

**Association of Owners of Lowlands and Meadows around Chilmark Pond  
Annual Meeting  
August 11, 2019  
Draft Minutes  
Chilmark Free Public Library**

Before the Annual Meeting, Chuck Hodgkinson made a presentation on behalf of the Chilmark Pond Foundation.

**Officers Present:** Amy Salzman, President  
Andria Jason, Vice-President  
Kathy Coe, Clerk  
Steve Lewenberg, Treasurer and Commissioner  
Martha Cottle, Commissioner  
Terry Meinelt, Ex Officio

**Call to Order** President Salzman declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM. The Agenda was circulated with the comment that in the future an agenda would be shared prior to the meeting.

**Minutes** The minutes of the 2018 Annual Meeting, moved by Randy Milch and seconded, were then approved as submitted to the taxpayers with the Notice of the Annual Meeting.

**Annual Administrative Agenda** Ms. Salzman reported the Executive Committee recommended the following slate of officers: Amy Salzman, President; Andria Jason, Vice- President; Kathy Coe, Clerk; Susan Mottau, Treasurer; Steve Lewenberg, assistant Treasurer.

She also announced the Pond Commissioners slate as follows: Martha Cottle, Terry Meinelt, Steve Lewenberg and Bill Randol as Commissioner Emeritus. With no nominations from the floor, there was a motion made and seconded.

**Voted** For 2019-2020, the Executive Committee:

Amy Salzman, President  
Andria Jason, Vice-President  
Kathy Coe, Clerk  
Susan Mottau, Treasurer  
Steve Lewenberg, Assistant Treasurer

Pond Commissioners:

Martha Cottle  
Steve Lewenberg  
Terry Meinelt  
Bill Randol, Emeritus

Ms. Salzman reminded the taxpayers that annually they are asked to vote to authorize the Executive Committee to borrow monies to be used in the event of an emergency. Moved and seconded.

**Voted:** To authorize the Executive Committee to borrow the sum of \$25,000 for emergency purposes.

The President next introduced the idea of the Chilmark Pond Association (CPA) making a donation to the Chilmark Pond Foundation (CPF) toward the proposed project to restore the aquatic habitat of the Pond. The estimated cost of the project (which will likely take 10 years or longer to complete) is around \$ 1 million. The Treasurer reminded the taxpayers that for the last 10 years the CPA has been saving monies for just this kind of needed work. He also said that as a quasi-governmental agency, grandfathered since the 1904 legislation, the CPA does not report taxes.

A question was raised about whether the proposed project included the Upper/Middle Pond (between Dr's and Intern's Creeks); a representative of both the CPF and the CPA Executive Committee reassured the group "the two ponds are one".

In further discussion of the amount of money to contribute to the Foundation's project, there was also a suggestion of raising the CPA taxes as a way to generate money. Another suggestion was to limit that amount. After several motions for various amounts \$75,000 was moved, seconded and voted.

**Voted:** To authorize the Executive Committee to spend the amount of up to \$75,000 to support the project to Restoration of Chilmark Pond; for any additional amount, the taxpayers must be notified for their approval.

Mr. Allan Holt, President of the Foundation, thanked the voters and also noted that there are fund-raising efforts being made and the CPF is going to working with the Permanent Endowment of Martha's Vineyard to handle the administration of the CPF.

**President's Report** Ms. Salzman reported that she had worked on up-dating our records by using the same database that the Town uses. We have 135 taxpayers includes riparian landowners, beach lot owners, people with deeded access or those with rights of way. If anyone knows of recent changes in ownership, please contact us with that information. Current information allows for ease of communication; the President referenced the updates sent over the year.

**Commissioners 'Report** On behalf of the Commissioners, Martha Cottle referenced her written report sent out with the Notice of the Annual Meeting, asking if it needed to be read aloud. Since that was not necessary, she informed the group that the recent cut had closed by itself in late July. She then reviewed all the factors that had been considered in making the decision to open the cut on July 2nd. First, the opening in April had lasted less than two days and thus did not flush or empty the Pond adequately (she noted that Tisbury Great Pond also had a two day early April opening and while they reopened later in April, Tisbury also had to be open on July 1st due to high water). May and June were very wet months, bringing the level of the Pond to the point where it inundated the marshes. Any such long term inundation threatens the existence of the marshes which act as critical flood controls. High water conditions also potentially threaten septic systems in lowlands. In mid June when it was clear that action needed be taken, the contractor was unavailable. In addition, from April 1 to September 1, any work at the cut must be coordinated with Biodiversity Works whose charge is the protection of federally listed species. One of the key elements needed for a successful flush is adequate hydrostatic head that comes

from high pond depth. Given the shallowness of the Pond because we have not been permitted to perform extended cut work in several years, the shallower water is seeping farther into the marshes; re-opening the failed April cut, for example, would not have worked.

Russell Maloney, a taxpayer, offered to do some research on alternative methods to lowering the level of the Pond. Another concern is the growth of widgeon grass which was evident when the July cut was made. Ms. Cottle stated that she had thought that widgeon grass grew in warmer waters, but that its abundance in June indicated otherwise and she would like to better understand the conditions for the growth of these grasses. One final comment was made recommending that decisions should be about the health of the Pond, not its recreational use.

**Treasurer's Report** (distributed at the Meeting) Mr. Lewenberg reported that the revenues this year totaled \$18,000 while our expenses are roughly \$8,000. So far bills for 4 cuts are outstanding. Back taxes from 4 years ago are now being paid and ½ of the 2019 taxes are already in. Our work up-dating our property records identified some new owners. These current owners are now paying back taxes that run with the properties.

**Other** Sheri Caseau, the Water Resource Planner for the Martha's Vineyard Commission, attended the meeting to discuss the growth of blue-green algae, cyanobacteria. This summer, a bloom first developed in the Upper/Middle Pond and was prevalent throughout the water column. The bloom subsequently spread down through Doctor's Creek to the crossing at Abel's Hill. Blue-green algae exists in fresh water, but also survives in brackish water. With warm water during the summer months, algae blooms and then produces toxins harmful to pets and humans. In addition to the warm water, excess phosphorous and nitrogen from fertilizers, acid deposition, and probably septic contribute to these blooms.

Before the close of the meeting, two positives were noted: the Ospreys continue to thrive and raise young and two horseshoe crabs were seen in the Pond.

Meeting adjourned 6:25 PM.

Clerk, Kathy Coe