

The Severn River Association, Inc.

The meeting was **called to order** at. At 2:14 PM by President Lynne Rockenbauch. All Officers and Board Members were present except Maureen and Betsy who had been excused due to conflicts (Rusty, Kurt and Lisa arrived during Dan's Report on Lot 71).

The (Draft 2) **Minutes** from the 12-17 -2015 Board meeting were unanimously Approved (Mark moved, Charlotte seconded).

Treasurer's Report – Lee Meadows

Lee distributed a Balance sheet comparison of 1/31/ 2016 vs 1/31/2016. our liabilities are about the same, assets increased about \$8,750 from \$75k to \$84k, primarily due to the Belvoir Farms fund-raiser. He also presented a comparison of Budget with Actual Profit & Loss for 2016 to date – there are no surprises and we appear on track.

Educational Meetings Update – John Wright

Attendance has been better, and we are getting better publicity. Meetings at DNR now need a sponsor & \$75./hr for security. Union Jack's is thus a better venue, though the acoustics are not good. The next (February) speaker will be Lynn Buhl on 2/16. Lynn is the Director of Water Quality for MDE and the former Executive director of the South River Federation. The 3/15 speaker will be Steve McCoy, Park Ranger for the Severn Run Environmental Area, speaking on the availability of hiking and biking trails in Severn Run. For April 19, we hope to have Erik Michaelson of AACo DPW update us on AACo Stormwater restoration projects. May is open – Oysters are one possible subject. Charlotte suggested a representative of the Horn Point Lab; Andrew suggested Stephanie Westbeke. Lynne suggested Bees for a topic – possible speakers include Stevie Wilding or Bonnie Raindrop. Dave suggested the Severn Riverkeeper as a speaker to update us on his organization's activities. All agreed these are good topics and speakers.

Nominating Committee – John Wright

John advised that all 4 Directors whose terms expire this year have agreed to serve another 3 years, and the Committee plans to nominate them at the Annual Membership meeting. This recommendation was accepted unanimously. No Officer's terms expire this year.

Lot 71 Report – Dan Mellin

Lot 71 is about 0.7 acres of private land in the middle of the interchange of I-97 with MD-32 at the headwaters of the Severn Run (Jabez branch). The Owner's daughter, Miss Gagner, would like to execute a quitclaim deed to the SRA with no survey. There are some legal advantages to leaving it undefined by survey, in addition to the fact that a survey costs money. The SHA owns some of the surrounding land, but those boundaries are not precisely known. This parcel is the only private land remaining. The Eustlers owned some of the adjacent property, but that is now public and used for storm water treatment. If the state wants it, they would survey it. Dan sees no downside – there would be no taxes since we are a non-profit and it is open space – the present Owners pay \$10/year in taxes on it. There is no HOA, so no insurance needed & no stormwater fee. It could generate good publicity.

Ken suggested we use it for a cleanup activity under Project Clean Stream. Lee mentioned that this would give us standing to sue the SHA for storm water damage. We would have no liability for injury, no tax since non -profit. Ken moved we accept this donation contingent on all taxes being paid up to date. Kurt seconded and the motion carried unanimously. The only private neighbors are the Belts family on Belts Road.

New web concept & Self-directed material on our website –Rusty Gowland

The basic concept of the new website is to have a homepage with general information linked to six Area of Interest Pages aimed at our six main Categories of members: Subscribers, Growers, Leaders, Homeowners, Activists, and Masters. Each AIP would have a team responsible for its content development, with a Director chairing each Team.

A fundamental question we must answer soon is do we agree that these 6 member types form a good basis for our organization and committee structures? A related question is what constitutes a "member" – a \$35 donation, or volunteer time that contributes something valuable. The financial component could be considered either a hurdle or a demonstration of commitment. [ByLaws Article III says "Qualifications for membership, associated rights and privileges, and dues shall

be established by the Board.”] Current policy is that Associations must pay to be considered members, but individuals may become members by donating volunteer hours or material donations or both.

While there was broad agreement on the general classifications, there was a spirited discussion of the labels. Lisa felt that "Activist" and "sustainable" each have some negative connotations. Dan suggested "Advocate" instead of Activist, generally agreed. Lee prefers the broader definition of member, including volunteers without money. Rusty agreed we want many types of members, and donors are a separate category. The South River Federation requires payment to be a member & get information. Rusty asked what are the benefits of membership? Lee said we sent stickers one year but never saw any used. Signage for oyster growers is also a benefit as it generates good feelings. One suggestion is to not require a donation, but mailing of the Log could be limited to paid members. Lee noted about 600 on mailing list, and it goes to many non-members that we consider important such as politicians and bureaucrats. It is hard to limit the lists. Lynne noted that the broad definition of membership creates a problem counting how many "members" we have.

Oyster Growers are a separate list as many do not wish to receive our more general mailings. Rusty & Kurt feel that Oyster growers should be automatically added to our subscriber list – they can unsubscribe if they wish. The new website will include a registration form indicating what types of information you want. If you don't pay for information, you are more likely to ignore it. Lee felt about 20% of oyster growers are members. Lee suggested "supporters" instead of "Subscribers" for the first group, to improve clarity to users. Dave said he couldn't see a site plan. Focusing on people is good, but it's not obvious how the River fits in – we need to clarify the connection between member types and the River. Rusty said that one button is "Our River" which will provide information about watershed wildlife, restoration, etc. The top menu is general on all pages, the left menu is team-specific. Tom was concerned about prominence – you don't get member types until you click "Join Us". Rusty said the prime objective is to get action from people, and information about them. Charlotte agreed - this is the front page. Dave said that Google analytics can infer a lot of information from a user's trail of site parts visited. Rusty said each team needs a "hook" for their section of the site. Information is nice, but we need to encourage action. Dave felt we are moving in the right direction.

