

**Western Cuyahoga Audubon Society
Board Minutes, June 17, 2013**

Present: Suzanne Aldrich, Kit Birch, Nora Ebie (moderator), Nancy Howell, Kurt Miske, Penny O'Connor, Mary Anne Romito, Tom Romito, Stan Searles, Barbara Shagawat, Barry Wolfe

1. Reports from Strategic Champions

a) Barry Wolfe, Membership. Barry expressed frustration with the slow progress of involving members and adding new members. Suzanne suggested personal contact by phone. Kit suggested that at each meeting, we recognize newcomers. Penny thanked Barry for greeting program attendees at the door, felt that it would make newcomers welcome. Will continue with the sign-in sheets. Board decided to table reports from the Membership Champion until the September Board meeting.

b) Kurt Miske, Leadership, Bylaws. Kurt felt that the bylaws are basically a sound foundation, and felt that elections were a positive step. A work in progress.

c) Stan Searles, Education. Stan is working on some PowerPoint presentations to help WCAS get the message out. Also would like to table this until the September Board Meeting.

2. Finances: Treasurer Nancy Howell prepared a half-sheet to show the state of WCAS finances. She asked that Ultrawalk/Ultrabird donations be sent in as soon as possible, in order to make one large bank deposit. The treasury is at \$25,852.37. This includes donations for the Ultrawalk/Ultrabird, Annual Appeal and Carbon Offset. Membership, Coffee sales and Rock Pile fundraiser also brought in some funds.

3. Designation of an administrator on the board:

Tom Romito proposed that one person become the administrator of disparate activities that he has taken care of as president. This would include acknowledgement letters for Annual Appeal donations, Preparation of the chapter annual report to the National Audubon Society, Combined Federal Campaign participation (attention needed now to avoid being disqualified), may think of other. Nancy Howell observed that it will free the president of some tasks. Suzanne felt that this would allow more accountability, tracking of activity, help in highlighting successful ventures. Stan Searles found the idea solid, and suggested that rather than create a new position, the Vice-President might assume these tasks. Nancy asked who would step up to assume this responsibility. Tom said that it was a question of exploring the concept at this point. Barbara Shagawat asked if there is a precedent for an administrative position in other similar organization. She observed that it sounds more like an administrative

assistant. Perhaps a need to delegate, rather than to create a new post. Barry Wolfe and Suzanne Aldrich and Penny asked for a more detailed understanding of the timelines, deadlines and workload of each task. Tom agreed to provide detail at the next board meeting.

4. Modify the bylaws:

For May Elections to move to April -- Board agreed to move the election cycle back one month, so that elections occur in April, not May.

To allow for more board members -- Board agreed to modify the language in the Bylaws to say that the Board includes AT LEAST 6 directors at large.

Penny O'Connor referred to the April 2013 Board minutes, which include some earlier modifications to the chapter bylaws, to indicate that the immediate past president will automatically be a board member.

5. Role of the Vice President to monitor committee functions:

Nora Ebie spoke to the workload of monitoring committees, administrative functions and the website redesign that she is undertaking. Penny and Stan felt that committee functions are on a different level than the administrative tasks. Penny felt that committee heads are responsible and competent and should be free to act in a professional and autonomous manner, not requiring a great deal of management. Stan observed that the chapter is at a crossroads. Tom said he would yield on having Nora monitor committees in favor of having her be the administrative officer. Nora expressed concern about the time involved in handling the administrative tasks. Tom asked her to focus just on the annual report for now. Nora asked the board for permission to postpone the web site update in order to do this. The board approved and suggested that Nora manage the annual report production by delegating portions of it to the board members and supervising them. Tom noted that the deadline for the chapter annual report is in September, but not hard and fast. There is a template on the National Audubon website, and previous reports are on the chapter website. Mary Anne Romito prepares IRS 990 form, and Nancy and Mary Anne can supply financial components for the report. Nora agreed to put the web redesign on hold, and move forward on the chapter annual report.

6. Member programs:

Nancy Howell reported that the first program for 2013/2014 will be in September, with Ken Ostermiller's E-Bird program. Penny will bring a wi-fi hotspot. Nancy is looking into a program on the Lost Bird Project to be offered jointly with other Audubon chapters at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, possibly in March.

7. Newsletter articles for August, September, October issue:

Kurt Miske would like submissions by Friday, June 28, 2013. Drop-dead deadline is July 10. Nancy reminded us that this issue goes to all 1,000-plus National Audubon members. She is revising the membership form that will be included, to offer an option of electronic newsletter delivery only. Tom Romito will write a front-page article.

8. Proposed meeting of Audubon chapters in Ohio: Grange Audubon Center is trying to put together a day-long get-together of Ohio chapter leaders. It will likely be in August. Stan, Nora and Tom are interested in attending. Tom will send a link for a survey to determine the date.

9. Visit to Brian Safran's property in Valley City: Tom received an e-mail. Property owned for 17 years, would like to make it bird friendly and eventually donate as a bird sanctuary. WCAS may suggest that Western Reserve Land Conservancy become involved. Several board members would like to visit, also will invite Michelle Manzo. Tom will contact Brian Safran to set a date.

10. Publicizing, advertising WCAS field trips and events.

Nora would like to see more social media, and other outreach.

. Kit proposed "business cards" that members could carry and give to other birders encountered in the field. Kurt will look into a "business card" design.

11. Fund Raising opportunities: Nora has explored chocolate fundraising from Malley's, or a chapter calendar. Kurt mentioned that there is an industry that deals in promotional items. Decided not to go the candy route, not mission-related, and storage issues. Free calendars are plentiful. Nancy would like a "Friend-raiser" theme. Suzanne felt that a conservation project would provide a focus for fund-raising. Board members agreed that we should recast the term "fund-raising opportunities" to "public awareness and member involvement" opportunities.

12. Website updates: Will let this slide for a time in order to address other priorities. Board authorized Nora to spend up to \$100. for a website template and other necessary expenses of redesign.

13. Next meeting: Monday, July 15, 2013, 6 p.m. at Sandwich Delites, Berea, Ohio.