

Minutes of Cape Conservation Corps Meeting, 10/19/2020

The meeting was held via Zoom.

In attendance: Stacey Wildberger, Marita Roos (via phone), Phil Ourisson, Brad Knopf, Bill Rappoport, Larry Jennings, Al Todd, Tonya Powell, Jeanne Martin, Karen Minor. (Neil tried but could not call in.)

Call to order 7:33pm.

1. Minutes from last month's meeting were approved.
2. Treasurer's report –
 - a. General fund balance \$13,300.
 - b. Grants balance \$416; Unity Gardens granted us \$693.40 for planting in the Serene Ravine. Stacey spent over that, with some of our input, to a total of \$1,135, the excess of which taken from the Grants fund. Unity Gardens only grants up to \$1,000 max. Organizations can only apply once a year (every Fall).
3. Stacey nominated Jeanne Martin to be a board member. Jeanne said she's wanted to get involved, and she, like Stacey, is applying to become a Watershed Steward. All voted in favor of welcoming Jeanne aboard.
4. All 4 officers of the CCC board expressed their desire to keep their positions (Stacey as President, Marita as Vice President, Phil as Treasurer, Karen as Secretary). The motion in favor of the 4 officers to continue their terms this year passed unanimously.
5. The committees are posted on the CCC web page, but the information is somewhat outdated. The board reviewed and redefined members in each of the committees.
 - a. Executive (officers: Stacey, Marita, Phil, Karen)
 - b. Finance Committee (Phil, Brad H (maybe), Bill). No one has looked at Phil's books ever since Linc looked them over, several years ago. Phil said it's nice to have a second pair of eyes to make sure everything is on the up and up. We will work on that.
 - c. Governance Committee headed by vice president (Marita), serve as the chair, per Bylaws, which are on the website. Stacey and Brad K agreed to also serve on this committee.
 - d. Restoration Committee (Marita, Stacey, Karen, Brad K, and now Tonya). Projects include Weed Warriors, construction oversight and maintenance, invasive plants control.
 - e. Outreach Committee (Stacey, Brad K, Marita, Jeanne, Brad K, Larry, Tonya). Projects include Habitat Hero, Plant Sale, Harvest Bash, guest speakers and screenings.
6. Old business:
 - a. The dead shrubs on Cape St Claire Rd by the fire house have been replanted, with mulch this time. Al gave a shout out to Amanda Fiedler, who handled that and coordinated with contractors. Al will reach out to Amanda to thank her.
 - b. There was an incident involving overzealous weeders at the Serene Ravine. Stacey didn't realize that volunteers had gone onto Suzanne's property. Her property line extends 3 feet beyond her fence. Suzanne's called the police and complained that someone broke a stem off her butterfly bush while pulling the Bushkiller. Ryan, Suzanne, and Stacey had a meeting. Suzanne was upset but the meeting was good. Stacey gave her 3 plants of Liatris (blazing star), which Stacey planted for her. Stacey apologized profusely and told her we wanted to partner with her in getting rid of the Bushkiller, so she's comfortable with that and is now is amenable to working together. Stacey is hoping we can pull down the weeds back over the fence so that it can be sprayed. On Saturday, Stacey and Suzanne had a nice chat, and Suzanne expressed her thanks for the plants. The question was raised if there any interest on Suzanne's part to having Weed Warriors going over there into her property and bagging weeds. Suzanne said she would be comfortable with that as long as experienced weeders are doing the work. There is only one more week left for weeding due to the diminishing daylight.
 - c. The neighbors to the left of the Serene Ravine pulled some big cuttings of Euonymus off their fence and threw them into the ravine. Stacey will talk to Neil about that.

