

The Severn River Association, Inc.

The meeting was **called to order** at 2:04 PM by President Lee Meadows. All Officers and Board Members were present except Rusty Gowland, Don Carren, and Mark Lister who were excused. Rusty arrived late, just in time for his presentation on the **SRA Communications Strategy**.

The (Draft 2) **Minutes** from the 1-15-2015 meeting were Approved (Lynne moved, Lee seconded) with three corrections. In **“C. New issues that may impact priorities and activities”** on page 2, the second line of the first paragraph should change from “Lisa is now working to evaluate... to “We are now working ...” And the last sentence should be “...80% of present Community Members are waterfront Communities.” The last sentence of the paragraph at the top of page 4, “Lisa suggested ...” should be deleted.

Financial Report – Lynne Rockenbauch

Lynne reported that dues paid to date include 40 Associations, 5 Companies and 46 Individuals. Ken noted that Saltworks paid the Severn RiverKeeper thinking it was paying the SRA. There seems to be no easy resolution to this confusion.

Nominating Committee Report – Bob Whitcomb (Chair) & John Wright

Four Directors’ terms expire this year – Bob Whitcomb, Tom Guay, Kurt Riegel and Sally Hornor. Tom and Kurt are standing for re-election and will be nominated by the Committee at the Annual Membership Meeting on June 16 to serve a term from 2015-2018 along with two other (new) directors. The NC will recommend John Wright (who will be the new Community Rep for Saefern) to replace Bob Whitcomb (the current Saefern Rep) who does not wish to be re-elected for this term. The NC had thought that Sally Hornor was standing for Re-election and planned to nominate her, but she has recently said she does not wish to be re-elected so another Director nominee for this term must be found before the AMM. Lee and John do not wish to serve a second term as President and VP respectively, so the Nominating Committee recommends the following slate for election at the Annual Board Meeting:

President: **Lynne Rockenbauch**

Vice President: **Rusty Gowland**

Secretary: **Bob vom Saal** (for a second term)

Treasurer: **Lee Meadows**

Since Officers cannot be directors, the NC recommends Andrew Muller, Oceanography Professor at the USNA and lead scientist for monitoring the Severn and South River water quality, to serve the remainder of Rusty Gowland’s term (2015-2017) since he will have to resign as soon as he is elected President. Finally, Don Carren has resigned, so the NC recommends Betsy Love to fill out the remainder of his term (2013-2016).

Ken Hatch moved to elect the 4 new Officers now, making this the Annual Board Meeting (ABM), so April would be the ABM from now on. The question of when they take office was raised – the Bylaws say on election, but it is not clear whether this can be the ABM without advance notice. The Bylaws Committee (Bob Whitcomb, Kurt Riegel & Lee Meadows) will check this and recommend a course of action at or before the next Board meeting (6/18). [NOTE: The Meeting Notice for this meeting did not state that it was to be the Annual Meeting as required by the ByLaws, and the Minutes from the January meeting stated “the 6/18 Annual Board meeting will ...” Also that meeting will be closer to a year from the last Annual Meeting (though still less than a year) and the By-Laws specify “a term of two years”.]

Bob W. nominated the above 4 officers. Ken seconded the nominations and the slate was elected unanimously.

Lee asked all present to please nominate Heron awardees, send names to Lee & Bob W. Green Herons are for recent service, Blue are for lifetime contributions. Awardees need not be members of SRA.

Lisa suggested special mention for the 4 AACounty Council members who voted down the rain tax repeal (instead of Heron Awards). Ken recommended Green Herons for them instead. Maureen suggested a Blue Heron for Don Carren.

[Post-meeting note – our bank requires signed minutes recording a motion to add Lee’s name to the signature cards so he can carry out the duties of his office. This motion and the election of the two directors to fill vacancies should be on the agenda of the next Board Meeting.]

Education Initiatives Update – Lee Meadows

Lee met with Ms Heisberger of Broadneck HS. She would like a Watershed Steward to serve on the BHS advisory panel. Tom Guay is in that school district and volunteered to serve. John Wright is also coordinating with her. West Annapolis & Millersville also had us help give out coupons for trees and make presentations about the Watershed Stewards Academy as part of their Environmental Signature Program.

Project Clean Stream Update – John Wright

We will plant trees Saturday at 2 locations – RockBridge Academy (140 acres) and Luce Creek (near the Friends meeting house). Lynne, Ken, Charlotte & 1 other WSS will supervise RA, Rusty is supervising Luce Creek. We are planting relatively big trees, 2"-3" Diameter, at Luce Creek; the RockBridge trees are ½" or smaller. We hope to triple the number of trees next year. Trees are provided by a grant from the Alliance for the Bay. We are looking for churches or AACo land to plant on next year. Finding good sites with adequate access is a major challenge. Maureen will take pictures. Kurt asked her to send him JPEGs for our website.

