



Consent Agenda Items for Review
for Tuesday, April 16, 2024 Board Meeting

Minutes for Friends of Casco Bay
Minutes — Board of Directors Meeting
In person at GMRI and via Zoom
Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Attendees: Board: Sandy Marsters, President, Samantha Bengs, Steve Bushey, Nathan Davis, Ellen Grant, Mark Green, Pat Ianni, David Kaufman, Anthony Moffa, Seb Milardo, Kirsten Piacentini, and Fiona Wilson

Staff: Mike Doan, Will Everitt, Ivy Frignoca, Sarah Lyman, Sara Freshley, and Meghan Vigeant

Welcome

President Sandy Marsters asked everyone: *What in the Operating Plan excites you the most?*

Minute for the Bay: several board members shared their observations of erosion from the January storms. Sam Bengs reported seeing two sturgeons and some ospreys on the Bay recently.

Update on Year-End Projections – Executive Director Will Everitt

We were under budget on expenses and had a strong year for Individual and Foundation giving. There was a discussion about last year's strong fundraising efforts and several factors that contributed to that success. We strategically reached out to our middle tier of donors. Sarah Lyman often makes the initial connection and Will sets up meetings with the donors. Susan and Sarah organize our membership asks very efficiently. Will emphasized that our fundraising letters are signed by board members, a personal touch which makes a big difference too. We are trying to live true to our name: *Friends* of Casco Bay.

Action Item: Acceptance of Consent Agenda

Moved by: Pat Ianni, seconded by Seb Milardo: Passed unanimously

Update on Board Officers to be voted on at May meeting - Vice President Kirsten Piacentini and President Sandy Marsters

The slate as projected includes Kirsten as President, Ellen as Vice President, and Malcolm and Pat continuing their roles as Treasurer and Clerk respectively. Ellen's role as Vice President should be considered interim because under ideal conditions, our Vice President would be preparing to move into the president's role, which Ellen does not want to do. So Ellen will take on the VP role and we will look for someone to fill her shoes in the coming year. Although not a board officer, Fiona has graciously agreed to chair the CEC meetings once Kirsten is elected President.

Executive Director Report: A look back on FY24 – Executive Director Will Everitt

Will shared a document listing our accomplishments and progress from last year's Y24 Operating

Plan goals and actions (attached below). Overall, we have done what we set out to do, made positive strides on some goals, and managed unforeseen challenges along the way. Some highlights from the list:

- A challenge overcome: Despite not knowing that we would be losing our staff writer, we created timely data presentation and outreach products and online events working with communications staff.
- Our science work is consistent. We maintained Three Continuous Monitoring Stations and conducted Year 31 of Seasonal Sampling, which gives us a good look at the health of the Bay over the years.
- We organized the Maine Ocean Climate Collaborative to improve statewide ocean acidification data collection and climate change policy to ensure implementation of marine elements of Maine’s climate action plan.
- We have taken a step forward on improving Maine’s Stormwater Rules (Chapter 500): Ivy was appointed to the State’s steering committee to revise the rules. We are very proud that DEP asked us to be on the steering committee. When we appealed the MS4 decision (twice!) and won (twice!) we did it in such a way that they had a positive and respectful experience with us and decided to invite Ivy to serve on their steering committee. It’s a big deal for us to have a voice on that committee.
- Our PFAS work has recently garnered a lot of media attention.
- The Tech Team renamed themselves the Sensor Squad and are doing exciting work with the Maine Ocean Climate Collaborative to explore new sensor technology and improve our quality assurance.
- We didn’t hit every goal, for example:
 - We planned to grow the number of Water Reporters and the quality of their posts. But the app was defective and discontinued. We pivoted to focus on building a new app. Despite this setback, more than 100 Water Reporters attended training events with us.
 - We planned on developing a family leave policy. Unfortunately, we didn’t predict how much time it would take to prepare for the office move.
- We successfully expanded our reach into the watershed and are working with partner organizations above the head of tide. We are also working with organizations we haven’t historically worked with in the past such as Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition and Wabanaki REACH.
- We are moving into a new office tomorrow!

