

Herring Ponds Watershed Association
September 19, 2022 Board of Director's Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Phil Angell, Paul Denoncourt, Melissa Ferretti, John Foye, Brian Harrington, Jack Kedian, Jerry Levine, Tom O'Brien, Trish O'Brien, Martha Sheldon, Don Williams and Geri Williams
Absent: Ramona Krogman, Beth Sobiloff,

President Williams opened Monday, September 19th, 2022, Zoom meeting at 7:00 PM

Approval of July 2022 Meeting Minutes and 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes:

Geri Williams read changes to the Water Quality portion of the July 2022 meeting minutes via email to the Board. President Williams requested a motion to approve as amended. Paul Denoncourt motioned to approve as amended. Jack Kedian seconded. Unanimously approved.
President Williams requested a motion to approve the HPWA Annual Meeting Minutes. Geri Williams motioned to approve. Jerry Levine seconded. Unanimously approved.

Approval of July and August 2022 Treasurer's Report:

Treasurer John Foye went over the July balance sheet. President Williams requested a motion to approve the HPWA July Treasury Report. Geri Williams motioned to approve. Brian Harrington seconded. Unanimously approved.
Treasurer John Foye went over the August balance sheet. President Williams requested a motion to approve the HPWA August balance sheet. Geri Williams motioned to approve. Jack Kedian seconded.

Committees:

Water Quality Committee – The Water Plan Review Committee has met several times to dissect the lengthy Water Quality Report. They are emphasizing their focus on how can we lower the phosphorus. They have emailed their thorough list of questions to the board. They have their questions ready to meet with Kim and David, our next step at making the Water Quality Plan complete and getting an Adaptive Water Quality Plan from the town. If any of the board has additional questions for the Committee's meeting with Kim and David, submit them to Don. Brian was puzzled by the focus on run-off, since most of our phosphorus is from Little Herring Pond, where run-off doesn't seem to be a big problem. Don said we have never done a run-off study in Little Herring Pond. Lee Pulis said there may be more run-off issues in Little Herring Pond than reported in the Water Quality Plan. Jack Kedian would like willing residents to be given the tools and training to test the water at their waterfront locations after a storm to help measure the effects of run-off. Brian agreed that more studies should be done on run-off, but that we need to also put emphasis on other sources of phosphorus. He added that the study indicates that run-off may not be the greatest contributor of phosphorus in the pond. Paul was curious if anyone listed well water as part of the aquifer. Don replied that the only information we currently had on ground water, was when we tested the spring water that runs into Little Herring Pond. These tests have shown low phosphorus and nitrate levels, except after a rainstorm when it yielded higher phosphorus and nitrate. After a storm the spring could be contaminated by the cranberry bog at the northern part of Little Herring Pond.

Geri said she was concerned about septic contributing to phosphorus levels in the ponds. She noted that one of our questions was that the study didn't investigate more about other possible sources of phosphorus. It may be the study justified their assumptions of septic being the main problem without looking into other possible sources of phosphorus. The study discounted run-off at Little Herring Pond and didn't do water testing after heavy rainstorms. Most of their run-off water testing was done in November and December with less than torrential rainfall, and not on Little Herring Pond or times in the summer when there were heavier rains. We'd like to push for more analysis, more water testing at different times of year, especially after rainfall.

Don added that septic, while more than likely a major problem, may be too expensive to remediate and take a longer time to accomplish, so we need to look at other high phosphorus contributors we can remediate. He'd like everyone on the board look at the Water Plan Review Committee's list of questions that he emailed to bring feedback and further questions via email to him before our next step of meeting with Kim and David. They have been informed we are ready to meet. They have a lot of projects going on, but have assured us it will happen in the near future.

Outreach Committee: Geri Williams would like another person to volunteer to help her with Programs. With the newsletter, and the more frequent water testing and recording of water tests, Geri has been falling behind with lining up program presentations. Once the Water Quality Plan is finalized, there will be a Zoom SMAST program presentation for members to understand the plan and ask questions. Other than this she has no other presentations lined up for members at this time.

Old Business:

Plymouth Youth Center at Hedges Pond Donation – Discussing our \$5,000 building donation to Hedges Pond Plymouth Youth Center will be tabled to next meeting. Bill Keohan was going to join our meeting tonight to discuss the status of our donation but he had to attend another meeting. He'll hopefully join us at next month's meeting when we'll revisit the matter.

