

The Severn River Association, Inc.

Draft Minutes - SRA Board of Directors – Thursday, January 09, 2014 at Calvary Methodist Church

The meeting was called to order at 2:04 PM by President Lee Meadows. All Board Members were present except Ken Hatch and Steve Barry. All four Officers were also present.

Minutes from the 6/27 meeting were Approved (Lynne R moved, John seconded).

The Minutes from the 9/25 meeting were Approved (Lynne R moved, Charlotte L. seconded) unanimously after Lee answered a Question about the fundraiser mailing. There have been a few more responses after the meeting so the response rate is now 6% from pier owners.

I. **Budget overview - Lee Meadows**

The proposed budget is conservative – it includes the expense of new revenue mailings, but no income. We need to start an endowment for the Stormwater Action Fund, so the surplus is shown as a deposit into the SAF.

The number of Organization Members has been between the current 60 & 71, averaging \$62-\$64 each (several make donations above the \$55 minimum). Members average \$55 each, and dockowners average \$65 each. We propose broadening the range, removing the labels, and raising the minimum from \$25 to \$35. 47 watershed stewards are honorary members – we need their volunteer efforts and hope to increase their involvement in restoration projects.

Direct Mail expense assumes we will continue the trend toward more on-line and fewer print copies of The Log. Smaller mailings are being printed at home instead of paying a printer. We are trying to get a restaurant to sponsor (subsidize) the Annual meeting to avoid a repeat of last year's net loss of \$398.

Contributions to Other Groups is primarily aimed at Watershed stewards, and possibly oyster groups. Miriam is helping with the website – we may revamp it to make it easier to focus on interests. Software - Maureen had a formatting problem trying to paste into email from a .pdf file - will work out with Lee - may need original Word file. This has highlighted our need to update software.

Jonas Green Park – Bob Whitcomb pointed out that Grants show up in one year, but the associated expenses show up the next year. The O&D Insurance premium is for 2 yrs, giving the same problem. Lee and Bob Whitcomb clarified that some of the \$1k donations for Jonas Green Park is to the Friends of the Trail, and some is for our own projects.

Mike Robinson suggested we increase the donation to the Watershed Stewards Academy. Also might add small grants to the SAF for trees or other plantings. Charlotte agreed, noting that Herald Harbor didn't apply this year because they got a design for free, so they only need implementation money. Maureen asked when is the deadline for applications – Lee and Lynne said there is no deadline.

II. **Program Budgets and 2014 Plans**

A. *Membership Donations* – Lee Meadows. Lee passed around a draft of the current mailing. There were no major comments.

B. *Other revenue anticipated* – Lynne Rockenbauch explained that this is the management fee for the Herald Harbor storm water management project, which Herald Harbor donated to the SRA.

C. Monthly Educational Meetings – John Wright. The next meeting will be about storm water design, on Wednesday 1/22 at DNR. The February meeting will also be at DNR on Tuesday, 2/18, on rising sea levels (2.5' by 2050). Lee would like a north shore location - maybe AACC? Sally Hornor will check availability. Lisa suggested community clubhouses, but John pointed out that many are gated, and navigation is hard at night. Many halls charge fees, which is why we have a Budget of \$500. The March meeting will be an update on windmills at Greenbury Point, by Ron George.

After that is open. Possibilities include an Oyster update by Bob Whitcomb, another presentation by Ginger Ellis (the last one was timely & beneficial) or SHA or DPW. Mike Robinson suggested DNR as another possibility – Bob Whitcomb suggested we ask them to describe their plan for the Severn Run Park. They will email John their suggestions. Charlotte suggested Kevin Smith & Claudia Donegan, but Bob felt we want responsible individuals, not PR. Need suggestions for topics, venue.

Tom Guay suggested a presentation by Mike Robinson to make the case for repair of the I-97 / Rte 32 storm water problem, then have SHA respond. Mike noted that this issue is complex because it is spread between two sub-watersheds. Benfield Boulevard is a different sub-watershed than Jabez. Benfield is in SW 3, Jabez is in 10. Tom asked for clarification – where is the problem, and how does Warfield fit in? Bob Whitcomb has maps & details. Mike said there are really only 2 different locations, since Warfield is part of Jabez which has 4-5 branches. Lee noted that the headwaters of the Severn are now a lower priority for AA County. Morris Tongue Drive provides access to Jabez. The term “Headwaters” covers both areas. The Map is online – Lee will forward it by email. It is not simple. Benfield looks bad, but Jabez is actually worse. Jabez branch 3 is the worst source of sediment (right behind B&B Refrigeration).