A vote was requested on the six category labels –Subscribers, Growers, Sustainable Homeowners (Changed to "River-friendly Homeowners"), Organization Leaders, Volunteers & Masters. After some discussion, it was agreed that these labels can be used for now, but should be referred to a committee for further study and for further development of the site.

Kurt noted that while a calendar of events (including those sponsored by related organizations) is a good feature, it is a lot of work to create and maintain. Lee felt we need to make it easy for users to self-categorize. Rusty said the teams can create those "hooks". Lynne felt we should encourage donations by individuals - organizations are different.

Rusty will revise the prototype site, and needs teams to create content, working thru the webmaster to keep continuity & reduce overlap, and facilitate phase-in. On-demand material is not yet in the prototype and should be developed by the teams. Each team needs to define content including links. Tom asked "If I have a storm water problem in my community, how does site help me?" Rusty said the site should direct you to your community POC. Lisa suggested we have examples of what others have done to solve problems. Lee said that designing tabs is the biggest challenge of website development. Tom added that the site needs to advertise our grants. Rusty said each page (team) should have help for that type of user. Charlotte suggested the site should provide help to identify which community the user is in. Rusty said we need to identify if the website is primarily meant to serve new visitors or existing members – it is now designed for people who have some idea who they want to be. Tom & Rusty will work on redesigning the top menu.

Lee suggested a "knowledge" tab. Rusty proposed changing the main menu to "About", "Knowledge", "Calendar", "Gallery", and "Join". All agreed, and thanked Rusty for the huge effort he has put into getting the prototype up for review and comment. It is a great start for a major step forward in our development.

Headwaters SHA Coalition Update – Charlotte Lubbert

Claudia Donegan suggests Marian Clemen as the contact with SHA. She is working to set up a meeting on 2/10. the stormwater management design will cost \$50k. Other places farther down Severn Run need work also. They need easements for access from adjacent properties. For DNR land ("The Park"), DNR needs partner to write a grant application – suggestions included Sara Caldez, and Dave volunteered to help. SHA is working on several BMPs that will significantly reduce stormwater input to Jabez 3. DNR's Habitat Restoration & Conservation Division proposes a project to reconnect the tributary's channels to the active floodplain and restore the floodplain wetlands. Restoring the stream will raise the water table and restore wetlands in the floodplain. The goal is to reduce flow velocity, encourage trapping of sediment, and reduce temperatures to produce a suitable habitat for brook trout in the tributary and downstream.

River Rat Update – Tom Guay

The boat is in winter storage at Bob vom Saal's house. Only minimal maintenance is needed to get back on the water in Spring.

Smith Marina Barbeque – Dan Mellin/Charlotte Lubbert

Rick Smith is on board for this with a 5/14 target date – that is when he will have room & parking after the stored boats are back in the water. The scope of the event is up to us. It will be open to Smith's customers. We will need some volunteers to organize, and we should use the River Rat to transport customers from their boats to the shoreside barbeque. Music may be provided by Them Eastport Oyster Boys, or another group. You can bring your own picnic, or we can probably use one or both of Rick's two grills.

We also plan a raft up on Saturday, July 2, in Clements Creek, between the Salin Farm and Saint Helena Island.

We are also considering a paddleboard & Kayak tour led by the River Rat on August 6.

Annual meeting will be Tuesday June 14, 2016 at Woods Memorial Church. Maureen and Betsy will coordinate the caterer, announcements, etc. Maureen can coordinate but may not attend. We still need a reservations person and someone to collect money at the door. Lee & John will help.

Severn River Commission update –Charlotte Lubbert

At the last Commission meeting, they discussed the WSA Conference, Gerald Winegrad's Crystal Spring Blog, and Richard Klein's CEDS which has legal cases all across the nation.

Growth Action Network update – Dave Barker

The next meeting will be 2/10. He is leaving the GAN Board, and they need a replacement. The GAN covers AACo, not just the Broadneck peninsula which was its original focus. Its focus is to control development. Its primary contact with AACo is Larry Toms (AACo P&Z) – they meet with him quarterly. They also attend most AACo Council meetings. Pat Lynch and the League of Women Voters are major supporters of the GAN. Richard Falk is also a major supporter – he is now out of the General's Highway Improvement Association). The GAN meets in Glen Oban at the president's house (Ann Fligsten).

New Business

Yellow perch – Tom Guay – The proposed Cattail Commons development on the Magothy is going to mess up spawning – we should support the MRA's efforts. Tom is talking to Paul Spadaro about how we can help. They are involving the Chesapeake Legal Alliance. Lee suggested that Fred Kelly might also help.

Annapolis Watershed Network – David Barker. This was created last October when Linda Broadbent of Annapolis sought public input on where stormwater projects should go. The Network consists of the South River Federation, Back Creek Conservancy, Spa Creek Conservancy, SRA and SRKeeper. SRK doesn't come but sends Ann Myer, his development director. On 2/24 they will meet with Lisa Craig, of Annapolis' sea level rise committee (Weather It Together). The Network is not formally organized, but provides synergy on the Annapolis Neck Peninsula. NFWF is seeking applications for \$50k capacity grants; AWN could provide the framework for applying for one of these to develop shared resources such as cartography, surveying and polling. SRA could apply to formalize the AWN. GIS is one possible shared resource. Lynne & Charlotte will participate also. The Back Creek Conservancy could apply directly. Photos of the critical area are critical to enforcing Critical Area Violations. Aerial views are often obscured by the leaf canopy.

Next board meeting date: All agreed on Thursday April 7, 2:00-4:30.

Meeting was Adjourned at 4:47 PM (Ken moved, Charlotte seconded).

Respectfully submitted



Bob vom Saal, Secretary