

Friends of the GTM NERR

Minutes of Board Meeting: Tuesday, March 11, 2008

Members Present:

Carl Hampp, Chris Rich, Craig O'Neal, Irene Kaufman, Frank Pixler

Staff Present:

Teri Webley, Janet Zimmerman, Angel Gonzales

Guests:

Tom Barry

Excused Absence:

Pierre Pierce, Anita Pierce, Nancy Schachnovsky, Peter Difatta, Bill Coleman, Michael Timpane, Barb Starck

Meeting called to order at 5:10 pm by Carl Hampp at the EEC

February Meeting Minutes Approval by Carl Hampp

February meeting minutes approval could not be voted on because there was not a quorum in attendance at this meeting.

Development Committee Update by Frank Pixler

Frank spoke about the soft response to the mass mailing for membership. He explained that reduced donations are a widespread problem right now. Frank reported that there has been about \$19,000 in donations since October 2007 from all sources.

The donation dollars are down about \$10,000 from the same period last year.

Frank said that the Financial and Development committees met to discuss finding sponsorships from businesses to support some programs at the GTM Research Reserve.

Frank said there would be a more formal presentation next month about corporate sponsorship.

Frank explained the need to identify the best candidates in the business community from the prospect list.

Frank also explained the need for a sheet or brochure directed at the business community that explains the benefits to them if they participate in a sponsorship program.

Frank said that the current Friends of the GTM Reserve brochure will not work for corporate sponsorship because the focus of the brochure is on the individual. Because money is tight Frank said that the work on the business brochure should be done in house as much as possible.

Teri was directed to suspend monthly renewal letters for now.

Education and Communications Committee update by Chris Rich

Chris spoke about the need for displays to promote the Friends of the GTM Reserve. One display would be portable for off site events and the other would be a permanent display in the Environmental Education Center.

Chris handed out quotes to the Board members present.

The traveling display that the Education and Communications Committee recommends is the retractable style banner.

Frank explained that the prices on the quote sheet from him are wholesale because he will pass that discount on to the Board if the displays are ordered from him.

Chris explained that the range in cost in the quotes is due to the design costs. There is no way to know how long it will take the graphic designer to develop the banner.

Chris said that for the permanent display there is a range of options from a poster to a professional museum display similar to the displays in the Environmental Education Center now. The cost of the latter is significantly more but it would go well with what is in the EEC.

Chris said she would work with Janet or whoever will supply the pictures for the displays.

Chris added that the displays should coordinate with the Friends of the GTM Reserve brochure.

Carl asked where the permanent display would be placed in the EEC. Chris said the space just to the left of the Nature Store doors was the current choice.

Chris said there had been discussion about getting two portable displays and using one as a permanent display in the EEC. She said that the problem with that is that the display would wear quickly in the EEC. The recommendation of the Education and Communications Committee is to use a display designed as a permanent display in the EEC.

Chris said that a large portion of the cost of the displays is the graphic design \$400 to \$600.

There was discussion about which display was more important. The portable display was decided to be the more important of the two.

Janet suggested that working with local universities on the graphics for the displays could lower the cost.

There was discussion about who would contact which college to suggest a class project creating the graphics for the displays.

Education cont.

After discussion about display components and design Carl explained that the Board could not take action at this meeting because there is not a quorum in attendance. He suggested that the next step could be the university idea.

Chris asked if the display project should wait for the new Friends of the GTM Reserve brochure.

Frank explained that there is not a new brochure in the works at this time but that one is needed. He suggested that the Friends of the GTM Reserve brochure and displays should be coordinated with the new GTM Research Reserve brochure.

Janet said that she would provide the Board with a copy of the new GTM Research Reserve brochure within the week.

Nature Store Committee Update by Carl Hampp

Carl explained that as a result of the Nature Store Committee meeting some merchandise will be moved out to the main hall of the EEC near the reception desk to let visitors know that the Nature Store is there. If the display improves traffic in the Nature Store a more permanent / upscale display will be purchased for the main hall.

The second item on the Committee meeting agenda was a coupon for the Best Read Guide. A coupon for the Nature Store will be included in the GTM Research Reserve advertisement in the next printing. The coupon details will be decided at a later time.