Discussion of the FY25 Operating Plan – *Executive Director Will Everitt*

Will shared a short overview of the plan (see Executive Summary, p.3 of the Operating Plan), highlighting these aspects:

- Eelgrass pilot project
- Coastal and Marine Working Group of the Maine Climate Council
- New Water Reporter app
- Revising Maine's stormwater laws (ch 500)
- MS4 permit
- Sensor Squad work
- Asking some of our Water Reporters to repeatedly visit assigned sites
- Expanding our community engagement with new partner orgs
- Making our science more accessible and writing at an 8th grade reading level
- A new office
- Implementing our EJ plan and training with Cross Cultural Community Service
- Fundraising: the budget calls for paying for ourselves this year
- Governance and recruitment work: in FY24, the board recruited differently than in past years resulting in five new awesome board members; we will continue to improve our recruitment work

Questions, comments, and concerns about the FY25 Operating Plan:

- There was a discussion on the increased budget goal for individual donations, moving from \$590K to \$650K, and on our foundation proposals. Will and Sarah shared that this is a doable goal.
- We are seeking to gain more donors at the \$1,000 level. We look for something called "indicator gifts." Example: a new donor whom we never met with before sends us \$250, this could indicate they have a capacity to give a larger gift. We are prioritizing these, giving some of these donors more of our personal attention and asking if they would be willing to give a larger donation.
- During a capital campaign, we often focus on asking donors for multi-year commitments.
- This year, our goal is to send out 100 foundation proposals. Thanks to the Operating plan, we are able to write boilerplate foundation proposals quickly. Statistically, foundations only fund 11% of the proposal they receive. Some applications are a long shot, but it's worth it because some do come through, and for not much additive work.
- There was a question about reserves in case we do not meet our fundraising goals. We do have reserves to draw on. Also, our four funds at Maine Community Foundation are spendable, which could also serve as rainy day funds. This helps to diversify our portfolio.
- There was concern expressed that the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase of 3.2% for some staff and only 1.5% for other staff does not match the increases in inflation. Will clarified that the 1.5% increase was for our highest paid staff (Will and Ivy), while the 3.2% applied to the rest of the staff. In the past two years, COLA has increased 14% across all staff, creating a widened and unsustainable gap between our highest paid

staff and the rest of the staff. The difference in FY25's COLA increases aims to be more fair to our staff, and is essentially the same increase in real dollars for Will and Ivy as it is for our lowest paid staff. We are also aiming for a break-even budget, which this helps us achieve.

- Kirsten asked a clarifying question for Mike about the monitoring equipment. Last year, there was a concern about the efficacy of the gear, but now you're saying we don't need new equipment. Mike explained that we were using two different sets of monitoring equipment: YSI Data Sondes and PCO₂ sensors. We are discontinuing using the PCO₂ sensors because through our Sensor Squad work, we have found them to be not very accurate. We are keeping the sondes, which provides accurate data. We are collecting Total Alkalinity grab samples, which are very accurate and help us calculate the ocean acidification parameters the PCO₂ sensor data used to allow us to calculate. Essentially, we have replaced that sensor by getting a water sample and sending it to a lab. We have reviewed other options, but nothing matched our price point, needs, precision, and logistics.
- The data sondes will also allow us to eventually add telemetry, sharing the data in real time.

There was a discussion on the risks and challenges in the operating plan – *What scares you?* – as well as how the board can help. Risks and Challenges:

- While Will and Sarah aren't much phased by fundraising (Will's comment, "You're walking around picking up checks with people who have a smile on their face" garnered some surprised reactions and chuckles from the board.), every year the budget moves into uncharted territory.
- Advocacy is an area where we have limited control. The DEP may not like our preferred stormwater recommendations. There is no guarantee the legislature will pass climate policy.

Ways the board can help:

- Volunteer to sign fundraising letters.
- Attend our events and invite friends, family, spouses to our house parties, etc. This is how we grow our membership.

There was a discussion about leadership and knowing when to add staff.

- Adding more staff leads to an increase in the budget. It sometimes requires hiring more development staff to help fund the new position(s).
- Sandy gave a strong endorsement of Will's leadership and understanding of staff needs.
- Burnout is a huge risk in this sector and our organization encourages our staff to use their earned time off. Will spoke of the redundancies and backups built into our staffing to handle tasks such as communications, science, advocacy, legal work, strategic planning, and database.

Board members asked about wish list items and dream-team staffing additions.

