

Meeting Minutes for the Board of Directors of the Carolina Wetlands Association

May 20, 2019

Location: RTI, 3040 E Cornwallis Rd, Durham, NC 27709

In Person: Chad Guthrie, Rick Savage, Kim Matthews, Heather Clarkson, Norton Webster

On Phone: Kristine Cherry, Kristie Gianopulos, George Howard, Matthew Harold, Ginny Daniel, Dan Hitchcock

6:30 Meeting Called to Order

Introductions

Adoption of the Agenda – motion to accept Chad, Heather second, all in favor

Adoption of the Minutes – Alvin Braswell added as attending in person – motion to accept Heather, Chad second, all in favor

6:40 Committee Reports

- Program Committee - Jessica/Jim –
 - Wetland Treasures
 - Rick gave update about 1st tour, 6 people, really cool place, owner trying to get more involvement
 - 8 people w Heather's tour in SC, was really fun, donations collected; feedback from 2 saying really enjoyed the trip
 - Chad talking about how to track donations from tours; most handing cash. Heather doesn't think that big of a deal on tracking when they are cash
 - Wild Ideas meeting (Alvin and Amin) – had quite a few interested people, animals were great, needed a signup sheet
 - Mud Day – Alvin and Rick there, 12 people signed up, lot of people came by
 - Eno River Festival – Jessica doing, Alvin/Rick/Amin also
 - Future Wetlands Matter Events – haven't planned anything specific
- Science Committee - Ginny/Robert
 - Talked about the retreat, how the field trips have been going
 - State of the Wetlands Report – decided to split into 2 sections, still need to extend website for this
 - RAMSAR – Matthew from Restoration Systems – used to work for NC Habitat Foundation, Mecklenburg County
 - Made some good progress in last few days in application, in understanding process
 - Curt has some work to do on the WQ/water regime section
 - Then need to run by Fish and Wildlife staff to make sure messaging is consistent with what they are wanting to present
 - Requesting everyone to look back at the draft verbiage of what they wrote so he can start cleaning it up a little more
 - Our answers have to match up with the dropdowns in the online application form
 - George will come up with an email for keeping on with this; will send reminder message to Curt
 - White Papers – 3 in draft form, need further reviews

- Executive Committee - Rick
 - WOTUS letter done by Carolina Wetlands – Kim posted CarWA letter and NC DEQ letter on our website, will post DOT letter
 - Letters signed on SELC WOTUS letter
 - Letter Signed on SELC to NC DEQ
 - No in person meeting – going to set up a more regular meeting between board meetings
- Development Committee - Kim
 - Track It Forward - logging volunteer hours – have 16 people logging hours
 - Total since started, 342 hours; Kim will start generating a report for future meetings, get more info from some people; good step forward
 - Social Media/Newsletter update – 738 people following on Facebook, newsletter 668 total audience, posted wetland treasures story map on social media (Kristie made), has been getting a lot of hits, getting Google analytics connected to website, will give us helpful information
 - Heather mentioned we should send the story map to the Wetland Forest Initiative
 - April O’Leary from Sound Rivers Alliance (?) will help us with guidelines about working with social media volunteers, to get them to help post things about events going on in their area, Community Engagement Plan, good fundraising ideas too
 - Meeting of Rick, Chad, Kim, and Norton (Strategy and Development)
- Financial Report - Chad
 - \$500 check from supporter in Wisconsin, Laura England had made presentation to the WWA about CarWA and made this contact, \$1,477.51 expenses in last 2 months – retreat, registration for Asheville conference coming up
 - Quickbooks - still working on migrating old data into Quickbook; hopefully will be done by next board meeting
- Tara Allden – wanted to mention she is representing CarWA as part of the Flooding Ad Hoc group – a group of representatives from conservation groups across South Carolina meeting monthly (by phone) to provide information and support efforts of the South Carolina Floodwater Commission (<https://governor.sc.gov/executive-branch/south-carolina-floodwater-commission>). Ad Hoc participant groups include: Carolina Wetlands, American Rivers, Audubon, Conservation Voters of SC, Sierra Club, Upstate Forever, and others. Current efforts include flood report and prediction tools, issue identification, and input to the Governor’s Commission. I will continue to participate and update CarWA monthly.

Want to go back to Committee reports given before the Board Meeting -- Rick

- Due one week before the Board meeting
- Secretary (Kristie) will ask Committee chairs for reports at least one week before the due date; then Rick will send out to board members to one week before board meeting

Two issues we need to get Board approval on:

- Attending the American Ecological Engineering Society meeting (national organization) in Asheville
 - To be a sponsor and have a Carolina Wetlands display and attend the conference
 - \$500 is the cost for the conference
 - There are many wetland mitigation providers and need to get to know Carolina Wetlands
 - Potentially a good source of funding for the organization
 - Rick wanted permission from the board to spend the \$500 to register – Kristine motioned to go to the conference, George seconded motion, all in favor. Heather asked if we had material to give out – fact

sheets, want to take the strategic plan to mitigation providers to get input into it (what needs do they have), notebook of wetland treasures, looking also for volunteers