D. Outreach Committee – Mike Robinson plans to arrange several more hikes of the I-97 / Rte 32 storm water problem with responsible officials and politicians. Taking officials out to lunch is also a good investment (Pizza, not caviar). Charlotte suggested that Steve Barry, she and Mike meet next Monday to set up a PowerPoint presentation. Charlotte is setting up a meeting with EPA et al (Chris Phipps, Ginger, Lynne, Ken Hatch and more). Lee suggested she also get some local communities like Pointfield Landing & Ben Oaks to participate. Tom G will attend & report on it.

Scott Hymes introduced Charlotte Lubbert to Robert M. Summers, secretary of MDE, at a meeting on stormwater management at MDE headquarters in Baltimore. He had read her letter to the Capital. She also spoke to Joe Gill, DNR secretary about the I97 problem.

We have attended County quarterly meetings – they appreciate our input to date – we have been vocal but not obnoxious.

Lee reported that Fred Kelly indicated this could be a cooperative project. Lee felt this would probably help, as long as Mike leads and we don't lose control. We may also get input from the Severn River Commission. The Commission has already written letters of support, and supports coalition with the Riverkeeper. Coordination is generally good. Fred is generally delegating to Sara Caldes. Ginger Ellis is also encouraging – AA county is our best lobbyist. The Severn River was AA County's first first audit, and they missed intermittent flow areas, which only flow during major storm events. This is one reason the Severn is only getting \$45mm vs \$60mm for the Magothy and \$193mm for the Patapsco (mostly Baltimore County). Lee is working with Ginger to get intermittent streams surveyed.

Mike may also have a meeting at The Capital later to try to get more publicity and political pressure to get the State to fix the problem. Monday is a County Council work session. SHA is the first step – they need to mitigate flows from I97. They have now moved it up to top priority. Need RSVPs for food head count for the next hike – we want no more than 25 people maximum.

E. Fund Raising – Lee Meadows. Miriam will send a list of contacts in her community. The fundraising Letter is posted on line. It was drafted by a committee consisting of Ken Hatch, John Wright, Charlotte Lubbert and Lee Meadows. 3 processes have been successful for other river groups & similar organizations (Nonprofits). They were screened to fit our criteria, one of which is that a fundraiser should generate at least \$15k to be worth the effort. One is a fun run/walk. The best seems to be a silent auction at the annual dinner. James River is now netting \$133k from this, and the South River Federation is netting \$90k. Homestead donated \$20k food to the SRF annual meeting.

Miriam felt that we need a goal for use of this money, to focus donors. Can we get a private landowner project? Lee is working on the cost of monitoring devices to measure nitrates, phosphates, sediment, temp, salinity & tide flow, posting results on the web. Seems to be about \$50k each. Maintenance is expensive, but we may get NOAA to maintain them. Bob Whitcomb had borrowed one from USNA and it disappeared for unknown reasons (storm? vandalism?) Location is critical. We would like to get several, and are talking to NOAA now. Monitoring is also needed to assess the results of our oyster planting project.

We are considering applying to Maryland Live for a room venue for our Annual Meeting, at the Prime Rib restaurant. 160 people = \$7-8k. The Eastport Maritime Museum is another possibility. Grants are also a possibility to defray costs. Maryland Live is slightly out of our watershed. Maureen voiced concern that our reputation might suffer if we are associated with Maryland Live. Is a private home on the water a possibility? The SRKeeper had such a program 4-5 years ago, but it failed due to parking and security issues. Is the Severn inn a possibility? Bob Whitcomb said the owner still thinks we opposed his pier application (Fred Kelly did), so he will offer no subsidy and it would be very expensive. Mike R suggested Jimmys Crab House in Odenton (still in our watershed). Lisa suggested Cantlers. Typically we would pay for food and they would donate the room. Miriam asked about Arlington Echo, which we have used before. That always lost us money - most members are in Annapolis and it is hard to draw from West County. Maureen suggested Manressa. It may be open, but the logistics are not good.

Lee suggested that each Board member should recruit a table of 8. Bob Whitcomb said it is best to buy a table and invite guests, to get new people interested. Lee said the James River group gives awards to broaden support. We shouldn't get commercial donations for the silent auction, but Board members should donate items. Miriam felt that burnout may be a problem - many organizations ask for that. Preferred date is the 3d Tuesday in June, 6/17. Since this is USNA graduation week, making venues busy so a weeknight is needed. Thursday is better for dinner.