- The current eelgrass project is a pilot project and could be scaled up.
- There will be further discussion of our wish lists during the capital campaign process.

Action Item: *Vote on accepting the FY25 Operating Plan and the Budget that supports it*

Moved by: Seb Milardo, seconded by Steve Bushey and Anthony Moffa: Passed unanimously

Discussion of a process to brainstorm our next capital campaign *Executive Director Will Everitt*

Our Strategic Plan calls for launching a capital campaign in this 5-year cycle. Will asked the board how they would like that process to go (and to hold off brainstorming ideas for the capital campaign). Some options:

- Staff could bring ideas to the Board in the fall.
- We could run ideas through the Community Engagement Committee (CEC), Executive Committee, or an ad hoc committee that meets a few times over the summer.

The Board had questions about the mechanics of capital campaigns. Will shared that generally our goal is to raise 80% in a silent phase, meeting with donors before announcing the campaign publicly. Once we've reached 80%, we announce it to the public, allowing numerous smaller donations to raise the remainder. We have had three previous capital campaigns, all for specific requests. The Baykeeping Fund, to support having an advocate for the Bay, the Baykeeper Boats Fund, allowing us to buy a boat and keep up our fleet's maintenance. Our more recent campaign, "Climate Change and Casco Bay Fund," which some donors are just finishing up their commitments on, was for \$1.5 million.

The board asked Will to share some of the specific ideas in consideration for the next capital campaign:

- Greening our organization: an EV instead of a gas-powered truck, green power for our office, retrofitting our boat.
- Adding a full time Casco Bay Riverkeeper to our staff, someone to advocate for the rivers and freshwater in our watershed.

Will emphasized that these are just examples. We have not vetted any ideas, which is why we are having this discussion on how we want to vet ideas.

Kirsten noted something she learned from Sarah Lyman during CEC meetings: after a capital campaign, there is often an uptick in donations to regular fundraising efforts.

There was a discussion about how the board can help provide fresh, outside insight, and have more capacity to see the bigger picture. There is an advantage to having both groups, staff and board, participate in brainstorming ideas for a capital campaign. Ultimately, the consensus was

that staff should bring ideas forward to the board, perhaps in the fall. In the meantime, board are encouraged to think about ideas.

Baykeeping Update: The Maine Climate Council Process *Casco Baykeeper Ivy Frignoca*
Ivy shared a briefing from the Science and Technical subcommittee presentation at the Maine Climate Council, which informs actions in Maine's Climate Action Plan. She shared factoids about increases in air temperature, precipitation, sea level rise, and ocean acidification.

Ivy shared her appreciation for what Dr. Susie Arnold, a valued colleague at Island Institute who has worked with us on ocean acidification, said at the end of the science presentation about the **science of hope**. Social scientists were invited to talk about the science of hope at Island Institute. She noted that action gives people agency, setting goals is empowering, and providing pathways to achieve the goals provides hope. Expanding on this discussion, Fiona recommended the book: [*All We Can Save*](#), an anthology of writing by “women at the forefront of the climate movement who are harnessing truth, courage, and solutions to lead humanity forward.” Will and Sandy heard Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, an editor of that anthology, speak at last year's Evening for the Environment event.

Ivy reported on the Climate Council's process. For this two-year cycle, Council members and Working Groups have been asked to look at existing recommendations and to suggest if new actions are required. The Coastal and Marine Working Group that Ivy serves on is divided into subcommittees: monitoring, fisheries, working waterfront, etc. We are adding in equity goals, focusing on protecting marine environment, promoting nature-based solutions, identifying and supporting lab capacity, adequate funding, adding water quality and ocean acidification monitoring to these recommendations, more baseline data for coastal resilience, mapping to minimize conflicts in permitting and siting decisions, cost/benefit analysis (ie. offshore wind), infrastructure upgrades, clean waterfront, and identifying the next steps. Ivy is pleased by the cohesiveness of the working group. She also emphasized how the January storms have provided us with a spotlight on the needs of the marine environment. We are hoping to take advantage of this moment while we have this administration.

Questions, clarifications, concerns, comments

Steve asked if the development staff have seen the results of our requests to contributors to up their donations. Was that effective? Sarah Lyman said we will talk more in depth about development metrics at the next board meeting.

Sandy adjourned the meeting at 7:25 pm.

