

Friends of Casco Bay Community Engagement Committee meeting minutes

Monday, June 1, 2020, 5-6:30 PM, via Zoom Meeting

In attendance

Board: Committee Chair Sandy Marsters, Stephen Bushey, Pat Ianni, Seb Milardo, David Kauffman, Bud Higgins, Malcolm Poole

Staff: Cathy Ramsdell, Will Everitt, Sarah Lyman, Sara Biron

New developments in communications:

Email situation

Will apologized to the Board for the email that was sent using the offensive term “whitelist.” Safer language exists, specifically “safelist”. Will sent an apology email to our entire list. He received more than 85 responses back--which is a lot! Almost half were from people who said no need to apologize, keep up the good work. Eight people responded that we should not have given into “PC” culture and should not have apologized. It is the love of Casco Bay that brings a lot of different people to support this organization.

Board Members shared a lot of support for how staff, especially Will, handled this honest mistake. It was authentic, timely, very well handled, and opened the eyes of some Board Member, too. This was a learning experience for staff and many others. Jack commended Will for how he handled an unusual mistake. He added: So few people are willing to stand up and say they make a mistake. Do not beat yourself up. I am proud you handled it well and took ownership. We all have blundered. Owning up to it is the best thing you can do.

The question of Board diversity arose and Board Members will consider this priority in future discussions of bringing on new Board Members. One goal may be for the Board demographics to reflect those of our larger audience and community.

Lion's Mane Jellyfish Social Media Posts

We have received a huge response to the image of the 5 ft diameter jellyfish with Nancy Heslton, former Board Member Jeff Clement's wife, in the background. 15,000 people saw the post. A typical post for us is 300. The Weather Channel asked for permission to share it and credit us.

Celebrating 30 Years and Members Annual Meeting

Tuesday, June 16, 5 PM - 5:45 PM

The invitation to the event will go out this week. This will fulfill our requirement as a membership organization to hold an Annual Meeting. The details of the event are outlined here:

<https://www.cascobay.org/friends-of-casco-bays-2020-members-annual-meeting/>

Cathy will Host with Malcolm as Co-Host. The slideshow of testimonials Board Members collected will be shared before the event begins. Then Cathy will introduce films from the Congressionals: Pingree, King, and Collins. Malcolm will run the Annual Meeting, including voting through the poll function, and Cathy will keynote with remarks about the past 30 years and the decade ahead. The event will close with a brief Q&A session.

Staff are planning another event for late July or early August to share the 30th Anniversary Film and a conversation with Poet Gary Lawless, as he shares his poem.

Our online events have been successful in part because we have been engaging attendees right away by inviting them to use chat and poll early in the event.

Board Members shared their idea for questions we could ask when engaging folks.

What is your favorite place on Casco Bay?

How do you interact with Casco Bay?

What do you appreciate or admire about Friends of Casco Bay?

Where was your first memory of Casco Bay made?

What have you done personally to improve Casco Bay?

Where is the warmest swimming hole in Casco Bay?

When you think about Casco Bay what do you think of? What springs to mind when you think of Casco Bay? - Could be one word answer.

What is your favorite Island in Casco Bay?

What has been your most exciting find in Casco Bay?

In what ways have you helped Casco Bay?

Note: to keep it short we could always add “in as few words as possible”.

Side note: Joanie made a book recommendation, *The Summer Book* by Tove Jansson

Future events in the planning stages:

In light of the pandemic and physical distancing, Staff reassessed all the events planned for FY21 and rearranged the sequence and timeline for doing these events. For example, we were not planning to do a Casco Bay Matters Event until the Fall, however we moved that up and held it in the spring.

Water Reporter trainings: Join us Wednesday, June 3, at Noon

Board Member role: please be ready to ask questions.

Details on the event to premier our film and Gary Lawless’s poem is forthcoming, as is additional information on Casco Bay Matters events on Science and Water Reporter.

Discussion: What to expect this summer

How our work may be different this summer

The work we had planned for the summer is different, however a lot of the operating plan continues. We will implement the vast majority of our operating plan, but how we will do our work is different.

We are still collecting data. The Continuous Monitoring Station is collecting data hourly. In addition to maintaining that program, Mike is collecting data at 22 sites around the Bay by boat and truck through the Seasonal Sampling work.

Advocacy work continues, too. Cathy is still involved in the South Portland Fertilizer Ordinance Meetings and One Climate Future efforts. Ivy has been continuing her work, especially the Coastal and Marine working group of the Climate Council work by phone and video conferences.

Our Volunteer Water Reporters are recording more observations than ever.

Staff collaborate more than ever which creates continuity to the work.

How Board members can continue to be involved

Cathy shared the Board, Executive, and Community Engagement Committee Meetings, even their online formats, are very helpful to her and staff.

Board Members discussed the ways they plan to remain involved this summer. Traditionally a lot of Board support came through events. In some ways, it is not a different system, just supporting, attending and encouraging the attendance of friends in our online events. Two upcoming examples are the Water Reporter training and Annual Meeting.

Donor meetings for *friends* recruitment is in suspension mode. Board members offered to continue those and calls to follow up on asks to support the Climate Change and Casco Bay Fund, when the timing is right. That may be the Fall.

Seb suggested possibly collective readings on certain topics and then discussing those, for example something on eelgrass being the ocean's canary in the coal mine. Pat suggested the book *Seaweed Chronicles*, for better understanding of eelgrass. Board members are welcome to organize that sort of thing.

Staff encourage your involvement. Stay active with Water Reporter. Let Cathy know if you see something of interest on the Bay. We will continue to hold these meetings and encourage you to attend, especially if you are feeling disconnected.