Community Stormwater Grants – Lee Meadows

5 communities got SRA design grants used those designs to apply for AACo grants totaling \$265k on 2/27. 2 other communities used our seed grants to apply for \$115k of state & DNR grants. Filling out the forms is a lot of work. AACo will award their grants in May. Herald Harbor had 2 applications, Ben Oaks, Carrollton Manor, Round Bay & Winchester each applied for one. Annapolis applied for a grant to remediate Hawkins Cove, working with Betsy Love of St Lukes Church. Tom will do a press release.

Fred Kelly should appreciate our help, because Olde Severna Park tried for a \$600k grant thru Fred because our process was too hard. This work was a result of our \$1k assessment grant. Fred is also doing work for Pines (\$300k) and Clement Creek (\$900k), all resulting from SRA assessment grants.

More assessment and design grant applications are in the works, 5-7 projects, including Linstead, Maureen Burt's community of East Pendennis Mount, and Mark Lister's community of Palisades.

AACo DPW spent \$214k last year in the Severn River watershed, which will be the topic of a presentation by DPW at an upcoming SRA educational meeting.

Oyster Program Update – Bob Whitcomb

June 6 planting party near the Route 50 bridge will include photo-ops of the SRA banner and new fleet. Bob and MD DNR will pick planting spots soon, on top of 3-year-old oysters.

Don & Bob went to a meeting of MGO (Maryland Grows Oysters) coordinators in Deale. There are now 32 tributaries participating, we are 25%-33% of total planted, much larger than anyone else's oyster program. Most others provide more service to pier owners. We still could grow - only 50% of our piers grow oysters. Epping Forest is held back by Fred Kelly who thinks it is a waste of time. Tom and Bob are working on them. Charlotte needs to plant early due to a schedule conflict with her helpers. Some of her neighbors want coddling. We now have 5 of the new self-agitating cages which help the coddling issue. Hiring aides to do the cage maintenance would raise safety and insurance issues. We need volunteers to help on the boats.

Headwaters SHA Coalition Update – Charlotte Lubbert

Charlotte, Lee, Lynne, Ken, Fred Kelly and Sarah met yesterday with Ginger Dadd from Stan Tec and Josh Gilman & Bill Park from GPI showing problem & proposed solution. Their 44 page draft proposal is on the SHA website. They have had several walks & meetings about the massive destruction from SHA storm water.

We now have land ownership records for all of the properties affected by the proposal. SHA owns 64, AACo 40, only 6 are privately owned. This multi-year project needs a sustained push to keep going. The engineers need access to 200 properties, 2 large properties being the most important. Lynne & Charlotte walked the area and gave contact info to Ryan Cole, Team Leader, SHA Office of Environmental Design. They then drafted a letter which got reviewed by the agencies and then sent to the private property owners. It got 5 yes responses. The SHA's letter which got rejected by all 6 owners was abrasive; ours was much more polite and got positive responses. The owner of the one remaining large property is in Ecuador and hard to contact; the property needs reconstruction and is now for sale, and may be bought by SHA or AACo.

Approved Board Minutes – April 9, 2015 2:00 – 4:30 rooms 217-219 Calvary Methodist Church, Annapolis

The Stantec and GPI proposals are good - Fred Kelly also liked them. Fred is very supportive of our efforts. The next meeting is in June, Erik Michelson will organize it. The project has a 5 year timetable (18 months for permits), and will cost over \$10mm. They should prioritize the steps for implementation by the end of this month. We already gave him our suggested priorities. There are now 30 people participating in these meetings. The Report cost \$500k and is very detailed. Fred asked how contractors are vetted - basically they choose the low bidder, but must have some experience.

Lisa noted that GSPC is meeting 4/13 re the proposed Rtes 175/32 improvement project in Fort Meade. Our priorities are Water Quality treatment, creation of habitat, raising the stream level, education, and creating a forested buffer. The site used to be a beautiful fish hatchery, which was very educational.

Educational Meetings Update – John Wright

April 14th at CBF – John Seebach, VP American Rivers, “Conowingo – What Are the Options” Gov. Hogan invited.

May 21st – “Annapolis’ New Forestry Protection Ordinance Proposal”, Kurt Riegel – Moderator. 7:00 PM at the Pip Moyer Center auditorium. Speakers invited include Mayor Mike Pantelides, Alderman Jared Littmann, Alderman Ross Arnett, and Diane Butler. Diane felt Annapolis will comply with State regulations. The South River Federation will co-sponsor & publicize this meeting. The City Council is expected to adopt this ordinance in June.

June 16th – SRA Annual Meeting 7:00PM at Union Jack’s. Dinner and drinks will be available. Andrew Muller, Associate Professor of the USNA will present the State of the Severn. New Directors will be elected.

July 21st – Oysters in the Severn – Are they making a difference? Presentation by Ken Paynter, Professor University of Maryland. Location to be determined.

August – we do not have a meeting

September – inviting a spokesperson from our power company on how they are scrubbing and cleaning our environment.