Did we accomplish what we said we would do in our FY24 Operating Plan?

Legend:

✓: We accomplished this goal to the extent possible in FY24.

↔: We made progress toward this goal and there is more work to do.

✗: We did not accomplish this goal.

Strategic plan goal #1: Tracking and addressing climate change

- ✓ We maintained Three Continuous Monitoring Stations and conducted Year 31 of Seasonal Sampling
- ✓ We created timely data presentation and outreach products and online events working with communications staff [to some degree this was affected by the loss of our Staff Writer part way through the year]. We developed at least quarterly science stories.
- ✓ Worked on policies to ensure responsible development of offshore wind (through federal, state, and local processes) and policies to reduce pollution from transportation, Maine's largest source of carbon dioxide, through Environmental Priorities Coalition's state and regional transportation advocacy.
- ✓ We organized Maine Ocean Climate Collaborative to improve statewide ocean acidification data collection and climate change policy to ensure implementation of marine elements of Maine's climate action plan.
- ✓ The Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) appointed Ivy to the advisory group overseeing development of regional plans to identify shovel-ready nature-based solutions plans to coastal flooding. We connected GPCOG with data and partners and helped broaden their focus to include salt marsh erosion, coastal erosion, and sea level rise. We also participated in a tour of living shoreline pilot projects on Casco Bay islands with GPCOG.
- ↔ Worked with Town of Brunswick on local response to changing conditions—we have given them a lot of advice and were a part of two joint funding proposals to help the town launch its own monitoring program but neither were funded. This work is ongoing.
- ✓ We trained and worked with Water Reporters to post observations of a changing Casco Bay. More than 100 Water Reporters attended training events with us.

Strategic plan goal #2: Stormwater and nitrogen pollution and emerging issues

- ✓ Worked with Bigelow Laboratory to collect PFAS data in Casco Bay. We will continue to collect PFAS data this year and perhaps next for a better understanding of sources of PFAS in the Bay.
- ✓ We supported Nitrogen Criteria for Casco Bay, meeting with the DEP to discuss nitrogen issues and sharing a well-received memo on our research toward nitrogen criteria. This work is ongoing.
- ✓ We advocated to improve Maine's Stormwater Rules (Chapter 500): Ivy was appointed to the State's steering committee to revise the rules. The steering committee did not start meeting until late 2023 and will issue its recommendations in mid 2024. This work is ongoing.
- ✓ We continued to work to implement MS4 General Permit and won a successful appeal to the Board of Environmental Protection to ensue appropriate Low Impact Development Ordinance language.

Strategic plan goal #3: Improve how we collect data and how we measure the health of Casco Bay

- ✓ Worked with "Tech Team" [now known as the Sensor Squad] of the Maine Ocean Climate Collaborative to explore new sensor technology

⇔ Begin using WRDB database for better data management [we have started to use this tool but are still evolving our use of it]

✓ We overhauled our Quality Assurance Project Plan [our draft is now in the hands of the EPA for approval].

⇔ We planned to grow the number of volunteers in Water Reporter program and increase the number and quality of the posts. Numerically, this work was hampered by the sunseting of the old app. We refocused our work on building out a new, improved Water Reporter app. Stay tuned for its launch this spring.

Strategic plan goal #4: Expanding outreach to be more representative

✓ Continued using environmental justice lens to ensure those affected by pollution and issues have their voices heard in the decision-making processes. This work is ongoing.

✓ We facilitated a network of river organizations to work together toward shared goals. This work led to a big win on the Presumpscot (a 4-year moratorium on new discharges!). This work is ongoing and our work has evolved to have one network for the Presumpscot and another focused on the Royal River.

✓ Senior staff met with groups lead by and serving historically underrepresented and marginalized communities in our watershed. We joined the Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition as they have begun work on climate issues and joined the Wabanaki Alliance. We began working with Cross Cultural Community Services to implement our EJDEI plans.

✘ We aimed to write stories/analysis to 8th grade reading levels. While we did track our readability early in the year (bringing our reading level down from college level to high school level), losing a staffer hampered our focus on this effort. This work is planned for FY25.

⇔ We had the goal of increasing media outreach on our issues and work. We will likely end the year with a similar number of media hits as last year as the Executive Director, Program Team, and Communications and Development Teams all picked up communications work once we were one team member down.

