

South East Volusia Audubon Society

January 7, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Agenda Items:

Accept the resignation of Jackie Myers as secretary. Voted unanimously to accept.

Accept Jane Talbot as secretary. Voted unanimously to accept.

Clarify Executive Committee and Elected Board of Directors

- Bylaws passed in April:
 - Article 5 states that the elected officers are the Executive Committee
 - Article 6 states that the board is made up of the elected officers, committee chairs and 4 at large members
 - Article 3 states that voting members are all members who have paid current dues and are members in good standing.
- This list will be published on the website. Current officers, committee chairs are:
 - Marsha and Bill Cox, Co-Presidents
 - John Pierce, Treasurer
 - Jane Talbot, Secretary
 - Lamont Ingalls, Conservation Committee Chair
 - Mary Schreiber, Programs & Speakers Chair
 - Richard Fasse, Publicity Chair
 - Gail Domrowski, Field Trip Chair
 - Don Piccard, Membership Outreach Chair, President Emeritus, Newsletter Editor
 - Nancy White, Hospitality
- Bill asked for input on other positions for board of directors.
 - Joyce Riddel, was added by unanimous vote as Member at Large, a voting member
- John had sent out a survey of chapter members. Results were as follows:
 - More activism and engagement in community and government environmental issues
 - Develop more community outreach opportunities
 - Cooperate & collaborate with other environmental groups like Audubon Chapters
 - Education of the young is an important mission, include the college aged

- Consider better financing and sources of Chapter income
- Provide for representation on local, municipal boards and commissions
- Work to elect environmentally minded officials
- Develop a stronger, more positive community image of SEVAS
- Focus on membership growth for more dynamic Chapter involvement
- Don listed the outreach work past and future:
 - Two programs upcoming at the New Smyrna Beach library
 - Know Your Island
 - Birds of the Beach
 - Birds of the Indian River Lagoon
 - Tomoka science fair
- Bill asked the newer members how they heard about SEVAS.
 - Online and from our field trips
 - From our booth at Lagoonacy
 - From volunteering at the Marine Discovery Center
 - From the Christmas Bird Count

Work area reports:

Birds and Brew has been very successful. There have been two events so far, the next scheduled for January 21st. John will show lead at the MDC. Ed noted if the group stays until sunset, they may see a great horned owl. Brews will be at the New Smyrna Beach Brewery.

For February B&B, Marsha would like to do a “Backyard Birding” community event in preparation for the Backyard Bird Count weekend. The event would be early in the month, and go to a neighborhood such as the one behind United Christ Church near Wayne Ave and Faulkner, then to Riverside Drive for water birds. Parking could be at the Brannon Center. Joyce and Marsha will plan the February event, Ed will help. Richard will put it on meetup. Ken suggested notifying neighbors and using it as publicity event to recruit new members. Jane suggested putting this on NextDoor, Joyce will ask some folks she knows who live in the area.

Dream Green Volusia

Don told about a new study showing that the arctic is getting full of plastic, which is coming from the snow falling. The plastic is being found under ice flows. He suggested looking for someone to do a poster of the reasons to do away with single use plastic and Styrofoam. Marsha talks to Suzanne (?) who said that they were planning an event at Publix in Daytona in conjunction with the Sierra Club with the aim of getting Publix to decrease plastic bag use.

The event was cancelled due to a lack of support. Marsha will ask Suzanne how we can support this effort. One suggestion is to help determine what restaurants should be classified with Gold Star for conservation activities such as eliminating plastic straws. Mary pointed out that all eggs sold at Publix were in Styrofoam but after she wrote to them they now sell some that are not in Styrofoam. Joyce said that Sierra is trying to get a petition going, but she is not sure if anyone has tried to engage Publix in a friendly conversation. She suggested a more supportive approach, and may have a potential connection to the owners.

John said that the MDC has been involved in testing water in the lagoon. The high school group checks oysters for plastics. Don reports that microplastics have been found in the water fountains, and all plastic that was ever created still exists.

Field Trips:

Saturday January 11th field trip is scheduled for Merritt Island, meet at 7:30. Margo pointed out that there is a launch scheduled for 8:00 that morning, and she will check to find out if Haulover Canal will be open. Margo will let Gail know which way the trip should travel to Merritt.

Publicity and Conservation have nothing to report

Speakers:

January will be Steven Kintner of West Volusia Audubon talking about Scrub Jays and their habitat.

February will be Jacqui Sulek from Audubon talking about how to combat bird loss. This is a project led by Cornell.

March will be a presentation on birds migrating south.

Mary, who volunteers at the MDC, will confirm that SEVAS meetings are on the MDC office calendar to ensure support for audio is covered.

Honorariums for speakers were discussed. Previously SEVAS has given speakers a bag and \$25 to cover gas/travel expense. After discussion, Ken suggested that SEVAS pay speakers with a check for \$50. This will be easier to manage, and easier to void if the speaker declines payment. All voted to approve the \$50 payments, which will start with the January 2020 speaker.

Marsha will broadcast a letter from Melissa Lammers relating to the ending of funding of a 25-year ecology grant. The letter includes addresses where to send letters of support for renewal of the grant.

Membership:

John reported that the money for new memberships is hard to track. He would like there to be a link between membership paperwork and the cash with communication to the treasurer. He is asking for a new form and a new process.

Marsha pointed out that there are two facets to membership: the accounting piece tracking payments, ensuring that existing members pay renewals; and outreach to bring in new members, making them feel welcome and helping them find ways to contribute. Joyce volunteered to help with the outreach tasks, and Dean volunteered to help with the logistics.

Treasury:

Current balances is approximately \$1,800 not including the grant money. Upcoming expenses may include an upgraded brochure, letterhead, science fair awards, stickers with SEVAS information to customize brochures, etc. Each work area should submit projected expenses to John. John and Bill will develop a budget using these expenses and historical data from the check book.

Future Activities:

January 18th there is a Water Wise event put on by the utilities commission on Canal Street. SEVAS has been invited to setup a table. Richard will help put up the tent, Margo and Mary will join Marsha at the table.

January 25th is the Science Fair. High school kids from around the county who have won their local competitions will compete. Event is at Stetson University. SEVAS needs a volunteer to judge along with representatives from the other two Volusia Audubon groups. John may be able to judge, or Eli can be assigned to cast the vote for SEVAS. Bill will follow up to ensure payment of \$100 for the prize has been paid.

Grants:

The general outline of the area at the MDC has been marked with stakes. Chad Truxall requested a map to send to the landscape architect. John has created a map and will give it to Jessy Wayles at his meeting with her on Friday. Jesse is our liaison for the project and will help champion our efforts. Shannon is doing a map of the vegetative plantings. Water will be needed at the site for the birds and to water the plants until the roots are established. The new idea is to create a watershed, this has not yet been approved by Chad. Suggestion to use solar pumps to circulate water in a bird pond.

John has decided to relinquish his role as grant writer and is giving up work in the field. The team working on this project going forward will be Ed, Shannon, and whoever volunteers to do planting work.

Joyce reports no update yet on the Home Depot grant, she expects to hear in late January or early February.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00.

Minutes submitted by Jane Talbot