

GSWA Board of Trustees Meeting

3.26.21

Minutes

Tony convened the meeting at 9:08 AM via Zoom. Attendees included Board members Michael Dee, Marilyn Dee, Kevin Sullivan, Eric Inglis, Paul Boudreau, Chris Obropta, David Naidu, Lisa Stevens, Matt Krauser, Teresa Lane, Brett Williamson, Jordan Glatt, Anthony DellaPelle, Yorgi Vlamis, Kate Barry, Clark Wagner, Dot Stillinger, Deb Apruzzese, Reed Auerbach, Gerry-Jo Cranmer, Nic Platt, and Guy Piserchia, as well as Advisory Council member John DeLaney and Staff members Sally Rubin, Sue Levine and Lynne Applebaum.

The meeting began with Tony offering condolences to Dot on behalf of the group for the loss of her son.

Tony asked for a motion to approve minutes from last meeting on January 22, 2021, all approved.

Tony asked for motion to approve minutes from capital campaign discussions on February 5, 2021 and February 10, 2021, all approved.

Tony mentioned Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest forms that all Board members need to sign. Sally identified several members who need to sign the forms.

Tony said that a Resolution had been made to upgrade our Vanguard account to a brokerage account, and Vanguard required a modification of the Resolution. Sally said intent did not change, just a few words to comply with Vanguard requirements, and that the resolution was previously passed by the board.

Tony discussed capital campaign and strategic plan update. Talked about kickoff with TAG. Strategic plan will happen first, then capital campaign. Capital campaign will come from strategic plan discussions. Any Board members are welcome to join these meetings with TAG.

Internal meetings will happen first to discuss existing strategic plan on April 8. First meeting with TAG is April 19, second meeting is May 3. Sally would like to start April 8 at 8:45 AM or 9, if okay with everyone, to accommodate one of the committee members. Sally will send preliminary questions for discussion to everyone.

Tony thanked all Board members for 100% participation in helping to fund consultant for strategic plan and capital campaign.

Sally reported on Ferber property in Chatham, had conversations with PSEG and National Wildlife Refuge. PSEG said they require a business reason to convey a portion of property to us. Negotiations are taking place. We may be able to convey our new acquisition of the Kent property in exchange for a small piece at Ferber. Will update when we get more information from PSEG.

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Sally confirmed music festival date at Giralda Farms on May 23rd. Working on bands, sponsors, vendors, food and merchandise. Asked Board to give thought to sponsorships. Asked Jordan to hold a Development Committee meeting about it. Tony asked if we need another band for the music festival, since one dropped out and he knows one who play locally.

Sally talked about the regional native plant sale – we order plants wholesale, GSWA could make a few thousand dollars with this sale. Takes place from April 1st – April 22. Plants will be delivered to the office. Environmental Commissions will bring volunteers to break up plants into each order. Working with 10 towns and 17 entities on this project. Encouraged group to go online and order. Project gets the GSWA name out to people who don't know about us. Each town will have pickup sites and so will GSWA. Hazel doing webinar on April 1 on native pollinator plants. Will include lots of into. Two (2) kits available – small and large. Will give design ideas about how to lay them out. Concept directly related to our Mission and our Watershed Friendly Living program.

Sue gave the Finance report. She said that the Finance Committee met on March 8, reviewed endowment and discussed PPP1 and PPP2 funds and ERC funds, if we get them. Have not had PPP1 forgiven yet.

Line of credit coming up in early July. Expect smooth renewal, but we will ask for increase from \$200k to \$400k. Increase gives us flexibility both for any potential construction and any possible land acquisition. Finance Committee looking at banks other than Investors, reviewing Provident, Lakeland, Valley, Peapack-Gladstone.

February vs budget - doing well. First quarter - got Lackland donation in March. Primary difference from last year to this year is annual event. We do not anticipate a financial trigger for first quarter. Budget process will start sooner than normal.

Matt brought up that Investor's "Care to Share" program charges monthly for inactivity on the account. Sally and Sue said GSWA doesn't get a true net benefit from this program, so we can drop it.