⇔ We began a nascent effort to engage current members to have next generation involved (outreach to families). We did this primarily through individual donor meetings. This work is evolving and continuing.

Strategic plan goal #5: Evolve and Grow

✓ We organized inclusive and family-oriented events, including We Are Water, our Members Annual Meeting. This effort is a work in progress.

✓ We grew our budget by meeting and exceed our annual budget goals to meet cost of living increases. Our Individual Giving and Foundation income line items were particularly strong this year.

✓ We found a new office with adequate space, including needed larger lab space

✘ We did not develop a family leave policy as the Executive Director spent time covering communications work and working on the new office. This work is planned for FY25.

✓ We support the Board in its equity work, including discussions on what kind of expertise, experience, and representation we need on the board. This led to a strong new class of Board of Directors this year.

Faithfully submitted by: Executive Director Will Everitt 3/19/2024

**Friends of Casco Bay
Community Engagement Committee
Minutes, Tuesday, April 2, 2024
In person at GMRI and via Zoom**

In Attendance:

Board: Kirsten Piacentini (chair), Steve Bushey, Ellen Grant, Pat Ianni, Sandy Marsters, and Malcolm Poole

Staff: Will Everitt, Sarah Lyman, and Meghan Vigeant

1. Welcome and check-in question What is your favorite sign of spring?

2. FY24 Development Statistics

Sarah Lyman guided the committee on a deep dive into our fundraising stats from our recently completed fiscal year, FY24.

Context: Most of our funding comes from Individuals (63%+ of the dollars). This is good for our financial health and for the strength of our organizational credibility. We spend more time talking about Individuals than other sources because staff and board have the biggest impact on gifts from individuals, by building and maintaining relationships through events, signing letters and being great ambassadors of our work in the community. 8,581 individuals/households received an Annual Fund and/or Membership ask in FY24. Anyone who donates becomes a member, regardless of level of donation, from \$1 to \$100,000+!

The good news in our FY24 Development Metrics: The number of households supporting us increased to 1,435. We see an increase in the number of new donors. This is likely due to the events, such as the house party and annual meeting, where Board Members, and Host Committee members invite folks to join. The improved strength of our community engagement events helps too! Our renewal rate remains strong at 71%. National nonprofit benchmarks are closer to 40 or 45%. We see increases in the number of households giving \$250 to \$10,000, while \$10,000+ is stable. This is likely due to the 35+ donor meetings in the past year and a half. Notice the uptick in supporters that live in Cumberland from the house party. This year's house party will be nearby and we will likely see an increase again while strengthening the relationships we built last year. Thank you for being ambassadors at these events and inviting future Friends to join us.

Context for the Annual Fund: Some of our individual and corporate giving is through our Annual Fund. We send Annual Fund asks twice a year, once in May and again in October. Board members are very active in this process by signing letters. Many folks

give to both Annual Fund and Membership, while some prefer one, and some prefer the other.

The good in Annual Fund: The growth is really great! Thank you for all the notes you are writing as Board members! Note: Expect this Spring's Annual Fund Letters around the beginning of May, and returning them at the May Board meeting.

The not so good: Our New Member renewal rate is not as strong as in the past. (Still higher than benchmarks of 14%.) This metric is important to grow the number of supporters over time. We also see a dip in the number of gifts below \$250. We need to grow this to allow for future growth. Board Members can help with this by introducing new folks to our work.

In Foundations and Corporations: While there's a decrease in the number of foundations, the dollars raised was above our budget and we expected the decrease due to Foundations that only allow applications every other year and other limitations. Corporate support needs more attention this year.

Discussions/Questions/Clarifications:

Did the quality of lists decline because of accuracy? We were using a third party service to obtain potential donor lists. The company we contracted with was sold and the quality of their lists declined. We were receiving returned mailers, so we weren't even reaching some households.

