

Severn River Association Minutes

Board of Directors Meeting Thursday, June 27, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m. by President Lee Meadows, with a quorum (majority of Directors) present. Directors present were Don Carren, Lisa Bender, Tom Guay, Ken Hatch, Charlotte Lubbert, Maureen Burt, Miriam Mellin and Mike Robinson. Directors absent were Bob Whitcomb, Kurt Riegel, Steve Barry and Sally Hornor, all with prior approval due to conflicts. Others present were Dick Spencer, Lynne Rockenbauch, and Bob vom Saal.

Minutes of the May 21 Board Meetings were Approved with one correction: Dick Spencer was NOT on the ByLaws Committee.

Election of SRA Officers: The following officers were unanimously elected: President - Lee Meadows; Vice President - Dick Spencer; Treasurer - Lynne Rockenbauch; Secretary - Bob vom Saal

Next Meeting: The following dates were agreed for the regular Quarterly Board Meetings: September 25, 2013 and January 8, 2014. Meetings will be Wednesday afternoon at 2:00 – 4:00 pm at the Calvary United Methodist Church (off of Rowe Blvd by the DNR building)

Treasurer's Report – Treasurer Lynne Rockenbauch reported balances about the same as the 5/21 meeting. About \$30,000 in checking and \$45,000 in savings, total about \$75,000.

Committee Appointments:

1. **Communities Council.** Historically, the strength of the SRA has been its reputation as an association of Community Associations – each member Association had one representative on the Board. To maintain this strong relationship under the new ByLaws, Lee recommends this Communities Council which would meet once or twice a year. Each member Association would have its SRA representative serve as a member. The Council would review all SRA community programs, and suggest improvements and new programs.

Dick Spencer agreed this was a good concept, but we should take some time to get the right members. All officers should get a list of Community Representatives. Lee has recruited some outside members already and believes it could have over 60 active members. Miriam noted that the activity level now varies from community to community. Dick stressed that we need more Community support from west of I-97, which is 40% of the watershed and presently has almost no representation. The Council should also recruit new communities. Mike Robinson noted that the meeting location is also important to participation – we should have some monthly meetings in communities. We get good speakers & this should draw more participation by community reps. Lisa Bender noted that the SRA is viewed as a good resource by waterfront communities, but west county communities don't see our value. Mike + Dick feel we need to sell ourselves to these communities. Charlotte noted that only 1 Severn River Commission member was from west county. Mike thought perhaps Jamie Benoit could help us recruit western communities. Lee suggested the Council should also address increasing our membership. Tom Guay, Miriam Mellin and Maureen Burt volunteered to serve on this committee. Lee would like 5 or 6 members initially to divide the workload. Lee and Dick will both attend meetings if desired.

2. **ByLaws.** Several changes were discussed at the 5/21 Board meeting, including restricting the number of officers and directors from one community, and giving the Vice President and Secretary voting status at Board meetings. Dick thinks we need another officer – a chief information officer to coordinate our IT. The website needs work, and databases are not shared between committees. Lisa suggested hiring an IT professional. Dick Spencer and Mike suggested using an intern. Dick volunteered for this committee, and will define the CIO position, Tom Guay will help. Ken also volunteered for this committee.
3. **Community BMP Audits and Consultation.** Bob vom Saal will chair this committee.
4. **Construction Site Photos.** Lisa Bender and Charlotte Lubbert volunteered for this committee.
5. **Project Clean Stream.** Charlotte Lubbert and Don Carren volunteered for this committee. Bob Whitcomb has said he will help also.
6. **Oyster Raising.** Charlotte Lubbert, Lee Meadows and Don Carren volunteered for this committee. Bob Whitcomb has said he will help also.
7. **Grant Programs (Seed money grants and \$5k-\$100k Community Grants).** Lee Meadows and Lynne Rockenbauch agreed to serve on this committee. Oyster Harbor has asked for our help with a grant application to fix their untreated stormwater outfall – they will provide volunteers to do most of the work,

but the grant will be applied for and administered by the SRA. Details should be ready by the next Board meeting.

8. **Operation Clearwater.** Sally Hornor and Maureen Burt volunteered for this committee. Lee and Sally have discussed optional additional testing to distinguish between human and animal contamination in cases where the pollution source is not obvious – this testing is expensive (a single analysis at this time costs about \$700) so funding is a problem. The committee will study this and make a recommendation at the next meeting. Tests for other pollutants besides enterococci may also be offered.
9. **Community Clean Marinas.** Lee Meadows and Charlotte Lubbert will work on this committee, along with an architect (Toni Moyer) and the volunteer who guided the Saefern Community Marina through the certification process.
10. **Communications (PR, Log, Website, Monthly Meeting Announcements).** Tom Guay, Lee Meadows and Dick Spencer volunteered for this committee.
11. **County/City/Environmental Group Outreach.** Dick Spencer agreed to chair this committee. Dick said the Chesapeake Bay Commission is now trying to assess behavior changes (pet waste, rain barrels, rain gardens, pervious pavers) via the University of MD OpinionWorks. We should do a similar outreach for the SR watershed – they will analyze & coordinate. They would like to get the survey out in the next 2 months or so, and include SRA's growth aims. We can get the mailing database for ~\$500. We now have only a few names, <1000. UMD program is to set a baseline. If we do nothing, they will use an online survey, which tends to get a poorer response. Lee pointed out that 2-3% is the normal response to mailings. Lisa moved we make it a goal to get the database of property owners in the watershed. Charlotte said we can get that from the AACoCouncil for free. Tom Guay felt it isn't much use since returns are often well under 3%, more like 1%. We can't do it effectively yet – we should start with community outreach, then grow as we add more communities. We need materials to distribute.
12. **Education.** Mike Robinson will chair this committee and Dick Spencer would like to serve on this committee. It will be responsible for organizing hikes to view invasives, measure Hydrogen Sulfide, and organize other educational activities, and will work with the Outreach Committee as appropriate.
13. **Others.** Other proposed committees include a Watershed Steward Coordination Committee, Fund Raising & Volunteer Solicitation Committee, Nominating Committee, and Finance and Audit Committees. Appointments to these committees was deferred to the next meeting to permit a general discussion of Goals and Strategies.