- d. Regarding the ongoing Bushkiller problem at the Poplar Tree ravine and Serene Ravine, Brad K, Al, Neil, Ryan, and Stacey met with Joe Ports, the Project Manager at the County's Bureau of Watershed Protection and Restoration. Joe doesn't know anything more that we can do at the Poplar Tree ravine. The contractor has 5 years of responsibility as far as planting, so they are the hook to keep up with it. They will meet with the landowners in continuing to treat the site. The County has a contract for 1 more year to spray. Here and there, they may need another push or reminder from CCC. Larry asked if Joe's contractors were independent from the people who installed the step pools. Al said yes. After the 1 year left on the contract ends, the County will get a new contractor, at which point, they want to coordinate with CCC and combine their efforts with us. Jennifer recommended contractors who would be a good fit for spraying. Larry said sprayers had to be licensed every year. Al said that at the meeting with Joe Ports, Ryan committed to paying for spraying when that occurs. CCC will partner with the County to coordinate with the homeowners on either side of both ravines. Regarding the Serene Ravine, Al's ideas are good with partnering with the Serene Ravine neighbors to get on board with spraying. We are allowed to approach the neighbors and get them on board. Brad K reported that there was an independent conversation between Brad, Joe, and Ryan, in which Joe was non-committal. Ryan said if someone makes a complaint about something, the County would send someone out to inspect. Ryan was disappointed with what the County has done. No one can get a copy of the maintenance plan. At the Poplar Tree ravine, the only one that has a copy of the maintenance plan is the Myers, the neighbors next to the ravine. Karen will ask that homeowner if they would let us take a look at that maintenance plan. We need to get neighbors on our side.
- e. Joe Ports, Ryan, and Brad K went out to the step pools by the ball fields across from Dunkin Donuts. All the trees are badly gouged by trimmers. About 20% of them are dying. Larry suggested checking with the County. Contractors are required to keep 75% of the plantings alive for 2 years.
- f. The Unity Gardens grant planting at the Serene Ravine on Saturday went well. Thanks to Al for letting us park the plants in his yard and driveway overnight. The arrangement for Matthew Toronto to handle delivery was a win-win. Katherine Woods helped Stacey place the plants on Saturday morning so that was very helpful. The plants looked moist and in good shape. Everyone that volunteered showed up, and in all, we had 40 volunteers throughout the day (22 in am, 17 in pm). A total of 60 shrubs, 90 ferns, and 60 perennials were planted. The girl scout volunteers were young, so some were not planted well, but a scout mom, Crystal, replanted some of them. Stacey had the girls pulling and bagging perilla, an annual weed. 15 bags of weeds were filled. The plants were really pretty. The foliage on the Itea and Viburnum is gorgeous red. The swamp sunflowers, liatris, blue mist flower, and mountain mint were planted where those weeds were. Larry said it was the great soil. 8-10 groups of purple love grass were planted and look pretty in the afternoon light. Overall, the planted area looks great. Stacey noted that the lady from Unity Gardens wrote a beautiful email. She liked our group and our projects and organization, so this relationship is good for future grants we apply for.
- g. Weed Warriors: We have had a lot of new faces every Wednesday (6 to 8 new people). Next spring, we'll have another kickoff get-together. Jeanne has come out a few times bringing people, and random people are coming out and signing up and liking it. The consistency of the same time every week is helpful. Marita calculated that the Weed Warriors have put in about 500-man hours of work in the Ravine. The federal volunteer rate is \$27.50 an hour, so that's \$13K overall. Congrats and thanks to Stacey and Bill for being such hard workers. Bill brings bags and Gatorade every week. A couple of times, Stacey brought Rita's for the volunteers. Crystal and her daughter Maddie have been helping a lot with weeding all summer long. The troop is helping now. Maybe we can have a wrap up party in November with a mulching day and cider to thank everyone. Stacey proposed that when the Weed Warriors ends, we do a few weed pullings over some subsequent weekends.
- h. Sam Papps' Eagle Scout project for installing benches in the Serene Ravine is close to getting district approval. Home Depot donated all the wood, screws, and cement. All his materials are now procured. Neil said he would help supervise. Al took down both old benches. We have to figure out

where to put the mosaic bench. Marita said the designs for the plaques are done so she will send out the orders (\$100 each). They can be put on as soon as they come in.

- i. Stacey met with another Eagle Scout who came to the ravine with his dad and scout master. He will figure out the material for and build two nesting boxes for Bard Owls. The project will also include designing a sign and having it made. CCC will give him information to include on the sign, such as our funders, their logos (including Unity gardens), the timeline for the ravine, etc. We need to come up with what we want on it. Once his initial design for the sign is made, he will present it to us, CCC will tweak it, and ultimately approve the sign.