There was a discussion about customizing our Asks:

- Recently, we have approached folks who don't have as much awareness of us and asked for special support (i.e. support for work on Presumpscot River). We plan to follow up with these folks to report back on their impact, a tweak to our general report. The report we sent them wasn't customized for the specific work they donated to and we need to improve this.
- How challenging is it to send out different flavors of the report for these earmarked donations? Our database makes this easy; Susan enters the details, so it is easy and efficient for us to isolate groups and do these in big batches. Board members noted the improvements to the database, how things are tracked and the notes from the board are personalized to folks they know.
- There was a discussion on the merits of naming specific locations, such as the Presumpscot River, versus focusing our asks on the health of the entire watershed. It's about clean water; it's all connected. However, we need to connect

with potential donors and if specifying an area of special connection brings in new donors, that's an effective strategy.

- There was a question about why donations went up and then dropped. Will credits our capital campaigns (Climate Change Fund for Casco Bay in FY20/FY21 and the Baykeeper Boat Fund in FY13) for increasing the years before, which are included in these metrics. We tend to get increases in giving during capital campaign years. The capital campaigns allow us to reach new donors and widening the perspectives of our current donors, generating a ripple effect on our other donations. Due to that it makes sense to look at them together.
- Board members noted the positives of board involvement in donation requests and recruiting new members.

2. Brainstorming an event to hold at L.L.Bean's Leon Gorman Conference Center!

After an extensive site visit, have concluded that the L.L.Bean Leon Gorman Conference Center would not be a good space for films because of columns in the way and a split screen. But it would make a great location for some other type of event and we would like to take advantage of this opportunity in FY25 for a signature event.

About the space: The seating capacity is 300 to 800. We could easily have 400 people. Set up is for a live event. There is a beautiful stage and great views for the crowd. There are screens on two sides of the room, plus TVs mounted toward the back for an incredible view of the speakers. L.L.Bean uses it for their employee "Town Hall" meetings.

Two primary ideas emerged from our brainstorming session. None are mutually exclusive:

1. The Past, Present, Future of Casco Bay – built around our 35th anniversary, featuring a panel with Joe Payne and/or Don Perkins reflecting on the past; Ivy talking about big issues for now; and a high school activist talking about their hopes/fears for the Bay in the future.
2. Evening for the Bay (modeled on Maine Conservation Votes's [Evening for the Environment](#)) featuring a headlining keynote speaker, plus lots of speakers; different partner organizations could be involved. Could include a poet, artist, etc. and hit on various aspects of the Bay from different perspectives.

Other considerations:

- Time of year? Probably January or February. Not November (Film Fest) or December. Malcolm thinks February would be better than January. It's too late to do it this summer. Annual meetings (pre-pandemic) used to be held in February. February emerged as the strongest choice.
- Day of the week and time of day? Weekday evening, weekday daytime, weekend daytime, or weekend evening? Most of our events are on weekday evenings, except film fest which attracts a wider range of folks. L.L.Bean would not host a weekday daytime event. Some members liked the idea of a weekend daytime event. For some, weekends are hard because too much going on. This really depends on our target audience. Are we trying to get older people? Families? Will wants us to attract all of the above, try to get the most people in the room. The group did not land on a strong consensus for day or week or time of day.
- Is this a one-off event or inaugural? Will thinks it's a one-off.
- What other organizations are doing for their events:
 - Maine Conservation Voters' [Evening for the Environment](#) recently invited and highlighted organizations with youth-oriented missions. MCV is adopting environmental justice and DEI as a priority in their work and events.
 - NRCM Rising hosts the [Brookie Awards](#), honoring Maine's youth environmental leaders (ages 15-30).
- This would likely be a fundraising event with cosponsors, a host-committee, etc.
- It would be great to have a dynamic speaker.

4. Calendar of Events for 2024 (so far!)

Red Brook Cleanup, Saturday, May 4, 2024 9 a.m. at Red Brook in South

Portland: Organized by Trout Unlimited and Maine Fly Guys, Friends of Casco Bay and our members will have the opportunity to help clean up Red Brook, and learn about stormwater and the Gorham Connector project. [sign up to participate]

Surf, Storms, and Spirits, Friday, May 17, 2024 at Maine Craft Distilling: Hang ten with Friends and the surfing community. We'll be watching TBD surfing film and enjoying brews like "Mermaid Tears" and "Cranberry Island Cocktail" to raise funds for Friends of Casco Bay.

World Fish Migration Day, Saturday, May 25, 2024, 10 a.m. at Royal River Park, Yarmouth: Organized by the Royal River Alliance, Friends of Casco Bay will have an opportunity to educate attendees about stormwater and its impact on the freshwater ecosystem.

