

DRAFT

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING
ASSOCIATION OF OWNERS OF LOWLANDS AND
MEADOWS AROUND CHILMARK POND
JULY 27, 2014**

Officers Present:

Joan Malkin, President
Steve Lewenberg, Treasurer and
Commissioner
Steve Asher, Clerk

Peter Bruce, Vice President
Martha Cottle, Commissioner
Bill Randol, Commissioner

Call to order

President Joan Malkin declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00pm. She invited members to take a copy of a brochure prepared by Biodiversity Works describing what we can do to protect endangered and threatened species as well as copies of the Commissioners' and Treasurer's Reports.

Minutes

The minutes of the 2013 annual meeting as submitted to members by e-mail with the notice of Annual Meeting and the President's Report were approved.

Annual administrative agenda

Ms. Malkin opened the meeting by suggesting that the members pass the annual resolutions regarding the election of officers and Commissioners and emergency borrowing before opening the floor discussion. She stated that the Executive Committee had recommended the re-election of all Commissioners and officers and open the floor for nominations.

She said due to her other commitments she had decided not to seek re-election, and that the Executive Committee had proposed the nominations of Peter Bruce as President and Terry Meinelt as Vice President. She said that the Association was looking for members to become involved in its work and serve as officers in the future. No further nominations were made by the members. Thereafter, upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: That Martha Cottle, Stephen Lewenberg, and William Randol be and each hereby is elected as a Commissioner of the Association.

VOTED: That each of the following persons be and hereby is elected to the office set forth next to his name:

Peter Bruce, President
Terry Meinelt, Vice-President
Stephen Lewenberg, Treasurer
Steve Asher, Clerk

VOTED: That the President and Treasurer be and they hereby are authorized on behalf of the Association to borrow up to \$25,000 for emergency purposes.

Commissioners' report

The annual report of the Commissioners was presented in writing at the meeting and distributed in an email to members sent prior to the meeting.

Shellfish Project

Rick Karney and Emma Green-Beach of the MV Shellfish Group (MVSG) discussed a proposal to seed in the Pond ribbed marsh mussels to improve water clarity. The Group runs a solar-powered shellfish hatchery in Lagoon Pond that produces millions of seedlings a year and now has leased the former State Lobster Hatchery. Shellfish are now seeded not for fishery but for their potential to improve water quality. Chilmark Pond is a shallow brackish-water pond with poor ocean flushing.

The Mass. Estuaries Project (MEP) is reviewing ponds across the Island to determine whether the nitrogen loads are harming the pond and if so what remedies should be instituted. In shallow ponds, runoff of phosphorus and nitrogen, largely from fertilizer and septic systems, leads to blooms of algae. In all the ponds that have been studied to date, there is an excess of nutrients, largely nitrogen. The MEP can impose a nutrient standard (Total Maximum Daily Load or TMDL) on each Town and the state can require the Towns to take action to reduce nutrient loads to attain the TMDL. For Lagoon Pond, MEP has recommended sewerage to reduce nutrient runoff to an appropriate level, which could cost the towns of Tisbury and Oak Bluffs millions of dollars. Tisbury Pond could lower its nutrient loading with additional flushing through more or longer openings.

The cost of sanitary sewerage has led to a search for alternatives such as shellfish. It would take 15 million oysters a year to bring Lagoon Pond down to its TMDL, which is probably unrealistic, but a meaningful reduction in nutrient loading could reduce the scope and expense of any sewer project.

Other control mechanisms include limiting hard surfaces, increasing vegetation buffers and reducing the use of fertilizer. As groundwater moves around 10 feet a year, employing such ameliorative measures in the watershed might not improve water quality in a pond for many years. Shellfish, by contrast, can reduce nutrient loads immediately. The Group has been looking at projects in Lagoon and Sengekontacket Ponds to determine how effective shellfish can be in reducing nutrient levels.

The Town of Chilmark asked the MVSG to evaluate whether introducing shellfish into Chilmark Pond could improve the pond's water quality. There are oysters in the Pond especially around Wade's Cove. However, MVSG is prohibited from adding more oysters because they cannot be safely eaten. As an alternative, MVSG proposes seeding the Pond with ribbed mussels, which are not edible. One mussel can filter 48 gallons a day and also digest bacteria, which is another concern in the Pond. MVSG estimates that 5.5 million mussels could filter Chilmark Pond in five days.

If the Association supports the introduction of ribbed mussels, the Group would figure out how to cultivate them in the hatchery and then introduce them into the Pond. Although the Group believe its cultivation efforts will be successful, as it has not previously worked with ribbed mussels, it expects that it will need to do further research and experimentation on the project.

Other bioremediation options MVSG is looking at include floating islands which the ribbed mussels would attach themselves to. Their normal habitat is at the edge of marshland. It also is reviewing harvesting phragmites, an unwanted invasive species that does however bind nitrogen as it grows. Harvesting phragmites would cause them to bind additional nitrogen as they grow back and likely limit their spread. Dredging sediments would also reduce the nitrogen which is bound in the sediments.

In response to questions, Emma Green-Beach said that bags of mussels would be spread across the pond, including five locations in Wade's Cove and additional locations in the Upper Pond. They can tolerate close to fresh water.

The Group requested that the Association authorize \$10,000 to support the ribbed mussel project. Liz Lewenberg asked if there were possible negative effects from introducing these mussels. Ms. Green-Beach said this should not be a concern because ribbed mussels are not a foreign species in Vineyard ponds.

In response to a question, Mr. Karney said the floating islands were not required for the project but could be a future enhancement. The \$10,000 would be a first step.

Chilmark Shellfish Commissioner Isaiah Scheffer said that he endorsed this project.

In response to a question, Mr. Karney said there would be additional investment needed for a full-scale introduction of the shellfish, but that other resources might become available, whether through the Town or otherwise, and that the pilot project would be completed in the next 12 to 18 months. Asked what his definition of success would be, he replied that he was looking at introducing 10,000 to 20,000 live mussels in the Pond. If that milestone was achieved, he was optimistic that the project could be scaled up. Mr. Scheffer said that there would also be some natural reproduction.

Ms. Malkin explained that the Association was seeking \$10,000 for its share of the project, and that the proposal was independent of the decision of the Town of Chilmark to authorize \$10,000 for the seeding of oysters in the Pond. After discussion, upon motion duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: That the Executive Committee and the Commissioners be and they hereby are authorized to contribute \$10,000 to the Martha's Vineyard Shellfish Group to cultivate and seed ribbed mussels in Chilmark Pond for the purposes of improving the water quality of the Pond.

President's Report

Ms. Malkin then referred to her report and added that there had been good results with the endangered plovers and oystercatchers. She said that Liz Baldwin from Biodiversity Works asked to remind the Association's members about the possible adverse consequences of allowing dogs and horses to roam on the beach. Discussion followed.

Ms. Malkin explained that the cost of Pond openings had increased in the past year because the members had previously authorized up to \$75,000 to extend and deepen the cut to improve the

effectiveness of the Pond opening. She said the most of the work had been completed last year and that the Association would monitor the changes in water level to determine if the project had succeeded.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon motion duly made and seconded it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn.

Adjourned.

A True Record.

Attest:

Steven Asher
Clerk