



Harwich Ponds Coalition

www.harwichwaters.org

May 30, 2025

Minutes from the Steering Committee Meeting

Steering Committee Meeting Attendees:

Susan Cyr - President

Ann Frechette - Vice President

Erik Skamstad - Treasurer

Hallie Vitolo - Secretary

John Kechum - Webmaster

Scott Norum

Diana Preston

Rich Walker

Donna Connolly

1. Approval of Meeting Notes

- The notes from the April 11 meeting were reviewed and approved unanimously. It was agreed that going forward the minutes would include highlights of the discussions and to note whether there was an action item as a result of the discussion or whether the issue was tabled until the next meeting

2. Financial Update

- Erik confirmed that there are sufficient assets to pay for the bookmarks but not yet for the signs. Donna agreed to order 20 of the Pond Pledge Signs herself for future reimbursement. The group agreed to each make a \$50 donation in 2025 to help cover the costs of the bookmarks and signs.
- Erik and John agreed to work together to create links for payment for a Pond Pledge Sign and Other Donation on the website using the group's PayPal account.
- Cost of membership was confirmed at \$25 and the cost of the Pond Pledge Sign will be \$20 each. Susan will take a photo of the sign to include on the webpage.

- We discussed the need to accept cash or checks at the annual meeting and the need to have paper forms that people can complete for registration and so that Erik can provide a receipt. He will also need to devise a system to track who took a sign and whether someone paid for one that will need to be delivered at a later date.

3. HPC Initiatives Going Forward

- **Bookmarks:** The Steering Committee reviewed the draft bookmarks that Erik had provided and a few edits were recommended. It was decided that the pond pledge would not appear on the bookmark as to keep the bookmark language more streamlined. Erik sent a revised draft to the group on May 31st and it was approved unanimously with the addition of the QR code. Erik will order 100 bookmarks for the June 14 annual meeting.
- **Pond Pledge:** Donna unveiled the prototype of the Pond Pledge sign to unanimous approval. She will order 20 additional signs to have available at the June 14 annual meeting. The cost for each sign will be \$17.29 each including shipping for 20 or more signs. The prototype cost \$29.

The language of the Pond Pledge to be included on the website was reviewed and it was agreed that we would use the word “minimize” as it related to invasive species as opposed to “eliminate” as elimination is challenging!

- **Testing Program:** Scott has confirmed the contacts for the eight (8) ponds that are proposed for sampling in 2025 (including the two new ponds that were confirmed with Don before his departure from Natural Resources). These ponds include:
 - Hinckleys
 - John Joseph
 - Bucks
 - Skinnequit
 - Aunt Edies
 - Black
 - West Reservoir
 - Sand Pond (public beach)

The goal will be to ask for additional volunteers at the meeting. Sara volunteered to come to Harwich to assist in training of new volunteers. Current data sheets are needed and instruments will need to be calibrated with assistance from the new Natural Resources representative.

- **Alerts:** The Health Department has added a notification system for pond water quality to their website. A resident will need to log into their town account (or create a login) to request this notification. A discussion of how to do this will be included in the June 14 meeting.

4. Plans for June 14 Annual Meeting

- Susan and Scott will attempt to meet the new Natural Resources employee, Stephanie, on her first day, June 2nd in the afternoon. The goal is to introduce our group and request her presence at the June 14 annual meeting. Scott and Susan will also plan to discuss the PALS pond testing program, training of volunteers and working to obtain data sheets
- Susan confirmed that HCT, APC and CCC have all been notified of the meeting and will “advertise” our meeting in their membership communications.
- Ann volunteered to post flyers at the Community Center, Library, Visitor Center and other areas around town
- Notice of the meeting will be distributed to the three pond associations (Hinckley's, GSLA and Skinnequit) and to our Six Ponds contact
- Susan shared a powerpoint presentation that she had started for the June 14 meeting. The presentation will include:
 - Introduction of the Steering Committee
 - Discussion of charter, by-laws and eventual election of officers and terms
 - Discussion of committees: education, science, environmental advocacy, membership and finance. Several potential education topics were identified including education on invasive species, water quality, pond walks, pond profile pages, and fertilizer and pesticide use
 - Financial update
 - Expert Panel including Amy Usowski from the Conservation Dept, Carrie's Board of Health Substitute (and she will be on the side) and hopefully Stephanie, the new person with Natural Resources, Mike Lach from HCT and Sophia Feuerhake from APCC.
 - The panel will make introductions of themselves and their organizations
 - Discuss the status of pond testing programs and each department's role and how each department responds
 - Notifications of pond quality issues (advisories & closings)
 - Stress that pond quality is a team issue and that our mission is to get more coordination
 - Present the Pond Pledge, the sign and the costs
 - Testing & Training Update

The annual meeting is scheduled to start at 10; the Steering Committee should plan to arrive around 9 for setup.

5. Wrap Up

- The next meeting was set for 6:00 pm on July 15th and will be held at Ann Frechette's house at 10 Paradise Path in Harwich
- Meeting adjourned