

Harwich Ponds Coalition

www.harwichwaters.org

January 31, 2025

Minutes from the Steering Committee Meeting

Steering Committee Meeting Attendees:

Susan Cyr - President

Ann Frechette - Vice President

Erik Skramstad - Treasurer (via zoom)

Hallie Vitolo - Secretary

John Kechum - Webmaster

Scott Norum

Diana Preston (via zoom)

Rich Walker

Donna Connolly (via zoom)

Patrick Otton

1. Volunteer Fair Recap

- Susan reported that the Harwich Volunteer Fair that was held on January 23rd was a success. Ann had prepared postcards and a table banner for the event. It was reported that response at the event was very supportive and that they felt that it had helped to spread the word!

2. Financial Overview (presented by Erik Skramstad)

- Erik confirmed that we have now had one person become a member of the organization & has submitted membership dues through the website link! The donation was made by Paul Aruffo who is interested in becoming a board member. Susan agreed to respond to him letting him know that the existing Steering Committee will remain in place through the next annual meeting in June at which time a new Board will be elected.

2. HPC Initiatives Going Forward

- **Pond Pledge:** It was noted that a meeting would be held with the Harwich Conservation Commission regarding fertilizer use in the Town and that many local landscapers would be present. All local HPC members confirmed they would be present at this meeting. Patrick noted that he had recently submitted two citizen petitions to the town for the May 5th meeting, one proposing the reduction of pesticide use and the other prohibiting the application of fertilizer, with the exception of commercial agriculture and private residential use of appropriate material. Copies were subsequently emailed to the Steering Committee members.

The current wording of the Pond Pledge was generally approved (with one spelling error to be corrected). We reviewed how Brewster and Orleans have handled their pond pledges online and decided that a submission form like Brewster would be our goal. Hallie will reach out to the Brewster pond group to confirm who they work with for signage and associated costs. Ann volunteered to look into signs (types & costs). The group also discussed the possibility of posting recognition for donors and/or members that have signed pond pledges online; this will be further discussed in subsequent meeting(s). If this is a goal, we would include a box to check on the submission form that would confirm that the donor is comfortable with their name(s) being posted online.

- **Logo Contest:** Hallie indicated that we had received no submittals for the Logo Contest despite sending the flyer to both Monomoy High School and at Cape Tech High School. Donna indicated that her brother was a retired graphic designer and would be happy to develop a logo for the HPC.
- **Pond Pages Project:** The Pond Pages Project is under development on the HPC website. The goal is to include a paragraph for each pond summarizing size, depth, types of fish and other wildlife, history, plants, sampling data and a pond association link (where applicable). Ann has started working on this and will continue to work with John and Rich to develop these pages. The goal will be to have the primary ponds updated by April 15, 2025.
- **Pondfront Owner's Contact Information:** Rich has developed a list of all abutting property owners that in more highly congested areas includes non-adjacent parcels. This will be used in the spring when we are ready to announce the annual meeting and membership drive. At that time we will send out a standard postcard size notice approximately 6 weeks before the annual meeting. The annual meeting is scheduled for June 14, therefore, the postcards should be sent to mail around the beginning of May. A notice of the meeting will also be posted in the Cape Cod Chronicle.
- **Testing:** Susan had spoken with Don regarding expanding the sampling program to include two additional ponds for testing. Don was very willing to help provided that we ensured that West Reservoir would be one of the two ponds to be sampled. The group agreed that Sand Pond would be the second. HPC will provide volunteer labor to complete this sampling.

It was noted that this is the last year of a three-year study being conducted by the APCC on the five ponds: Walkers, Cornelius, Sand Lake, Hawksnest and Long Pond.

Owners of property around Robbins Pond have expressed interest in sampling of this pond. However, as it has no public access, sampling will not likely be a priority. However, the cost of sampling should be determined so that additional sampling could be evaluated in the future.

- **Alerts:** Susan had discussed the potential for pond quality alerts and it was determined that neither the Conservation Commission nor the Natural Resources department could provide a separate alert for the ponds. She was informed that the current Town emergency alert system was to be reserved for weather or emergency notifications. Susan then reached out to the Health Department who indicated that they should be able to develop a separate alert for pond health advisories. The Health Department will look into this further and advise Susan as to what is possible.

3. Wrap Up

- The next meeting was set for 4:00 pm on March 14th and will be held at John Ketchum's house at 2 Lakehurst Drive in Harwich
- Meeting adjourned