

**Friends of Casco Bay
Board Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 15, 2020 online via Zoom**

Attendance:

Board: Board President Sandy Marsters, Chair, Stephen Bushey, Mark Green, Bud Higgins, Pat Ianni, David Kaufman, Seb Milardo, Malcolm Poole, Jack Thomas

Staff: Sara Biron, Mike Doan, Will Everitt, Ivy Frignoca, Sarah Lyman, Cathy Ramsdell

Minute for the Bay: Sandy shared how much solace he took in the Bay this summer: seeing dolphins, incredible dances of the sturgeon, eagles, huge schools of bait fish.

Board Consent Package *Action Item*

Motion: The minutes and financials were accepted as presented: PASSED. Jack shared that we are in good financial shape given the pandemic.

Community Engagement Committee *Seb Milardo, Chair*

Seb updated the Board on CEC discussions and topics. We are planning a Casco Bay Matters event on October 21 on the two biggest threats to the Bay: climate change and stormwater pollution, how these issues are related, and what we can do. Will shared development metrics. Sarah shared communications metrics, and we will continue to explore that data. We did not get to debrief our attendance at the Royal River Conservation Trust event when they gave Friends of Casco Bay and Cathy "Conservation Champion Awards." It was great to see us commended and recognized by another organization; very meaningful, like a "peer review" from a scientific point of view! At our next CEC meeting we will debrief how we are holding the meetings: What is working? What is not? We want that feedback. Seb also touched on the July and August events. The consensus was our "Celebrating Water" event was moving and well organized. We discussed ceasing the pumpout program for the season, and we have had no real negative consequences to that so far.

Pumpout Committee *Malcolm Poole, chair of Pumpout Taskforce*

The committee met three times this summer. The report speaks for itself. The general consensus was that the pros of the pumpout program outweigh the cons and the potential of the program outweighs the cons. There will still be a lot of work to figuring out how to operate given the pandemic and what changes we may want to make to the program in the future. Cathy will explore options with staff to bring back to the committee.

Development Metrics *Will Everitt, Communications and Development Director*

Will shared our development data from the last fiscal year, FY20 (April 1, 2019 through March 31, 2020). We had the highest number of households give to us ever. Our average gift size was up, too, largely due to large gifts received for the Climate Change and Casco Bay Fund. Our renewal rate, at 72%, was excellent; the benchmark for renewal is 55-65%.

Will shared that the number of individuals giving to us increased in spite of the changes to the tax code and all the concerns around that. The growth is a result of our Cumberland house party, annual fund mailings, and acquisition mailings to waterfront property owners. Corporate giving is still decreasing.

Casco Baykeeper Update *Casco Baykeeper Ivy Frignoca*

MS4 permit. The permit will be delayed and will not go into effect until 2022. This is disappointing news. DEP is so short staffed they cannot issue the permit. This is a delayed gratification story.

Integrated Plan for Portland. The Plan would pull together under one plan all the permits pertaining to Portland and Portland Water District's Clean Water Act permits, including all consent decrees. We made comments on the Integrated Plan and due to our comments, the City is planning to add into the plan more monitoring of pollution. We think this is a good plan.

Maine Climate Council. In June, all the working groups presented their strategies to the Maine Climate Council. The Council spent the summer trying to get feedback from Mainers through social media and other online ways, but we have heard that they did not provide enough ways for people to give meaningful feedback. So Ivy worked with leaders of the Coastal and Marine Working Group to host small, targeted, in-person meetings to feedback on strategies. Ivy stressed the importance of collecting data and how important it is to update Maine laws with regard to climate change. For example, we need to update stormwater pollution, shoreline zoning, septic rules, and other regulations. Next week, we will send an action alert to our members on this issue.

Seb expressed skepticism about DEP not having enough staff for the MS4 permit. Ivy shared the logistical problems DEP has with not enough funding and not enough staff. Seb also asked about Long Creek. We have good news the EPA is meeting with the DEP about rewriting the Long Creek permit to have clear, measurable goals for water quality. Mark Green shared how frustrating it is to grow shellfish in Maine, although it is great to work with DMR staff.

Executive Director Update, *Cathy Ramsdell*

Campaign update: We are bumping \$1.4 m of the campaign! We are continuing to meet with significant donors. We have received gifts from \$5 to \$10,000 during the public phase and have had more than 250 donations. We are continuing to do the work we would have done in the Spring as best we can, were it not for the pandemic.

The campaign will allow us to put in two more Continuous Monitoring Stations. The data from our one station is being used in our advocacy, and we are engaging the community in the data more than ever before. This is powerful work. Our Casco Bay Matters event in October will cover the power of these data..

It has been a fluky summer with incredible drought and incredible temperatures. You will see this in our data.

Malcolm mentioned the CARES Act. Cathy was tapped by the Maine Association of Nonprofits and the state to help figure out what data the state should collect for use of recovery funds by nonprofits. We are not going to participate because our financial position is not precarious enough.

Cathy has been sitting on the South Portland Fertilizer Ordinance Working Group appointed by the South Portland City Council. It has been a well-run process over the past year plus. The Task Force has been coordinated by South Portland's Sustainability Coordinator, Julie Rosenbach. Tonight Cathy will participate in a workshop with the South Portland City Council about the ordinance. Cathy is excited to turn over the draft ordinance to the City Council.

It has been a good summer. It is incredible how much of our work has continued despite all that has happened. We have thoughtfully rolled our public events into online zoom events in various forms and have kept rolling. This fall we will likely host three more events: Casco Bay Matters in October, another 30th anniversary event in November, and an online Donor Appreciation Event to provide good news to our donors.

Our office space search is having a re-think given COVID. Our needs may have changed.