



Minutes of the Board of Directors

Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges, February 2, 2018
Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Lake Jackson, 1:00 to 4:00 pm

In Attendance: Oron Atkins, Ed Barrios, Marty Cornell, Mickey Dufilho, Judy Green, Phil Huxford, David Plunkett, Kim Richardson, Dick Schaffhausen, Torry Tvedt.

Excused Absent: Jeannie Manry, Lisa Myers

Refuge Staff in Attendance: Jennifer Sanchez

A quorum being present, President Ed Barrios called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm

Election of Officers: Mickey Dufilho moved and Torry Tvedt seconded the motion to approve the slate of officer who will serve in 2018 consisting of President; Ed Barrios, Vice President; Lisa Myers, Treasurer; Dick Schaffhausen, and Secretary; Marty Cornell. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Committee

Dick Schaffhausen reported that CPA Kevin Kadenhead has begun his pro-bono examination of our 2016 bookkeeping. The intent is to certify that Friends is using appropriate financial accounting practices; this is not a full audit of our books.

Best Practices of Friends Board of Directors

Marty Cornell presented an overview of best operational practices of Boards of Directors, reflecting his experience as a Friends Mentor for the US Fish and Wildlife Service. A summary is included at the end of these minutes.

2018 Migration Celebration

Ed Barrios announced that Christine Rivers has agreed to design the web site for MC18. Her fee is \$45 per hour, and the task is estimated to be 40 hours = \$1,800. Lisa Myers, as Communications Chair, will coordinate the flow of information to Christine. Christine will be asked to talk to Neal McLain on the best web platform to host our web sites (Friends and MC18); the platform currently used is FatCow.

Recognizing the need to update other Friends social media sites, it is suggested that Lisa talk to Tanisha Young of her possible ability and interest to take on this task.

Dick Schaffhausen reported that the expenses for MC18 will likely exceed the ~\$23,000 cost of MC17 (includes \$2,537 of in-kind donations that were not part of the cash flow). Major

additional costs will be expenses incurred by our guest speaker, Stewart Mackenzie of Bird Studies Canada, and the cost of contracting the update of the MC18 web site. Dick noted that about \$10,000 remains in our account dedicated to Migration Celebrations.

Dick **motioned** that **“The Board of the FOBWR authorizes the expenditure of up to \$30,000 for the operation of MC18, with funds to come from sponsorships, donations, and event fundraising activities.”** Judy Green seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously.

Jennifer Sanchez noted that the Complex is receiving quite a few inquiries about the MC18 photo contest. Ed clarified that Denise Kaplan has assumed responsibility for the photo contest and will attend to publishing contest rules and deadlines upon her return from vacation this weekend.

Appreciation Dinner

The 2018 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner will be held on Tuesday evening, February 26th at the Clute Community Center, starting at 5:30 pm. A dinner featuring seafood and chicken gumbos will be served at 6:00; Marty Cornell will lead the cooking and serving crew. As is the custom, refuge staff will provide desserts.

Dick Schaffhausen will provide Jennifer with photos from ATFN17 which she will include in her year in review.

Ed Barrios will also recognize Ron Bisbee for his many years of service on the FOBWR board. Jennifer will provide Ed with photos of Ron early in his career, and Ed will check with Brenda Bisbee for other incriminating photos. The board will collect contributions for a gift for Ron; aprons are recommended because of his love for cooking. Phil will arrange for custom-made aprons from Sweeny Graphics.

Ed Barrios paid the required deposit of \$100 to cover a police officer because of our serving BYOB; this fee is not refundable.

Pre-purchase Discovery Grants

Mike Lange suggested that Friends pursue our forth \$300,000 grant from Houston Endowment (HE) to enable the continued research on title and other documents of lands that could be added to the Complex. We currently have about \$90,000 left in the third Houston Endowment Grant. Judy Green **moved**, and Phil Huxford seconded the motion that **“The board of the FOBWR authorizes the pursuit of the forth \$300,000 grant from Houston Endowment for pre-purchase land discovery activities.”** Grant Administrator Marty Cornell will apply for this new grant. The motion passed unanimously.

Mike would like Friends to authorize another \$8,000 of the HE grant funds to be used for pre-purchase discovery activity on Follett Island land parcels, which will become the property of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. This money would be in addition to the \$17,000 already authorized for this purpose. Funds from the HE are designated to be used for potential purchases by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, however Jennifer Sanchez authorized the diversion of the requested funds toward this TPWD objective. **Mickey Dufilho moved**, and Phil Huxford seconded, that **“The board of the FOBWR authorizes the increase of expenditures for pre-purchase discovery activities of Follett Island land parcels from the current \$17,000 to up to \$25,000.”** The motion passed unanimously.

Friends Academy

Ed will enter a request through Tom Schneider that two members of the board, Kim Richardson and Lisa Myers, apply for attendance at the August, 2018 Friends Academy. Dick Schaffhausen, who attended the 2017 academy, noted that several Friends groups sent two delegates to his training session. Kim will have preference if we are only granted one attendee.

Job Descriptions

Ed had asked each board member to submit descriptions of their leadership positions. Kim will collect these descriptions and render them in a uniform format. The descriptions of the roles of the four offices of the FOBWR are part of our bylaws. Other job descriptions will be part of our Policy and Procedures.

Scheduled Meeting of the Board

Future board meetings will occur on the second Friday of odd-numbered months, for a total of six meetings per year. The starting time will be 1:00 pm; location may vary. The next board meeting will be on March 9, 2018

Best Practices for Friends Board of Directors

- Focus on Mission-driven goals that support their Refuge/Complex
- Formally meet once per quarter with structured agenda
- Attend to Governance at each board meeting
- Delegate to committees
- Know the roles and responsibilities of each other
- Each member actively engaged in leadership role
- Have a high degree of mutual respect and trust.
- Regularly-scheduled Meetings
- Limit terms
- Need-driven Recruitment Process
- Execute a Succession Plan
- Seek Diversity
- Have a living Strategic Plan

- Operate on a Budget
- Cultivate Major Donors
- Advocate/Lobby

Attendees were asked complete the sentence “I wish our board would...” The responses were:

- Complete action items in a timely manor
- Complete active projects before raising money for new projects
- Expand membership
- Provide training [orientation] for new board members
- Note in the minutes when members have be granted an excuse for being absent from board meetings
- Have more frequent board meetings, perhaps every two months
- Expand our volunteer base
- Better communicate what Friends does to the TMN-COT chapter
- Develop a long-term strategic plan; up to 20 years
- Advocate [lobby] with local government
- Find out who is interested in staying on the board – how long – and getting a replacement when needed.

Marty Cornell

Secretary, Friends of Brazoria Wildlife Refuges.