Goals and Strategies

Dick Spencer went to a Montgomery County presentation on educating homeowners and other stakeholders on stormwater management. There is no quantitative measure of how important inspectors are. Richard Klein's assessment may not be accurate. There are many Outfalls with no treatment at all, and addressing these may be more critical. Richard Klein did a lot of useful work and taught us a lot, but not major priority – the major priority is to educate, recruit volunteers, and increase involvement in the watershed. We need a much bigger mailing list. Charlotte will work on getting that mailing list. Email addresses are not generally available. Lee and Tom said direct mail would be very expensive – cost is about 60c each and average response is only about 1%. Lee felt that our Communities can provide the direct link via their newsletters. Dick felt that we need to get to every property owner in the watershed to assess their interest. Lee agreed, but felt we can't get there immediately and should do smaller targeted test mailings first to improve our management of the responses.

Lisa suggested we develop teaching aids – pamphlets and perhaps a film – then market it to schools and communities. Lee said these already exist – Arlington Echo is a resource for them.

Lee and Tom felt that a large direct mailing is beyond our present ability and would be a waste of resources. Our community links provide a for growth and should be nurtured. For example, SRA is now working with Oyster Harbor to get a grant to build 3 BMPs supervised by Watershed Stewards. We can look for similar grants (under \$100k) to fix outfalls in other communities. Ken H – Crystal spring opp is using SRK to collect donations for opposition. Charlotte noted that Green funds have been funneled thru SRA before, e.g. to help the Sullivan's Cove lawsuit, Winchester rain gardens, etc. Eloise Ullman, a WaterShed Steward, has suggested we do more of this to help our member communities meet their stormwater treatment needs. Tom Guay agreed that SRA does this for Winchester now and it is a valuable benefit of membership. Lisa noted that the Greater Severna Park Council communities are now up in arms about the new stormwater tax costing communities money, and we can help by helping them do stormwater projects which will reduce their tax. We should educate them. Lee agreed. We can help get them grants to match funds.

Mike Robinson said we need to share more with the Severn River Commission. SHA paid for \$1mm report in 2006 that showed many serious problems. They still haven't acted on it. Dick said the SRA doesn't know what's happening on the Severn – there are no reports from communities on their stormwater or other watershed problems. Lee responded that The Downs just did that, asking for our help fighting a zoning request that would allow changing the shape of the waterfront. Dick said SRA should talk to MDE regulators – Lynne said she has tried to contact county DPW project managers on the Shipley's Choice dam issue, and gotten no response.

Mike and Dick said we need to spend the \$25,000 now to send a direct mailing to all 45,000 households in the Severn River watershed, telling them we are changing and will be more proactive, improving Water Quality and Safety for swimming &c. If you want to participate give us your email address. Miriam asked what makes us different from our competitors? Lee said that a test mailing is in process now. Dick said that mailing has been in process for over 6 months now, with no results. We need to do it now. If we need to spend \$500 on computer software to make it happen, we should do that. It is our highest priority. Dick also said that CBT is offering \$2500 grants for organizing, and this project would qualify.

Mike R moved to donate \$2,000 to plant Atlantic White Cedars or other appropriate plantings in Cabin Branch, specifics to be determined based on Keith Underwood's input. Lisa seconded. Lee asked to check with Keith Underwood who designed the project. Mike already has spoken to him and he would be thrilled. Ken Hatch said Fred Kelly (Severn Riverkeeper) is working on another grant for Saltworks Creek restoration. We need to confirm where they should plant. We have worked on Cabin Branch, but not with SRK. Dick felt this would also help us work with the SRKeeper. We should be supporting Fred, and suggesting projects. We also need to work more with the SR Commission to advocate for improvement. Motion carried unanimously. Mike will contact Keith & Fred to determine mechanism.

Lynne reported that our net income for the year is projected at ~\$15,000 not including grants. Outgo ~\$10,000, last year was \$16,500. We have about \$27k in the checking acct + \$48k in savings, total \$75k cash reserves.

Maureen reported that she had attended AACo government's Community Connections Day. County Executive Laura Neumann was there. We can give them educational material to send out to residents. They have reached out to us, we need to work with them.

Lee noted that we need to be careful to control our emails so we don't swamp recipients.

Mike suggested we need to send more information to community Newsletters.

Our Community Rep email database is not on our website, though email addresses are available for current reps on the governance page. The full membership data base is in the secure section of the web; the most recent is December of 2012. For access to this section, contact Kurt or Bob vom Saal. Kurt will work with others to make it available to committees. Tom will add community newsletter editors to his PR database. Mike will get Tom the contact for Arden and Charlotte will get the contact for Herald Harbor. Kurt will send out material to his email database on request.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:10 PM. Next regular Quarterly Board Meeting will be September 25, 2013. Interim electronic or physical meetings may be called as needed to appoint more committees.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob vom Saal