October – lawn fertilizers – How your Choice helps our rivers

November - "Can we afford to fix the bay?" Speaker invited - Dan Nees Environmental Finance Center at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Website Update – Kurt Riegel

Kurt is organizing a raftup in Round Bay or another tributary. Plum Creek is too small. Tom & Rusty will provide music. August preferred. John Wright plans to attend.

Situs Corp provides our website security software free of charge.

Bob vom Saal suggested adding Board meeting announcements to the Website to improve transparency – Kurt will consider. Board meetings are supposed to be open to members but they presently get no notice.

Sally advised that Operation Clear Water emails are still going to her AACC account. OCW emails should go to Tammy, and other emails should go to her gmail account.

Charlotte will provide some content on activities of the Headwaters Coalition.

The mass e-mailing list now has 600 names. Lynne sends him email addresses, but changes go to Kurt & not back to her. A unified Database would be preferred, but we need a coordinator to maintain it.

Communications Update – Tom Guay

Our FaceBook page is getting more popular – we need photos to get more attention. Twitter will be worse because of text length limits. FB networks automatically which is nice – it’s easy to like & forward.

Kurt will add more links from the website to FB on specific articles. The Website has more permanence and is a better repository of information. Google now ranks us pretty high in their searches.

Tom asked Kurt to send out his press releases by email blast. Kurt now does this for meeting announcements, but not all others. If we blast too often, there is a risk the members will start ignoring our emails and treating them as spam.

River Rats Update – Tom Guay

Next week, Tom will start work on commissioning the boats.

Fund Raiser Update – Lee Meadows

We plan tours of Belvoir, a 1680 Arboretum and the estate where Francis Scott Key spent his boyhood summers. It was 400 acres, but is now down to 140 acres. Three tours are set for 6/20, at \$20ea. Tours will include the slave quarters, grounds, and the state champion Copper Beech tree. Charlotte will help sell sponsorships. She has pictures of the tree and will send them to Tom and Kurt for use in publicity. New Annapolitan will provide docents; Bob Whitcomb will try to get Rotary to help with parking.

SRA Communications Strategy Report – Lynne Rockenbauch, Rusty Gowland

The previously distributed Power Point presentation “201504 Strategy april sra meeting” was discussed. There was no clear consensus on the slogan, with “Treasure the Severn” getting the most votes (4). “Keep the Severn Scenic” was also suggested.

Scott Hymes has offered to help make a video. Rusty feels this is worth some investment to do right, and will pay off in increased memberships and growth of the SRA. We should focus on our opposition to "Uncontrolled" Growth. We need to emphasize right-sizing, not just growing. Uncontrolled growth compromises Quality of Life in the Watershed.

Sally felt that a no-growth position locks you out of directing growth. Rusty believes we need to stop enabling growth. Lisa agreed we need to promote "Responsible" growth, which minimizes harm. Bob W asked how will this reinvigorate SRA? A Membership campaign focused on No-growth will reduce our membership and influence. Rusty believes the message of no growth is resonating – more communities are fighting development & overgrowth.

Kurt felt we should be against growth of impervious surface unless mitigated. This is a good goal to keep growth responsible while not overtly opposing growth. Ken agreed, since property rights are also important.

Tom agreed with Rusty – there are no guarantees of return on any investment including land. Also agreed we should not lead, but support others who try to limit or stop growth. Lisa agreed we should support fighters more.

Dan Mellin feels we should never quash fervor, so he tends to agree that an overt no-growth position is not good, supporting responsible growth is better. Unimproved land is eroding, development should stop this.

Rusty responded that we shouldn't facilitate sprawl, but just watch out for diseconomies of scale. Lee felt we should accept growth that treasures the river. Maureen felt we need to protect present owners from their neighbor's overdevelopment, but legally we can't. Sustainable growth is good, planning is important and sticking to that plan (i.e. the General Development Plan) is crucial. Our mission statement on our website is good. All agreed that since most of the river is already developed, planned growth (e.g. redevelopment) is good, but unplanned growth is bad.

Sally noted that the AACo General Development Plan gave the number of acres of intact forest. Intact forest is now only 13% of total land area. It was 16% only a few years ago, and is slated to reduce by factor of 4 at full build-out. Charlotte said the Chesapeake Bay Foundation website says 300,000 new people move into the Chesapeake Bay watershed each year. Herald Harbor was turned off by the General's Highway Federation's NIMBY attitude. Old Herald Harbor Road has 2 Koch developments going in, one in wetlands with no tidal flush. They are installing biking & walking trails and horse trails, all in wetlands, but zoning permits it. We need to change zoning for controlled responsible sensitive growth.

As an example of responsible development, John Wright noted that the developer of Saul's Marina, Alan Hyde, is proposing to change concrete to grass, asking for 2.6" rain retention, when only 1" retention is required. Lee summarized the general feeling that we need to have closer control of change.

New Business

There was no new business.

Scheduling Meetings The Annual Membership meeting will be 6/16 at 7:00 at Union Jack's Restaurant. This will be low-key. The next Board meeting will be the 6/18 Annual Board meeting at 2:00-4:30 at the usual location

Meeting was Adjourned at 4:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob vom Saal