Lee felt we can net \$15k from the Annual Meeting. Tom Guay may be able to get Them Eastport Oyster Boys. Other models - Fish for a Cure has netted \$40k for Breast Cancer. A Rockfisherman is needed to chair this. Bob Whitcomb suggested the Severn River Rod & Keg club - Jeff Schomig is a contact. RvS will contact Jeff. Bob W suggested small boat organizations also for possible partners. Miriam noted there are many such events giving fierce competition. Charter boats also support such events. John Paige Williams also supports them.

A House tour is another possibility – a joint venture with the community. houses with a view of the water are a draw. A Realtor may sponsor one. Charlotte had successful house tours 2 years in Herald Harbor – volunteers took visitors from the Community Center to the tour. Could be multiple houses in one or more communities.

Lee Meadows had another thought (not a fundraiser) – give an award for the best communities on the Severn. Bay Friendly Neighborhoods did this a few years ago and Saefern won – they were the only applicant.

Charlotte suggested the New Annapolitans as another source of new members / volunteers. They always need a speaker – Lee volunteered. They have 600 members (newcomers in the last 2 years) and are very active.

Don Carren noted that CBF has been criticized for studies, with no action. Our projects are good motivators.

Tom Guay asked if we could do a fun thing? He is in the Oyster Boy Band – they do annual raftups. Last year they had over 80 boats on the first Saturday after Labor Day. Last year they collected money and donated it to a river association. Probably under \$15k. Sally pointed out that DNR now requires a fee for raftups over 50 boats because of problems on the Magothy River.

Maureen suggested we organize educational cruises up the river. Sally suggested renting a tour boat, with the Board providing food & drink, and speakers providing historical notes about the sights. The SRKeeper does that now at \$50 / person. Lee said the committee looked at that but it would generate less than \$15k, and would also conflict with the SRKeeper cruise. Bob Whitcomb said one tour boat does Back Creek on Sunday - Annapolis Water Taxi. Lee said one Princess tour goes to Round Bay. Kurt said E.K. Holzendorf does one on the West River.

Charlotte suggested we publish a book of photos of the Severn. Bob Whitcomb has 100yrs of photos in his basement. He has started to go through them but there are a lot and many are copyrighted by Marion Warren. Mike suggested we Paddle the length of the Severn (8 miles, above Rte 50). Lisa asked if we might get large boat owners in Annapolis Harbor to donate use of their boat for a tour? Maureen noted we still have Maps to sell. Lee said all ideas are welcome.

F. Oyster Program – Bob Whitcomb said we now have 450-500 names in the database, and send out 6-7 (email) newsletters / yr. We need \$500 to monitor the reef to evaluate effectiveness. UMD had Painter Lab - he is trying to recruit them to do the monitoring, and is exploring the cost. Sally H suggested we also speak to Andrew Muller at USNA – he may still offer a workshop on diving. Visibility is zero. Florida measures what oysters are filtering. Bob is working with a biologist, but hasn't gotten it to work yet – lab work is expensive. Charlotte suggested underwater photos. Sally said Jay Fleming might be interested in doing that. Lee suggested dive shops - Bob said the diver needs scientific expertise, not just diving expertise. Sally said the Magothy River Association collects samples of their oysters every year, measure the length and look at survival & growth. They are put back right after measuring. They need a new dive master. It is a paid job. You need a safety officer and a permit. DNR is expediting permitting. Sally can do the science. John W will ask NOAA about monitoring. AACCC had a scientific diving course, but the teacher retired.

G. Clean Streams – Bob Whitcomb reported this will be very similar to last year. Some sites have been suggested but we need more work on logistics. It will be the first Saturday in April (4/5). Probably Luce Creek. Rusty Gowland wants to join the group, and is looking to transition from dump site cleanups in tidal waters (which are mostly done now) to headwaters and inland watershed. Also may move from cleanup to tree planting (Rusty is also working on that). Still affiliated with Project Clean Stream – the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (sponsors) favors the move to tree planting. This will be Bob W's last one (his 10th year). Lisa suggested Buy a Tree as a memorial or gift for a loved one.

H. Jonas Green Park – Bob Whitcomb reported that SRA is getting good publicity there. We planted several Crepe Myrtles several years ago. He is working on finding a Boy Scout to make a SRA signboard in park. We may need to pay for it if we can't find a Scout. We need literature for the park building. Trail Park rangers are now headquartered there. It is crowded in the summer. Several organizations have sponsored benches with plantings near the bridge. Diane Evans' Friends of AACCo

Trails is doing a lot of work there. We would like to offer \$1k in plantings to beautify benches. We can get trees free from DNR. Lisa asked if we could also plant trees in a land conservancy on the Severn? Maybe.

