicated time to thank her. Please mark your calendar:

### **Congratulations on Your Retirement Party for Mary Cerullo**

Wednesday, March 18, 5:00 – 7:00 pm

Cumberland Club, 116 High St, Portland

There is no replacing Mary, yet a plan to transition is underway. Cathy shared that she is formulating plans; she has been working with communications staff best the make use of Mary's remaining time in the office. Cathy, Will and Mary have sorted out Mary's job description and Cathy has been making permanent and temporary assignments, while beginning to formulate a new job description to meet our needs moving forward.

It will be essential to mindfully pace the hiring process. The first 3-4 months of this year are especially packed as we continue the regular day-to-day work, transition Mary into retirement, create the operating plan and budget, continue the quiet phase of the capital campaign, prepare the public phase of the campaign, and plan and execute the biggest event in the organization's history. Due to all of this, it is likely that Cathy will not begin interviews until May, though she will likely be able to launch the search during April so that applicants can be submitting their materials. Bud mentioned that the organization has a good track record and process for hiring, especially the last few hires and that this will be important to mention at the Board Meeting. While this is an Executive Director hire, Cathy has already asked Sandy to be available for his advice and input in the process, as the position is looking like it will be focused on writing. Cathy also looks forward to sharing more about the transition through the Board Operating Plan Review process later this quarter, once the staff has further clarified things.

## **Patagonia event debrief**

Patagonia reached out to us to provide a tabling opportunity to encourage holiday shoppers to donate to Friends of Casco Bay through the Patagonia Action Works website, with gifts matched by Patagonia. Thank you to Sandy and Steve for representing us at this event and maintaining our great relationship with Patagonia in Freeport. Two other volunteers, Leslie Hallock and Jodi Breau, joined them at the store on Sunday, December 15<sup>th</sup>. The store was bustling with focused shoppers who were not particularly interested in being cornered, yet this partnership with Patagonia raised \$3,700, which may all be eligible for the matching funds. Leslie was bold and fantastic, working closely with Steve. While this was a challenging event, it was great to connect with the Patagonia staff. Mike, the Store Manager, was particularly great, taking time to make announcements and promote the opportunity. Thanks to Sandy for bringing his iPad and allowing for on-site donations.

## **Donor Appreciation event debrief**

This was a very good event. The presentations were great, succinct, and engaging. The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Film was great as well.

## **30th Anniversary Event, Wed., April 29, 2020, 5-8 pm, Ocean Gateway**

Thanks to the generative discussion during the last Community Engagement Committee meeting, the program is falling into place. Save the date cards were distributed.

Location: Ocean Gateway, off Commercial Street, Portland

Date: April 29, 2020

Caterer: Blue Elephant

Tech: Headlight Audio Video

### **Draft Program:**

- Cathy will be leading us as we celebrate 30 years of achievements and the launch of the public phase of the Climate Change and Casco Bay Fund campaign.
- We will host a pre-event Members Annual Meeting, followed by a reception, the program, and then more reception time.
- During the reception, a slide show will be running on two large screens, including 1-2 sentence accolades from non board/staff colleagues attesting to the value of our work.
- Program elements:
  - Governor Janet Mills has been invited to speak
  - Videos from congressionals will be shown: Senator King, Senator Collins, and Representative Pingree
  - Reiche Community School choir will perform one or two environmental songs
  - Ivy will create connection among the attendees with an interactive portion of the event
  - 4-minute 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary film by Knack Factory
  - Gulf of Maine poet Gary Lawless will do a reading
  - Cathy will talk about building on 30 years and our plans for the next 10, to launch public phase of campaign

Many Board Members noted that Cathy's message is the most important part of the event and must be emphasized. The series of mailings related to the event, including the invitation, will also set expectations.

### **Additional details:**

- We will be asking attendees to make a donation in lieu of an admission fee with a suggested donation of \$50.
- Cash bar and heavy hors d'oeuvres.
- The invitation to this event and any mailing post event will be part and parcel of the public launch of the Climate Change and Casco Bay Fund campaign.
- The invitation will include an invite to the Annual Meeting portion of the evening, which will run before the celebration begins.
- We expect 200-400 people.
- Campaign will help pay for the costs.

### **Ways we will promote the event:**

- With the save the date cards, you may invite anyone who enjoys or cares about Casco Bay to attend – tell them we need their email address or they need to watch our website closely to gain admission before it sells out
- Email invitations
- Social media
- Our Newsletter will be sent before the event and will promote the event and cover the campaign

- Mailed invitations will be an integrated part of the fundraising for the public phase of the capital campaign. Those invited will be on the mailing list for the campaign. We hope drop the campaign mailing into the mail the day of or the day after the event.
- Joanie offered to reach out about getting Cathy on 207 a week or so before the event
- Any other ideas for promoting the event, please reach out to Will

#### Testimonials:

During the reception, a running slideshow will share our history and successes, including various photos and testimonials from some of our partners and supporters. Each testimonial will be a short (1-2 sentence) statement in support of our work and a headshot of the person. The folks on the list are a rich tapestry representing our 30 years. Sandy, Seb, Bud, and Malcolm have begun collecting the quotes. Joanie, Steve, David, and Jack offered to help with reach out to others. Bud shared that it is rewarding to connect with these folks. These quotes will be useful to us in many ways in the coming year, and beyond.

Bud also mentioned that the staff preparation and planning for the event has been impressive.

Ahead of the event, staff will provide Board Members with talking points and suggested ways to talk about the campaign that feel inspiring.

#### **Volunteer thank you letters**

A quick comment by Malcolm at the November Community Engagement Committee meeting led Cathy and Sarah to devise a plan to send thank you letters to each of the 470 volunteers who gave their time this year. The project took over 22 hours of staff time, longer than expected. A system is now in place to continue this in future years. Sarah enjoyed being able to share our appreciation in this way and mentioned that if Board Members are interested, next year they could share their appreciation to the volunteers by writing thank you notes on these letters. Board Members quickly agreed to take part. Thank you!

The reason we were able to send very customized letters is because of the Raiser's Edge Database and how Sara, Sarah, and Will implement it. We are tracking the activity of each volunteer and have a lot more people doing more lower-involvement-threshold activities. Water Reporter, specifically, is a perfect fit with our work on Climate Change.

#### **Additional agenda item: An Update from David on his discussion with Television Station WMTW Channel 8.**

WMTW Staff met internally and came back to David with a strong interest in a multi-staged campaign with us. David plans to meet with them one more time before inviting Friends of Casco Bay Staff to join.

WMTW is hoping that we would be open to having a sponsor, which we would approve, pay for the airtime as they are tight on availability this year due to the election and related ads. Cathy inquired about their interest to wait until after the election or even 2021, since their time would be less tied up with elections and we would have more capacity. Board Members encouraged us to explore potential sponsors with WMTW and see if any are a good fit.