Stormwater Stroll, Friday, June 7, 2024, 4 p.m. along Portland’s waterfront: Come tour Portland’s stormwater infrastructure and get the clean and dirty business of how the city is working to keep sewage out of the Bay during large rain events.

House party to benefit Friends of Casco Bay, July 16, 2024, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. 19 Sturdivant Road, Cumberland Foreside: hosted by Liz and Tim William

We’re Celebrating our 35th Anniversary, Friends of Casco Bay Annual Meeting, Thursday, July 25, 2023 at TBD: You’re invited to join us outside on the shores of Casco Bay to celebrate our coastal waters with longtime and new Friends. Come and enjoy food, drink, and clean water speakers by the Bay we all know and love.

Film Fest for Casco Bay, Saturday, November 2, 2023 at University of Southern Maine’s Abramson Auditorium, Portland: We hope to see you at our Film Fest for Casco Bay, an afternoon of movies curated by the Maine Outdoor Film Festival. The event will feature a variety of environmental and adventure films curated just for us. You won’t want to miss it!

Board member volunteer opportunities:

IDEXX Sustainability Fair, April 24 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.: Staff a table to inform IDEXX employees about our work

Walk the Working Waterfront, Saturday, June 8, Noon to 3:30 p.m.: Staff a table to educate attendees about Friends of Casco Bay’s work.

Questions/Discussions:

There was a discussion of this year’s Annual Meeting’s location and theme. Location will probably be at Portland Yacht Services. We’re considering the “Science of Hope” as a theme.

There was a discussion about the possibility of hosting the annual meeting on one of the islands. The logistics would be challenging, but we’ve held house parties on islands before. We want to be careful of not overstepping and bringing too many folks from off-

island. For example, for Bud Higgins's house party on Peaks, we had to make sure it was just Peaks folks were invited so it was not perceived as an invasion of the island. We will consider an island event, but perhaps not for this year.

Pat Ianni suggested an idea for "You are Entering the Casco Bay Watershed" signs at the borders of the watershed. She was inspired by a sign she saw for the Red Brook watershed on Route 22. We would need to partner with DOT on signage.

Kirsten adjourned the meeting at 6:32 pm.

**Friends of Casco Bay
EJDEI Engagement Committee
Minutes, Tuesday, April 9, 2024
Meeting via Zoom**

In Attendance:

Board: Pat Ianni (chair), Sandy Marsters, Janna Rearick

Staff: Will Everitt, Sara Freshley, Ivy Frignoca

1. By-Laws review

As homework, the Committee reviewed our Bylaws and were to come to this meeting with suggested changes to them to help make the org more inclusive and accessible.

Pat lead off the discussion noting that Article II (Membership) and perhaps Article III needed revision given our DEI objectives. There was a wide ranging discussion that at least one point of conversation for us will be what constitutes a member (Article II on page 2 of our bylaws). Will provided some context: our bylaws clearly state that members are dues paying. In practice, we recognized that anyone who has volunteered for us is a member. Further, anyone that attends our annual meeting is de facto given a vote because our Board of Director votes go “under the hammer” at the meetings, as board members have historically been approved unanimously. We do not separate dues paying members and non-dues paying members at our annual meeting.

Ivy shared that Article I, section 2 “Purpose” of our organization was also out of date. We could recommend updating that with our actual mission and work and note our EJDEI values.

There was a further discussion of what types of things we would want in the bylaws vs. what are guidance/best practices documents. For example, our By-laws do not articulate any specific guidance on who should be board members. But we may want some best practice guidance on how to overcome barriers to serving on our board, requirements for board members, or how to recruit board members.

There was consensus that our bylaws should remain relatively simple and changed minimally, whereas guidance documents could have more nuance.

Will encouraged the Committee to stay focused on its goal of reviewing the bylaws

and tackle guidance documents and other goals later. That is what CCCS recommended to us: pick a goal and keep it manageable.

Janna asked in what ways membership would need to be defined to meet how we do things in practice and our EJDEI goals. Will shared his reflection that membership, as defined, should cover four sets of members: donors/dues paying members, people who volunteer their time or express a desire to volunteer, people who strongly identify with our mission (whether they donate/volunteer or not), and people who are given a membership by the board (or by people who are empowered by the board, such as staff).