7. New business:

- a. Stacey attended the monthly Cape Board of Governors meeting last week. The illegal pier is down. They talked about their Halloween plans and trying to get electricity at the guard house for the Christmas tree. The \$50K from Fish and Wildlife is coming soon. They are in process of getting the Army Corps permit for site 2 and trying to work out logistics for dredging sand from the Little Magothy. Phil talked to Mary about getting back into the Cox room. We aren't allowed yet, but once we can, Phil has reserved it for the 3rd Monday of each month. If we need to change dates, we can do that. There might be an extra charge for cleanup. Phil asked Leslie to tell us what the cleaning fee would be. Thanks to Larry for his porch all summer. Larry said we can use it in the Spring.
- b. Jeanne and Stacey are both applying to the Watershed Steward Academy. Stacey wants to do the bamboo eradication as her capstone project. Stacey had another idea for a project, which she polled on CCC's Facebook page: a plant exchange of sorts--invasive plants for free replacement native plants. She got a lot of good feedback on that.
- c. The Native Plant Sale was very successful. Al did a great job of keeping people in line. Thanks to Marita's great map and Brad's great signs, everyone stayed socially distant. Splitting the line into cash and check vs credit card also helped. Thanks to Bill and Brad for boxes. We all pulled together and cooperated, and had amazing volunteers, such as great help with tallying the plants, Stacey's Sister and daughters, Crystal and daughter Maddie who had a ball and helped the entire time, various high schoolers, and other community volunteers. A lady came from Monkton MD to help. She showed up at 7:00 and dropped \$250 on plants. Overall, the sale was very seamless. The only thing that went wrong was that we ran out of plants and sold out in 55 minutes. We realized that there were more people in line than plants we had. After closing and packing up, Phil was one of the last ones out there. Phil talked to some of the late comers, who were understanding. In hindsight, Stacey wished we would have stayed after we closed. After we all left, Stacey later found out via Facebook that people were wandering around and wondering if they had the right place. One gentleman was melancholy about having missed the sale and reached out to Stacey. He was so nice, and he mentioned the lady who posted her rant on our page was not the designated spokesperson as she claimed, and that no one else was mad. Everyone was defending us in response to her long, accusatory post. Word of mouth about the Native Plant Sale has spread, and people have been raving about it. People are into gardening now, which all played into the success of it. If we advertise 9-12, we stay the whole time, including our experts to give info. If we finish early, we need to have a sign as well. In considering future plant purchases, we should increase ferns by 3 times. Ground covers sold well, flowering plants sold well and fast like asters, lobelia, liatris, so we should increase them significantly. A lot of goldenrod was sold but they went a little slower. We had a great selection of plants, so we will order similar plants next year. Overall, the sale was super successful, so we just need to sell more plants next year.
- d. Phil reported we spent about \$9K on plants and received so far about \$10K. In the end, after taking into account the credit card fees, we will profit by \$1K. Phil talked to Severn Bank to ask for a short-term increase of the \$5K limit on withdrawals/debits per day. Regardless, we don't have enough in our checking account to buy all the plants we want next year, so he inquired about a credit line or short-term loan. They suggested a credit card, which has no annual fee. As long as we pay it off within 20 days, it's free (no interest). Once Phil has the meeting minutes, he can go to Seven Savings to apply. Phil, as Treasurer of CCC, would be the only person allowed to use it. Stacey made a motion to get a credit card with a \$10K limit (Marita seconded it), and CCC unanimously approved

the motion. Closer to next year's Native Plant Sale, we will figure out a budget for it so the plants will last at least 2 hours. We need to grow the sale at a normal pace. Maybe \$15-16K. Larry noted that with \$10K on credit card, and \$10K from our general funds balance, that would be possible. Another option suggested by Stacey is to not pay on delivery of plants but instead to establish credit with the nurseries and pay for the plants after the plant sale. We have done 6 orders so far with both Babikow and 5 with Cavano's, so getting a credit relationship with them in the future may be another possible option for funding the purchase of plants.

- e. Lastly, Phil sent an email blast that there will not be Harvest Bash tickets and asked for donations instead. Board members are also invited to give Phil some money in place of a ticket or two. Stacey posted on Facebook asking people to donate in lieu of the Bash tickets.

8. Adjourned 9:02 pm.