Tony said small banks, regional banks, might be more interested in us than national banks, even though their resources are not as great.

Development Committee – Jordan said music festival was discussed, but we want to wait for strategic plan and figure out new initiatives we may want to fund. He thinks we should expand our network and bring more people to the property to see the swamp itself.

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Sally is happy to set up any types of programs, we can put together at drop of a hat. Lynne and Wade submitted reports to packets, new grants, doing well – received very few negative responses. Numbers look good.

Tony said, going forward, committees should meet in between Board meetings and note if something should be discussed at the Board level.

Education and Outreach Committee – Deb said her involvement was working out processes and metrics with the team on their work. Looking for ways to get educators on team, and feedback on programs working and not working. Kickoff meeting was productive.

Sally asked the Board if they have any contacts in any schools? Please share – tough to get programs in schools, looking for help. Deb acknowledged the challenges that the Education team has getting into the schools, having to encourage the educators to adopt and weave our programs into their curriculum.

Land Preservation and Advocacy Committee– Dot said that the final sale of the Kent property has gone through, has gotten a lot of comments from Chatham Township. Said Chatham very aggressive in pursuit of open space. Controversy in Township Committee – what is open space tax – may be higher than in past few years. Looking for other properties that might be suitable for purchase by GSWA.

Land and Water Stewardship Committee – Lisa gave accolades to Sandra’s Water Quality Report on Zoom. She talked about the CMA - water is high, working on boardwalks. Sally talked about press for the engraved bird boxes and boardwalks from the Gala auction, and hoping to have a small unveiling event for everything this spring.

Tony asked Michael, who is the new Liaison to the Advisory Board, about progress and the Advisory Council dinner. Michael said he has been reaching out to Advisory Council, fell on deaf ears, and may require personal attention. Asked Board members to call and make personal invitation. There was further discussion about Board members looking for new Advisory Council members. Sally will connect with Michael to put together a list of potential candidates.

Sally asked if we should hold the Advisory Council dinner. Different venues were discussed including Grain House, but outdoors. It was suggested that we do cocktails and heavy hors d’oeuvres. Sally said Kathy Pfeil reached out to NJ American Water regarding microplastics in water, could have them and Sandra be speakers. Prefer not to do it on Zoom. Looking at July as an option for this event or possibly end of June. Further discussion about venue and date, but all seem to be in agreement about having it offsite and outdoors.

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Tony brought up GSWA's 40th anniversary. Sally gave an update – asked about interviews with a few Board members and if they have any suggestions for people we should interview. Deb suggested interviewing one of the educators who have been weaving our programs into their classrooms and maybe a student or intern.

Tony talked about the Gala. No consensus on what the right thing to do is. Fall will have a different dynamic than now. People will want to be able to socialize with people. Don't think it would be prudent to plan a large indoor event at this point. Looking for ideas, need to decide. Has participated in outdoor events, fully catered, hosted by friends. Need to provide a venue. Could have dinner in your home with a virtual component.

Sally said we need an honoree for this event. Paul thinks we should leverage our 40th anniversary and bring in honorees who have had a significant impact on GSWA. He mentioned having multiple honorees. Michael said the theme should be "outdoors saved us (during the pandemic), now give back to the outdoors." Tony thinks we should do an outdoor event, since we are an outdoor organization. Sally will reach out to Brooklake Country Club to see if they do outdoor events.

Deb suggested maybe getting the head of a pharmaceutical company to be an honoree. Further discussion was had about this, with multiple suggestions.

Sally asked Jordan to discuss the music festival, Advisory Council dinner and Gala at next Development Committee meeting.

Sally told the board that Debbie Rice is retiring at the end of June.

The next Board meeting was previously scheduled for May 21, but that is two days before the music event, so that meeting will be cancelled. We may reschedule or we may just wait and hold our June Board meeting.

Tony asked if there was any other business to discuss. No further discussion. Tony adjourned the meeting at 10:45 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynne Applebaum
Director of Institutional Relations