Ivy encourage us to get guidance. She articulated that there seems to be three sections of guidance we would want: our purpose statement, membership, and barriers to board service.

Pat volunteered to seek guidance from Curtis Bohlen as Casco Bay Estuary Partnership looked into some of these issues. Will will get information from Waterkeeper Alliance's resources and Maine Association of Nonprofits. Ivy will seek guidance from Anthony Moffa and the Law School.

2. Upcoming board/staff training on "Resettlement and Assimilation: the immigrant experience in Maine" with Cross Cultural Community Services on April 30, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Our May Committee meeting will be a debrief with CCCS at the May 13 EJDEI Committee Meeting. Janna encouraged Will to get the agenda and any recommended reading to the Board soon. Will will check in with CCCS.

3. Is Tuesday at this time a better date to meet going forward? Would a non-work hour time be better - 5:30 pm or 6 pm?

Our next meeting is already set for May 13 with CCCS. Staff find that overall Monday works better. There did not seem to be any issues from current Board members on the committee. Pat encouraged us to continue to check to see if times work. She also recommended sending the next meeting notices to the whole board. It would be great if we got another member or two for the committee.

What to know about the following document:

- Friends of Casco Bay supports the transition to a green energy future. We support the responsible development of offshore wind.
- To support offshore wind development, Governor Mills's administration announced that Sears Island was the preferred site for a port facility. Upon the announcement, some environmental groups, such as Maine Conservation Voters and NRCM, supported the site. Some, such as Sierra Club did not. As the site was not in Casco Bay, Friends of Casco Bay had no opinion of the site.
- Upon selection of the site, the administration, noted the presence of sand dunes at Sears Island, which are critical and protected coastal habitat. Rather than deciding if the Sears Island proposal could be modified to avoid the dunes, the administration introduced a bill, LD 2266, which would have permitted destruction of the dunes.
- While the dunes are not in Casco Bay, we saw this bill as a slippery slope and a precedent that could be used to destroy other sand dunes along our coast or other critical habitat.
- We submitted testimony recommending that LD2266 Ought Not to Pass as written. Our position is that the Sears Island proposal should be modified to not destroy the dune or another suitable site should be found.
- We did not spend much time or resources on this issue outside of submitting short testimony. The bill is working its way through the Legislature now. We may know by the board meeting if the bill was passed or not.

17 March 2024



Re: Friends of Casco Bay Opposition to LD 2266, *An Act Regarding Offshore Wind Terminals Located in Coastal Sand Dune Systems*

Dear Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and Distinguished Members of the Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

Friends of Casco Bay opposes LD 2266 as written and respectfully requests that, rather than passing this bill, the State reexamine its offshore wind (OSW) port selection to decide if the Sears Island proposal can be modified to avoid the sand dunes or to select another site that will cause less environmental harm.

For 35 years, Friends of Casco Bay has worked to improve and protect the health of Casco Bay. Climate change poses the biggest threat to the Bay, to all coastal Maine, and to the marine waters we depend upon. Accordingly, we have supported Governor Mill's approach to OSW, intended to create a cleaner energy source while minimizing environmental harm.

Governer Mills evinced this balancing act in her [announcement](#) that Sear's Island was the preferred site to develop OSW port facilities:

The selection of the site follows an extensive public stakeholder process led by the Maine Department of Transportation and Maine Port Authority to consider the State's primary port development options, including multiple potential sites in the Port of Searsport, the Port of Eastport, and the Port of Portland. The State concluded that the Sears Island parcel is the most feasible port development site in terms of location, logistics, cost, **and environmental impact** based on input from port and offshore wind stakeholders, including the University of Maine, and on technical and engineering analyses.

It appears that the review process failed to note the presence of sand dunes. The proper remedy is to reexamine the site selection to avoid harming critical coastal sand dunes. It is not to pass a law permitting destruction of the sand dunes in contravention of existing environmental laws and to actions set forth in the Maine Won't Wait climate action plan, which seeks to protect critical coastal habitats. As written, LD 2246 creates a slippery slope precedent that would allow future administrations to avoid application of environmental laws for other purposes.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that you recommend that LD 2266 Ought Not To Pass as written. Thank you for considering our testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Ivy L. Frignoca, Casco Baykeeper
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