The virtual meeting was called to order by Acting President, Mike Krzyzkowski at 7:00 pm. The following board members were also present on Zoom: Vikki Carpenter, Sandy Artman, Rob Mills, Brenda Curtis, Phyllis Cady, Sandra Kaiser, Cindy Macri, and Pete Quasius. Mike introduced Nancy Leipold who was joining tonight’s meeting as a potential future Board member. Other Board members acknowledged Nancy’s presence and welcomed her. Mike also announced that Susan (Sue) French was interested in joining the Board. Mike recruited Sue from the Bird Blind volunteers at CHEC (Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center). Sue was unable to join us this evening but Mike will send her resume to board members.

Roll call indicated a quorum was present for this evening’s meeting.

Agenda, Minutes from March 11, 2021 and the Treasurer’s report were sent to the Board prior to tonight’s meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda and minutes.

Sandy Artman presented and commented on the Treasurer’s report. PRAS has received $1,735. toward the Ron Mills scholarship fund through last week ($1,669.29 after PayPal fees). As voted by the Board at the March meeting a $50. gift certificate was sent to Patti Lin for her volunteer work at Pennington Park. Sandy reported that she has already received a nice thank you note back from Patti. Sandy also reported that she has sent the rent check to the First Alliance Church on Midway plus a $100 deposit in order to resume PRAS onsite monthly meetings beginning in September 2021. PRAS insurance documents are due in August and must include the church meeting venue.

After no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer’s report.

OLD BUSINESS:

Website – Pete Q. said that PRAS needs to post solicitation documents from the State. Sandy will send out the documents. Phyllis C. reminded everyone to send all information for social medial to Sandra K. and to her. Board discussed sending Brenda’s C. conservation blog directly to Kalindi (Webmaster) to post or through Sandra and Phyllis. It was decided that Brenda can continue to post her blog directly.

Plants for Birds Book – Brenda C. stated she has 2-3 boxes left of the books to distribute. Brenda sent books to Steve Buczynski, president of the Hendry/Glades Audubon Society; Pelican Island, and Bay Mangrove School. Brenda is saving a box for Earth Day the end of April. The grant will close out the end of May and the monies have been spent. Pete Q. suggested that the book could be published in PDF online for future use. Can do if PDF is print quality.

Wildlife Viewing Signs Project – Vikki provided an update on the Wildlife Signs Project that Ron Mills had initiated. She has contacted both Charlotte County and C & R Graphics. The County is still interested in having signs (2 each) at Ollie’s Pond and Kiwana’s Park. The cost to produce and install would be the responsibility of PRAS. C & R Graphics provided estimated cost of $149. plus, PRAS would need to buy
the four posts for the signs. A motion was made and approved to spend up to $200. to continue this project and Vikki was asked to pursue.

Robert Batement Print – Rob Mills reported there has been no interest online for the sale of the Batement print to date. Phyllis Cady offered $200. for the print to be earmarked for the Ron Mills scholarship fund. Board approved the offer via vote.

Ron Mills Passage/Memorial - Sandy A. stated she was looking into an informal fundraiser this fall at the Nav-A-Gator bar & grill in Arcadia where there are the murals painted by Ron Mills. Board also decided to keep PRAS donation memorials in memory to Ron for local camp scholarships. Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center’s (CHEC) summer camp is $150. per child per week. Alligator Creek and Cedar Point offer weekly sessions for 10 weeks. Board voted to offer $1,800. from current annual budget plus an additional $1,800. from the Ron Mills scholarship fund for a total of $3,600. in CHEC camp scholarships this summer

Board also approved to make a plaque for Ron at the Bird Blind at CHEC which can be affixed to the door/building. Mike suggested a dark wooden engraved sign approximately 8” x 12” and asked Vikki to check into it on behalf of the Board.

PRAS 2021-2022 Meeting Venue- Sandy has again secured the 1st Alliance Church on Midway for the general meeting for the 2021-2022 year. The agreement with the church is from September 2021 – May 2022. Meetings are the third Thursday of each month from 5:30-9:30 pm. Note – Board meetings will continue to be conducted virtually.

Nominating Committee for 2021-2022- Mike reiterated that the May meeting is our annual meeting and there will be a slate of Officers and Directors presented for the 2021-2022 year. This will be a virtual meeting and there will not be an opportunity for candidate nominations from the floor or a voice vote for election. Like last year, we will handle the process by a ‘unanimous consent’ procedure. An email will be sent out to all members asking for any floor nominations 14 days before the final voting. A final slate will then be sent out and if there are no objections after 14 days, the slate will be confirmed by ‘unanimous consent’. Roberts Rule of Order Parliamentarian has approved this approach.

Mike announced that he and Brenda Curtis have agreed to co-preside as president and Vikki and Sandy have agreed to serve as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively. Mike will come up with the slate of officers for the election and will also contact the committee chairs to affirm their willingness to continue to serve. Mike will also look into the term limit of the current Directors and determine those needing re-election after two years of service.

Vikki asked that if there are any changes to the Directors’ contact list she previously sent out to please let her know.

Bird-a-Thon- Sandy A. asked Mike and fellow Board members to promote the upcoming Bird-a-Thon scheduled for May 1st. Cathy Olson has indicated that not too many people have signed up to participate. Venice Audubon Chapter members can also participate,
NEW BUSINESS:

Earth Day at CHEC - Phyllis C. offered to coordinate the Earth Day celebration participation of PRAS at the Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center on Saturday, April 24th from 10-3. PRAS will have a table set up outside with information on PRAS, conservation, demonstrations and a free raffle for a bird house. (Note, a book on birds was also offered for the free give away). Members Vikki, Rob, Sue, Phyllis, Brenda and Sandra K. have committed to assisting with this event.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Membership - Phyllis reported that there are 460 current members.

Conservation – Brenda submitted her report to the Board via email and hoped everyone had a chance to read it. She said the article 5 Ways Birds Change During Migration was especially interesting and she will share the link for PRAS social media followers. Brenda also mentioned she took her mentee and PRAS member/photographer, Edwin, for his first camping trip which he enjoyed.

Programs - Mike K. said there was not much to say this evening. The last two virtual programs this year will take place this month and May as planned with guest speaker, Reinier Munguia. Mike is hoping to have more members take over this committee for next year.

Field Trips – PRAS member Ron Robinson conducted virtual field trips this year. Rob M. stated no other trips were set up through PRAS this year due to pandemic restrictions.

Audubon Pennington Park – Cindy M. and Rob M. confirmed there continues to be some vandalism at the park. Kiosk has been smashed a couple of times and repaired (by Larry Lin). Patti Lin has spray painted the wood. Discussion ensued about mounting a false video camera which needs to be posted high enough out of reach. Cindy will check with the county to get authorization.

CHEC - No report

Scholarship – No report

Yard Certification/Plants for Birds – Rob shared that last week the Master Gardners in Charlotte County had an outside in-person presentation at Harbour Heights. Rob was the speaker and spoke on Plants for Birds. There were about 67 people in attendance. Several people were interested in the yard certification program. Rob said that his speaker fee will go to PRAS.

Rob also stated that both the Boat Club and the Port Charlotte library yard certifications are finished!

Bird Blind – Mike K. said the bird blind still has a rodent problem. The rats are hard to get rid of. They are using traditional snap kill traps. Poison will be used after the Blind is shut for the summer. Care will be taken to ensure the safety of other critters at the Blind. Mike also reported that the pump has to be replaced and that a platform feeder was purchased to replace the bulk feeder. Mike also reported that overall, there has been a good turnout of participants at the Blind this year.
OPEN FORUM:

Brenda mentioned a 15 seedlings wildflower give away in the conservation report. The May conservation conference is virtual from May 14-16.

Phyllis inquired where to send check to CHEC. Information provided.

Rob mentioned that the County’s Extension Office will have an Arbor Day celebration event with a free give away of native trees. There will be a plant sale from 10-1 at the end of April. You can register via Eventbrite.

Mike confirmed that the next Board meeting will be May 13th. There will be a summer planning meeting in late July or August.

After no further discussion, Acting President Mike Krzyzkowski adjourned the meeting at 8:35 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vikki Carpenter, Secretary