- Applying for the EPA Wetlands Program Development Grant with NC State and RTI
 - To establish a volunteer wetland monitoring program of our wetland treasures
 - Review Carolina Wetlands Statement of Work
 - \$40,000 to the organization with a 25% match (some expenses and lots of volunteer time)
 - Would hire a part time volunteer coordinator for the project
 - NC State has continued the monitoring of the DEQ long term monitoring sites; Burchell doesn't have interest in continuing monitoring of those sites. DWR is monitoring some sites, but not fully these.
 - CarWA would coordinate volunteers (volunteer coordinator), training, build partnerships with wetland treasure sites, RTI would be involved to develop a database and get it to the state, interactive website to work on data visualization
 - 2 year project, \$250,000 grant budget; CarWA would get \$40,000 (plus our 25% cost share – keep tracking volunteer hours)
 - Going to be a real commitment, have to track it, have to deliver, can ask for donations specific to this project, cost share can include donations/hours from our partners, volunteer
 - This is a pilot grant – could apply for another grant to continue the program; will be producing meaningful data
 - Chad is concerned about the tracking and the fact that once this gets started, can't shut it off; grant would require document retention, etc., will be responsible for keeping the information for a long time; not a lot of room for error/problems; what about professional liability insurance (\$2000)? He's not terribly comfortable with the project or the budget; he would prefer to see a \$10,000-\$20,000 cushion in budget before embarking on something like this; more risk on our own part without it, especially if the project has problems. He says we don't necessarily have the \$ to fix something if we had to; he doesn't like the liability. Chad will reach out to the contact from Sound Rivers as to what she recommends. Kim says since NC State University is the primary applicant, there is a little less liability.
 - Kristine says we really do need to get active in projects like this in order to grow and get more funding; need to start showing products or will continue to struggle in getting big funding. She acknowledges risk but doesn't think it's big enough to jeopardize our delivery of the requirements of the grant.
 - Ginny was wondering if workplan was available that CarWA will be responsible for completing and will it be ready by this board meeting? She would like to review the materials they have together for the grant application – she has concerns about the amount of volunteer work required for this project.
 - George, Kim, Heather all suggest we go ahead and apply for grant. Deal with insurance, liability, etc. later.
 - Heather moves to apply for the grant under condition that we have a full board meeting to talk about this before we accept funds. Rick seconded. All in favor.

7:10 Strategy Plan – Rick, Kim, Chad, Norton

- Acknowledge missing sections/gaps
- Review of each section and get comments from the Board at a high level (not word level) – within 2-3 weeks
- Editing changes send by June 15 and we will send a final version by July 1, well in advance of the July board meeting
- Comments will be due by July 8 and final version approved at July 15 meeting
- Needs to use Strategy Plan to get funding and may start in June

- Comments on Strategy Plan
 - Several people agreed that Objective 2 has too many items – limit to most important for the next 3 years
 - Kristine suggested 5 or fewer under any one objective; can combine some together
 - Perhaps take out Objective 6, especially Objective 6.5.
 - Board should review this objective for wording and return edits
 - Kristine asking if we have the expertise for Objective 7.4 – Rick said need partnerships. George thinks would be stepping on toes (Swamp School for example). Who would that be with? Suggested “develop collaborative relationships with mitigation providers – what would they like to see us do?” George says sometimes we have good ideas, but it’s hard to get nonprofits or state agencies to pay attention – too regional, tied up in litigation, etc. Suggested something like – provide public comment to guide mitigation policy. Kristine suggests paring down to just 7.2 and 7.3 for this goal.
 - Rick says we could push using the myriad of public data for guiding mitigation. George suggests getting Tim Baumgardner from DMS come in to explain what he does (ask him how we can help him), and restoration association too, so get a picture of all the pieces. Kristine loves this idea to help us learn what the gaps are.
 - Kristine mentions she is glad to see Objectives 8 and 9; good to have these written down. Kim mentioned that we want to show it to potential donors.
 - Send comments and changes to strategy document by June 15th

7:40 Meetings/Events

- Sierra Club wants to partner/finance a wetlands event/project with Carolina Wetlands – Rick
 - Rick was approached; Kim asked the board if there were any concerns with the CarWA working with the Sierra Club (Heather said she would feel more comfortable working with a chapter, than the national Sierra Club; their propensity to want to control everything in certain areas; George agrees need to be careful, but worth looking into. Kristine – the more we can get in writing around the terms of our relationship with them (who signs off on media press releases, how we are going to publicize the work we are doing together – Chad reiterated the need for insurance)
- Resiliency Round table – Rick
 - The point is that doing restoration work will be better than building dams for flood control; including landowners and farmers who are getting flooded out
- Meeting with EDF – Rick, Norton, Chad
- Natural and Working Lands -- Rick
- SeaGrant Coastal Conference in Wilmington in Nov. – Rick
- NC Coastal Resilience Summit (NC Coastal Federation) – Havelock, NC – June 11, 12 – Rick paid \$45 to go.

7:57 Other Business

Biggest thing is the Strategic Plan; Rick will send out a report from the AEES conference in Asheville on what learned from mitigation world.

8:15 Adjourn – Kim motion, Chad seconded; all in favor