Conservation Commission – Don has drafted a letter to the Conservation Commission. Do we want to send it? Jack Kedian pointed out that there are a lot of other environmental groups that are concerned about the CC not enforcing their rules. One being Concerned Citizens for a Better Plymouth. Geri attended their last meeting. At this meeting, Meg Sheehan informed the group of recent egregious violations of the CC rules reported to the Conservation Commission that were ignored. Others had similar reports of CC negligence upon being notified of CC rule violations. One of the members informed the group that Carver residents recently put in a letter to request a show cause hearing to remove a member from their Conservation Commission because he has voted on things that are a clear conflict of interest and he is very rude and makes inappropriate remarks at the meetings. Geri has inquired of Meg Sheehan, who facilitated this request, how Carver residents have gone through this process; and, asked her if members of the SEMPBA, an organization to which Meg belongs, is interested in helping us with our complaints against Plymouth Conservation Commission. Meg sent Geri a copy of the letter to Carver CC and expressed that The Friends of Myles Standish would be willing to join our fight against the town of Plymouth's CC. Jack Kedian noted that it is tough to prove a conflict of interest. But, Geri noted, that Randy Parker is in violation of not only conflict of interest but also of not enforcing blatant violations of the CC rules that have been brought to his attention.

This is a big problem for our pond – the Board offered their thoughts on the matter. Because of the makeup of the new Commission, Martha favored the HPWA staying engaged with the problem. Jerry Levine suggested we get the opinion of David and Kim before we proceed. Phil commented that we shouldn't go political as a group but stick with our mission to be a sustainable organization. Brian suggested that this issue pertains to our watershed and that we should fight for it but not become political. Jack thought we should involve our fellow environmental groups to fight the Commission. Jack has a list of environmental groups that are concerned about the CC. Melissa felt that as citizens, we are obligated to protect our watershed, that we should proceed as individuals not as an organization unless we poll the entire membership. Tom thought it better to be part of a bigger environmental group, perhaps reporting the town to a state ethics commission, or State Conservation Commission. Geri thought there are a lot of organizations concerned about the CC and that we need to join them. She thought a show cause hearing to remove Randy Parker with these groups might be our best action. John Foye agreed there is power in numbers so we should align with other groups. Trish felt there may be a more diplomatic approach to get what we want from the CC because we need the Commission and the town right now to get remediation for the Herring Ponds after we and Plymouth have spent so much money on the Water Quality Plan. Brian noted that Sustainable Plymouth is another group worthy of alignment. Jack Kedian knew of a dozen or so groups that are all going in the

same direction, which cohesively would be a sustainable force. He'll email a list of them to us. Jerry notes that we are a small group in which each of us are environmentally conscious and somewhat politically active. There were two concerns for us, one is the environmental concern for Great and Little Herring Ponds and the other is our willingness as a whole to become politically involved. We need to keep this forefront as we move forward as an organization. It seems to him that more of our group is more concerned with the environmental issues than the political issues.

Don wondered at this point in discussion if we should or should not send the letter he has composed. He read the letter to the Board. Don would like to cc Randy Parker, Board of Selectmen, and the CC Board.

After more discussion, the Board agreed to send letter if after meeting with Kim and David they were OK with sending it and to take out specific addresses of violations.

Grant Topics – Teri Pekol has volunteered to learn from Kim Tower how to write grants for us. It was suggested that run-off grants could help with more testing, training and instrumentation for residents to test, and a flowmeter at Carter's bridge. The board will wait for the meeting with David and Kim, and their Adaptive Management Plan, their recommendation of remediation from the Herring Ponds water quality plan.

New Business:

Town of Plymouth Clean-up - Another town-wide clean-up day scheduled for October 22nd. Should we organize another HPWA effort or pass information onto members? It was decided that once a year, especially this year with the Board's busyness on the water quality study, is enough. We should, however, pass the information on to our members. They can obtain their own bags from the town.

Second Tier Volunteers – Tom and Trish have met a couple that lives on the Great Herring Pond, Cheryl and Steve Nichols, who they think would be an asset to HPWA, volunteering to organize social activities. Last year, they organized a 4th of July boat parade via Facebook. Cheryl also has parties for her grown children that are themed and sound super fun. She also expressed wanting to have a movie night on a giant outdoor movie screen that can be seen and heard by land and water at the same time. I mentioned these events might reach more people and the members would help her if she organized them through HPWA. The board agreed this is a good idea. Tom and Trish will contact them to see if they are interested in volunteering. Don suggested they could attend the next Zoom meeting to discuss their ideas and involvement and how the Association can help.

BOD Meeting November – November 14th

President Don Williams asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Geri Williams

Second by John Foye

Unanimously approved

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM