Peace River Audubon Society Board Meeting

September 14, 2021

Board Members in attendance on Zoom: Sandy Artman, Phyllis Cady, Brenda Curtis, Ashley Demarais, Sue French, Sandra Kaiser, Mike Krzyskowski, Nancy Leipold, Rob Mills, Peter Quasius

Guest: Mike Bednar, CHEC and Larry Behrens

Mike K. called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M as a quorum was established.

Pete Q. moved that the agenda be approved. Sandra K. seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Sue French moved that the minutes from the August 2021 be approved as distributed. Phyllis seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

2021-2022 Brochure

Mike K. distributed a draft of the brochure to all board members by e-mail prior to the meeting. Pete Q. stated Larry B. did a good job. Nancy L. stated that the information listed January 18 was not clear. Rob M. stated the correct information and Larry stated he would change the listing. It was suggested that the digital form of the brochure be placed on social media as soon as possible and not wait for the brochure to be published. Rob suggested to Larry that he send the brochure digitally to the publisher rather than having to deliver a hard copy. There was discussion regarding how many brochures should be ordered. Phyllis suggested that we order 250 brochures but later discussion upped the number to 500. Rob M. volunteered to pick up the brochures.

There was discussion on sending brochures to the people who signed up for membership through the national Audubon. Discussion revolved around who would send these brochures out to these national members, wondering whether it should be the secretary or membership chair. It was decided to table the discussion of who would send out brochures until next month. Phyllis revealed in the past that a welcome letter accompanying the brochure to the new national members. The number of new national members is usually five to seven annually. There was discussion on where the brochure information should be publicized. Newspapers, Waterline, and Florida Weekly was suggested. Sandra K. stated she would do this and she was advised by the board to only put in at most two weeks at a time.

The discussion ended with the board agreeing to order 500 brochures and that we would agree next month to decide how and where to distribute them.
Sandy K. asked Larry B. if he would be willing to do the flyer for the banquet and he agreed.

**CHEC Blind**

Mike B. from CHEC discussed the process of evaluating different vendors for the new blind. Lowes and Home Depots costs were 25% higher than the other vendors. Tempa Sheds in Port Charlotte had a good price but putting in the window would be difficult. Southwest Sheds would be able to do a rough cut for the window that would fit the custom window that is in the present shed. This re-use of the window would save costs. He reminded the board costs are increasing and the quote he had for a replacement shed was only good for 30 days. Mike B. stated that the quote he has is for $5400. He stated that on September 25th, the day that has been designated National Public Lands Day, CHEC staff and volunteers are going to tear down the old shed and make it acceptable for the delivery of the new shed. He extended an invitation to the board members to come to CHEC and help with the tear down and preservation of the window and the water cistern. Mike B. would like the approval of the board to order this shed from Southwest Sheds. Mike K. reminded everyone that last month the board approved an additional $3000 to CHEC for the shed to accompany the $1800 PRAS had sent already. Mike B. stated that he wanted to make sure that we are all in agreement regarding the purchase of this shed. The board agreed. Mike B. will order this shed. Mike reminded that the shed tear down will take place September 25th from 9 A.M. until 12 noon and invited Mike B. members to come and help. He stated that he would keep the board up to date monthly.

**Photo Contest**

Brenda C. sent out emails to all board members regarding the Martin County Photo contest. Brenda discussed the difficulties of having a photo contest on-line. She discussed many ideas regarding how the photo contest could be used as a fund raising project or a method to get new members. Brenda suggested that the photo contest be postponed this year and that we encourage members to join the Martin County contest. Mike K. moved that we postpone the photo contest for this year. Sandy Artman seconded. Larry B. liked the idea of doing the photo contest online. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Treasurer’s Report**

Sandy A. stated not much has happened in September. She paid the website bill. Brenda C. moved to approve treasurer’s report. Pete Q seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

**Zoom complexities regarding member inactivism**

Brenda C. stated her concern that some PRAS do not have internet. There was discussion about how people can get internet service and there was suggestion that a cell phone can be used as a hot spot to get internet. She wondered how we can help people who are not comfortable with zoom and with zoom meetings. She was concerned that this may have an effect on our membership. Phyllis stated that membership is doing well. Brenda C. shared how welcoming PRAS was when she was decided which area Audubon group to join. She wants to continue fostering comrades in the group. Since the only social interaction within the group is through field trips and walk-a-bouts we should encourage all members to attend these activities. This is why she is working on the newsletter which she sent to all the board members.
prior to the meeting. There was discussion on how the newsletter could get to all the members. Our mailchimp subscription does not allow this organization to include photos. There was suggestions that the newsletter could go on our Facebook page and the website. Mike K. said that during the regular Zoom meeting on Thursday September 16th he would talk about the importance of meeting other members on field trips and walk-abouts. He suggested that it is important for board members to attend these activities.

**Giving Challenge and Insurance Update**

Sandy A. said she had no more information on the Giving Challenge. She renewed our insurance with the Pachner and Associates after trying to get other quotes from agencies that never responded. Mike K. asked if Sandy needed any help with the Giving Challenge because it does take some effort to keep our profile up to date. Phyllis stated that we never really reach beyond our membership to the general public with the Giving Challenge.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Bylaw update committee formation to discuss 6 Amendments**

Brenda C. sent an email to all the board members with her suggestions about the by-laws. Brenda C. discussed her concerns about the way the current by-laws are not being followed. She stated that according to the by-laws the group should be focusing on conservation and education. She mentioned that since there are now co-presidents, this fact should be reflected in the by-laws. She identified 5 areas that need to be addressed: 1. how to deal with vacancies in the board 2. How do deal when the presidency becomes vacant 3. Should we have a photo group in the club 4. Newsletter committee 5. The president as an ex-officio member of many committees. She also discussed the fact that the board needs to address board members who miss several board meetings in a row. Brenda C. requested that the board create a by-laws review committee and asked for volunteers. Nancy L. and Pete Q. volunteered. Brenda C. stated she would contact these members via email.

**Audubon Assembly, CLI mentorship**

Brenda C. sent out emails to the board regarding the Audubon Assembly. She then discussed the Audubon Assembly and how valuable it is to attend. Pete Q. agreed and encouraged people to attend. Pete Q. and Brenda C. are attending. Mike K. said that in the past PRAS has sponsored two members to attend this conference. Sandy K. suggested that maybe PRAS could sponsor more members to go to this conference. Could we possibly put this offer on Facebook and open it up to members who would like to go?. Bren C. stated that she would look into possibly putting this on Facebook.

**RCC and PRAS Objectives**
Brenda C. emailed all the board members listing these objectives. Please refer to these. There was discussion about these objectives.

**Charlotte City Resilience and Water Quality, Red Tide Update**

Brenda sent out handouts and photos regarding these topics. Please refer to these. She wants us to be aware of these topics and the actions people are taking to organize government, private organizations and NGO and Southwest Florida to work to address climate changes. Regarding red tide, Brenda provided photos of the consequences of red tide on animals. Pete Q. stated that red tide was terrible this year. It has persisted for months and is now spotty. There is strong evidence that nutrients from Piney Point that were released into Tampa Bay caused significant damage to wildlife.

**Plants for Birds Grant**

Rob M. submitted, on behalf of PRAS, a grant to Plants for Birds. The deadline for submission was extended because of covid. He described the conversation he had with the people who are providing the grant that instead of giving away one plant it was suggested that we give away a bundle of 5-6 plants. Rob thought that the people he discussed the grant with were very impressed and he is hopeful that we are approved for the $2500 grant.

Rob M. said that April is National Native Plant Month. Arbor Day is the third Friday of April. He suggested that we give away the plants in April. He proposed the idea that there could be a Native Plant Festival during April and we could work with other like minded groups, for example Native Plant Society who could sell plant, and get more native plants out in the community. Rob M. stated that he thought as a result of the grant we could give around 100 people plant bundles. Pete Q. recommended a person that could be a resource for Rob M. He agreed to email Rob this contact.

**Evo Conference**

Pete Q. described the Evo Conference that will occur on Hawks Key, January 6-8, 2022. This is a conference where well known experts from Washington D.C. will attend and speak. In the past, Pete Q. stated that we have spent $250 to get our name in the brochure. He suggested that we sponsor a member to attend the conference. Mike K. moved that we allocate $400 to a member to attend this conference. Pete Q. seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. Sandy A. said there is money in the budget allocate more money. Brenda C. stated that she would like to see others go.

Pete Q. said that he was going to a conference on water quality September 28-29th. This is a virtual conference. Pete said that he would send a link to this conference.

**COMMITTEES**

**Membership:** Phyllis reported that the September membership is ongoing. She is reaching out to past members by email and social media. She reported that 52% of members have already donated.

**Conservation:** Brenda C. reported on yellow fever mosquitoes eradication program in southern Florida.
**Programs:** Mike K. reports that everything will be on Zoom until January.

**Field Trips:** Ron M. nothing else to report.

**Publicity:** Sandra K. discussed the Ambush Reward recognition that she will be putting in Waterline and Florida Weekly that acknowledged Rob Mills for all the work that he does in Charlotte County.

**Audubon Pennington Nature Park:** Mike K announced that Cindy Marci will be resigning from PRAS board effective today. Rob M. stated that the Ambush Awards people related to him that the PRAS is the only group that meets weekly: Wednesday mornings to work on maintaining Audubon Pennington Nature Park. He related that the potato vines are getting under control because of the beetles are eating them.

Rob M. also stated that he was walking in the Town Center Mall and came across a mural of Keep Charlotte Beautiful. He noticed that there were many blank walls and maybe we could get a PRAS mural painted on one of these walls. He reached out to a contact person to see if there were interested in this idea. No response yet.

**Banquet:** Sandra and Sue have met, but there has not been another banquet meeting because of covid. Sandra requested that a Zoom meeting be scheduled for a future banquet planning meeting. Mike Z. said that he will do this. Sandra will make e-mails available to Mike so he can schedule meeting. Sue F. said that she would be able to coordinate this meeting. Sandra asked for a bio for the speaker of the banquet. Mike K has this information.

Rob M. stated that the Peace River Botanical and Sculpture Gardens had been certified as a Native Plant Yard program. Rob described the Garden’s beautiful butterfly house and recommended that people visit.

Meeting ended at 8:53 P.M.

Nancy Leipold, Acting Secretary for the September Meeting.