

South East Volusia Audubon Society

March 8, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Marsha Cox, Bill Cox, Richard Fasse, Rachel Smith, Joyce Riddel, Jenifer Russell, Mary Schreiber, Don Chalfant, Gail Rogers, Jane Talbot

Agenda Items:

- Strategic Planning
- Plants 4 Birds Update
- Finance Report
- Fledje
- Communications Committee Report
- Field Trip Report
- Other Business
- April Meeting

Strategic Planning:

Marsha asked the question who are we as a group and where are we going? In what direction do we want to take the chapter? Should we have a strategic planning session? Our chapter has a dual commitment to action. It is difficult to recruit volunteers for projects such as Plants 4 Birds and other areas aside from field trips. Richard suggested asking new member Bob Chew, who is active in the Edgewater Environmental Alliance, to join the conservation committee. Marsha and Joyce have been going to Green Flamingo farm for years weeding, planting, and harvesting food that is donated to local food pantries and met Bob there. Conservation committee role is to keep the group informed about issues and provide us with the backstory so the group can make informed decisions on where to take a stand. Don suggested working to involve more kids in our chapter, he has seen this work very well in other chapters. He gives kudos to Rachel's projects at Chisolm Elementary and also suggested tapping into the homeschool movement. Joyce asked if we should change our mission statement. Current bylaws limit president to two terms, Bill and Marsha are in the last year of their term (4th year). Bill pointed out that the group is in good shape with Florida Audubon, has a strong field trip program and a good action plan with the purple martin project and Plants 4 Birds. Someone taking over as president would have an easier task, and the support of Marsha and Bill. Most agree a strategic planning meeting is worth pursuing.

Fundraising should be discussed as part of the strategic planning. Gail suggested integrating with Flagler events on fundraising.

Bill and Marsha asked that anyone who is unwilling to continue in their current board position next year please notify them. Jenifer, Jane, Joyce, Mary, Don, Richard and Rachel all said they would continue in their current roles.

Action items:

- Bill will ask Bob if he will work on the Conservation Committee
- Marsha and Joyce will organize a strategic planning meeting.

Field Trips:

Don said the field trips are well attended and approximately 150 cumulative species have been seen on trips. The trips have attracted new members. Tuesday morning birding is working well. Trips are a good mix of nearby and far away. Don will do the Tuesday morning birding walks next year as well. He will also try to get more leaders involved so he can limit his trips to 2 per week.

Plants 4 Birds:

Joyce reported that P4B has multi-year commitments to Chisolm Elementary and the MDC P4B garden. Chisolm meets our group goal of education, but more education needs to be pursued at the MDC garden. She would like to grow the programs around the current gardens rather than increasing the number of gardens. Each year, some planting will need to be done replacing plants that don't survive. Joyce may submit a grant request to enhance publicity around the gardens. Audubon P4B grants can be used for garden support, Volusia county grants can only be used for plants, trees and a few tools. Rachel's idea for backpacks would require different funding sources, possibly education grants. Joyce suggested asking people to sponsor backpacks. Backpacks could also be sponsored by businesses in exchange for having their name/logo embroidered on the backpack. Backpacks would include a binder with a kid's birding adventure kit, binoculars, bird guide and/or bird flash cards. We may be able to get a discount on binoculars. Mary suggested adding a second backpack at the MDC, in addition to one at Chisolm Elementary. The kids would also need someone to teach them how to use the binoculars. The public library would be another possible location, but must require only people over 18 can check it out.

Action item:

- Rachel will continue to work on launching the backpack program

Finance Report:

Jenifer reports that the cash balance is \$8,353, which consists of \$3,125 in the general fund, \$3,567 in grant money and \$1,660 in memorial funds. She also reports that we have over 30 paid members! Two additional gourd sponsorships have been ordered.

Communication Committee:

Richard reported on the progress of the new communication committee. Richard and Dean did a survey earlier this year, followed by a face-to-face meeting of the full committee consisting of Richard, Dean, Mary and Jane. Dean had collected questions from newbies, and developed a road map for relevant links. Concept will be to drive newbies to the website where they will be directed to find the information they are seeking. Website improvements are in the works, and will be completed over the summer. This will include updating pictures, making the site look more current, adding helpful easy to find links, and possibly an online payment link. The committee will meet again either over the summer on zoom or in person in the fall. Richard pointed out that Facebook is great for posting pictures and trip reports but terrible for announcing upcoming events.

Don is trying to collect photos of members and creating a PowerPoint with picture, name, and picture of their favorite bird. Goal is to start playing this when we go back to meeting in person. Joyce will send Don a sample of a "permission slip" to ask folks if they are OK with their pictures being used this way, and Richard will send a blast email asking people to opt in.

Action items:

- Joyce will send Don a sample “permission slip”, Don will edit for our use.
- Richard will send a blast email once the permission slip is ready asking people to opt in.

Fledje

Marsha reported that Liz, Rachel and she are halfway through the Fledje training program. They are learning a lot. The program is to help organizations have a broader more diverse population. Goal is to ensure we are welcoming and open to folks of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Rachel added we should be casting our net wide, making sure the organization is sustainable. Question if there are barriers to joining, what are the barriers, and how can they be change.

Newsletter:

Mary reported that the contributions to the newsletter are great!

April meeting:

The April meeting will be on April 13th (Wednesday instead of the usual Thursday). There will be no speaker, and the meeting will be in person. The next board meeting will be April 12th. The plan for next year is to have meetings in person again. The first meeting will be in October, an organizational meeting rather than a guest speaker. Jane suggested that some folks may not be back yet in October, so consider doing a hybrid meeting.

Minutes:

Mary moved to approve the minutes of the last meeting. All agreed.

Meeting minutes submitted by Jane Talbot

Meeting adjourned 5:00