

Friends of Casco Bay  
Community Engagement Committee  
Minutes  
Monday, August 3, 5-6:00 PM via Zoom

Attendees:

Board: Seb Milardo (Committee Chair), Sandy Marsters, Malcolm Poole, Joanie Samuelson

Staff: Cathy Ramsdell, Will Everitt, Sara Biron

### **Debrief of Celebrating Water event, July 27, 2020**

- What worked?

Terrific event: refreshing and different! It was a pleasure to participate in. Seb hosted guests to watch the event. Everyone liked the film, the poem, and the interaction between Cathy and Gary Lawless. It conveyed something deeper than metrics and science, showed a more emotional side of our organization. Joanie remarked that, "It was just what our brains needed." The age distribution and the geographic distribution of the event was tremendous, from young people to old, from Maine to Florida to Ireland. Gary sent out hundreds of emails to his followers about the event. The video has been viewed online 65 times so far.

- What could have been better?

Cathy admitted to a verbal slip, mentioning "the other" Portland as being in Washington and not Oregon. While it is hard on a Zoom meeting to judge peoples' reactions to the event, to read the audience, during this event there was a LOT of engagement via chat, one great way to judge reactions. There were very few questions during the Q&A session.

### **Blackbaud security breach**

Blackbaud, our database vender, had a security breach this spring. We were only just informed about the breach. The good news is that no credit card or bank info was stolen. Hackers got access to our database constituents' philanthropic and contact information. The timing could not be worse for us, given the public launch of our campaign. Ethically, we need to communicate this with our supporters. Malcolm encouraged us to be factual and to get information out quickly. Seb commented that it is so common. This is part of our modern world.

### **Public Launch of Climate Change and Casco Bay Fund**

We dropped 7,200 packages in the mail as well as sent out a video via email and social media announcing the campaign. The mailing is not just about raising money, but raising our visibility and our messaging in the community. The message is that we are here for the long haul. We have received 18 donations since our event. Malcolm shared that Frank Strout walked up to him and said he was blown away by the mailing. Frank is a straight shooter, so that is high praise. Will encouraged Board members to share social media and emails with their circles. Cathy and Will will review lists to continue to have meetings with our supporters.

### **Water Reporter update**

We continue to get Water Reporter recruits (including Malcolm!). Many volunteers are reporting green slime, eelgrass, sea level rise. This continues to be a meaningful way to volunteer even as the pandemic continues. Ivy relies on these reports. This is a perfect way to engage our volunteers.

### **Events**

- Maine Outdoor Film Festival (August 2) accepted our Knack Factory film and showed it on August 2.

- We submitted our film to the Wild & Scenic Film Festival (home festival in California). We will find out later this year whether the film was officially accepted.
- Greendrinks, August 11, 5-5:30: We will host a Facebook live Greendrinks event.
- Royal River Conservation Trust Conservation Champion Award, August 13, 4:30-7 p.m.: Cathy and Friends of Casco Bay are being given Conservation Champion Awards. Cathy will say a few words at the event. We will look for ways to build visibility from this. Board members are welcome to attend. Up to 100 people can attend the event.

### **Bailey Island tragedy**

The great white shark attack was a tragedy. There are more fish and seals coming in close to shore, and so are the great whites. We have always had great whites in the Gulf of Maine; their presence is NOT due to climate change/temperature.

### **Development Metrics**

Will shared the development metrics packet in advance of a development presentation at a fall Board Meeting. Will finds it helpful to have a conversation about what he is seeing in the data with this committee to prepare. He also invited anyone to email him with any additional thoughts or questions as they come to mind after the meeting.

Please note: The most recent data is for the last fiscal year, FY20 (April 1, 2019 through March 31, 2020).

Will walked everyone through the packet. For each board meeting, board members receive a financial report from Cathy; those numbers are about how much money we received from what sources (Individual, Foundation, Government, Corporate, etc.) for our work this year (and for our capital needs). Development metrics are about how we raised that money, the efforts, if you will (Membership, Annual Fund, etc.). The first page is about the number of gifts we receive, the second is about the size of the gifts received from various sources. The third is an in-depth look at the Annual Fund, and the fourth lists the number of donor households in each community around the Bay and beyond. Finally, Will lists notes from FY08 to FY20, on interesting historical events related to giving and our history to keep in mind as we review these numbers.

Our overall individual (household) donors bounced back up after a small dip the year before. We had the highest number of households give to us ever. Our average gift size is up, too, but that is largely due to the large gifts we received for the Climate Change and Casco Bay Fund.

Our renewal rate also increased over the previous year, to 72%, which is remarkable in the development world. Continuing to recruit new donors is essential to keeping this renewal rate up. New supporters tend to join us through the Annual Fund or House Parties, so Board Members' work around these efforts are essential. Larger house parties, like the one held in Cumberland last year, allowed us to reach more people even if they do not attend the event.

### **September meeting time**

Due to our next meeting time falling on Labor Day, Cathy suggested having CEC meeting on Wednesday, September 9. The Committee agreed.