I. BMP Audits – Bob Vom Saal. Lee has a landscape architect who is a Watershed Steward and will work with us. We are still waiting for Department of Public Works to get organized, and plan to start with one or more communities who have the older wet pond facilities which can be converted by AACo to the more effective dry ponds at little cost to the community.

J. Operation Clearwater – Sally Hornor reported that this is self-supporting, needing no resources from SRA. Participation is by emails to waterfront communities. Application is on our website, and also on AACo website. They have a loyal core constituency. Miriam will put this in her community newsletter. Many Community Associations meet quarterly. Sally said they generally email in March to fit that funding cycle. Sally is retiring soon and is transitioning the work to Connie, a Molecular biologist. She hopes to modernize the lab work. They could track sources of bacteria, but it is very expensive. Sally retires 6/2015, but transitioning now. Lee asked if we can offer incentives to increase participation? Cost is an issue, so a first-time discount would help. They now have about 20 communities participating, and could do 25. For more than that, collection time is an issue. They need more sampling sites along a common route. Epping Forest dropped out when Fred Kelly became their representative. Many have stopped because the water is so bad you can't swim. County competition is an issue. There has been very little response to her health survey, but many anecdotal stories. The AACo Health Dept says she cannot talk about public health because her degree is not in that field. Lee pointed out that this testing provides feedback on stormwater control effectiveness.

K. Community Member Progress – Miriam Mellin. Miriam asked if we can send email from SRA.org to improve credibility? She will work with Kurt to organize regular newsletters from SRA. Lee noted that AACo has a site listing communities. A common database would help to avoid multiple communications. We need to promote the regular meeting on 1/22, but otherwise, one per quarter is enough. Some communities have an erosion officer. Watershed Stewards are also good contacts. WSA has a map of where they live, with a link to the tax base showing which community each is in.

L. Communication Programs – Tom G./K. Riegel 10 minutes

Kurt has composed the next Log and asked if we want to print it or just send it electronically? Lee recommended email with attached .pdf file – all agreed. Tom will post on Facebook.

Lynne needs feedback on email bouncebacks. Lynne's is considered the master list. Miriam said we need a Google Doc coded with interests. Bob Whitcomb has an oyster database and Kurt also has an email database. We need to coordinate. She hopes to have a common database set up by April mtg.

Tom suggested we only issue press releases for meeting announcements – positions on problems generate too much controversy. He needs more Board input with links to associations or environmental articles. Hasn't yet gotten Charlotte's letter on our Facebook page. We need more "likes" and adding Friends. He will post a report on each SHA meeting.

M. Donations to others – Lynne Rockenbauch said this \$500 includes \$25 to the Bay Journal, \$75 to the Chesapeake Legal Foundation, \$400 to the Chesapeake Watershed Steward's Academy. Mike proposed increasing the WSA donation to \$1,000. Lee wants stewards to apply for grants for projects. Lisa said they are doing that but starting is confusing because the Initial form is missing from our website so you need a design to get a grant for a design. She will call Ann Jackson to clarify. Tom asked how many SW grants did we award last year? Sally said we awarded 3 in 2013 –

Oyster Harbour, Olde Severna Park, and one other. Ann Jackson will send a report. Mike moved to increase \$400 to \$1k to WSA, taking it out of the Stormwater Action Fund allocation, Charlotte seconded and it passed unanimously.

N. Detailed Budget – Lynne Rockenbauch. Kurt asked if we should have a contingency fund for the 3 months between meetings? All agreed it was not necessary since we can allocate funds by an email vote (must be unanimous) or conference call meeting. All agreed that no change is needed. Mike suggested we use excess funds for plantings. This motion was not seconded or voted on.

III. New Officers / Board members committee

John Wright, Bob Whitcomb and Lee Meadows will meet soon to discuss this and propose a formal Nominating Committee of Board Members. That Committee will be appointed by electronic vote and will have a report at the next (April) Board Meeting.

IV. Next Board Meeting Content / Location /Timing

Next meeting will be 4/10/204 @ 2:00 at the Church. Main topics will be Fundraising and the Annual Dinner. We need Art & Cruise lines for silent auction donations. The Annual Meeting will be at the Eastport Maritime Museum since only 3 Board Members were in favor of MD Live. Dropped ML.

V. Meeting adjourned at 5:05 PM (Lisa moved, Lee seconded)