The third item Carl discussed was the need to upgrade the QuickBooks program used by the Friends of the GTM Reserve and the Nature Store. The program currently being used is being phased out so the upgrade is necessary. Nancy and Teri will work together to decide which upgrade version is appropriate for the Friends of the GTM Reserve and Nature Store needs.

The fourth agenda item was road signage for the Nature Store. Teri will work with Joe on that project. The signage would be on A1A at the entrance to the GTM Research Reserve property, the goal is to inform and attract the public to the Nature Store. The second goal for signage is to promote the fact that local artists are displayed at the GTM Research Reserve.

The final item discussed was the Volunteer staff in the Nature Store. Irene explained that there is a shortfall in Nature Store coverage.

Janet suggested that the volunteer spotlight in the St. Augustine Record may be a resource.

Finance Committee Update by Carl Hampp

Carl said that the Finance Committee met and although there is not an official report for this meeting due to Nancy's absence he would pass along some information.

The P & L statement for the last two years has been created.

Finance cont.

For the same time frame in the 06-07 fiscal year \$56000 in funds was raised and only \$27000 for the 07-08 fiscal year.

Spending is down for 07-08 \$36000 compared to \$5500 for the same time frame in the 06-07 fiscal year. Carl said there is a concern that expenditures exceed funds raised for this period in 07-08.

Carl explained that because of the shortfall in contributions more effort will be made to get corporate sponsorship for some of the programs formerly funded by the Friends of the GTM Reserve.

Carl explained further that the lack of contributions is likely due to the financial climate in general today and not a lack of attempts to raise funds by the Friends of the GTM Reserve. People are not contributing as freely as they used to.

There is a need to find new ways to attract donor dollars to the Friends of the GTM Reserve and the Research Reserve.

Frank said that in speaking with contacts in the industry he has found that everyone is feeling the pinch right now. The expectation is that contributions will be down this year.

Chris asked Angel if GTM Research Reserve volunteers list affiliations on their applications.

Angel said they do list occupations and affiliations on their volunteer applications.

Chris asked if there were any CEOs of local corporations or similar potential contacts for corporate sponsorship of GTM Research Reserve programs in the volunteer files. Explaining her thinking on the subject Chris said that these individuals may not be aware of a need that they could provide for at a place they are already committed to.

Angel expressed his agreement of Chris' point.

After discussion about what information is known about volunteers and how it is captured Frank suggested that the Board could check the volunteer list for known names in the business community.

Janet suggested that the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner would be a good place to announce the need for corporate sponsorship for programs at the GTM Research Reserve. The request could be part of the Friends of the GTM Reserve presentation at the dinner.

Research Reserve Update by Janet Zimmerman

The first subject Janet covered was the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner to be held May 17, 2008 at 6pm.

Research cont.

Angel said that the best quote to date for food for the dinner is \$2130. This amount does not cover drinks. Angel said he is still waiting for a quote from an additional vendor. Angel requested a budget from the Board.

Carl asked how many people were expected to attend the dinner.

Angel said that he reduced the estimate to 90 people to reduce the cost.

Carl expressed concerns over a repeat of past experience where the attendance estimate was high and resulted in overspending.

Janet said that the Finance Committee directed them to get the cost of the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner down to about \$2000.

Angel suggested that the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner would be a good place for the Friends of the GTM Reserve to do a PowerPoint presentation to explain the Friends of the GTM Reserve function at the GTM Research Reserve and to express any needs.

Angel explained that he is working on a presentation and would like a board member to work with him to provide information about the Friends of the GTM Reserve accomplishments and goals.

Carl suggested that either the Executive or Development Committee could work with Angel on this project.

Frank said that he and Jonathan could provide Angel with the information he needs.

Teri was asked by Frank to compare the volunteer list to the Friends member list and prepare a report listing the percentage of volunteers that are also Friends of the GTM Reserve members.

Janet passed out the NERRA FY 09 Budget Priorities. Janet said that there is a call into Congressman's office asking for him to lead a Dear Colleague letter to send to other officials concerning support of the budget. The Friends of the GTM Reserve are encouraged to write letters to their Representatives. Janet said time is short for this and that things will start happening in about a week or so.

Carl said that the Board could not take because there is not a quorum at this meeting. Carl added that Teri could send an email to all Board members requesting a vote concerning a letter of support for the NERRA budget. Teri

would request return receipt when sending the email to ensure delivery to all Board members.

Janet will get with Teri concerning the content of the proposed letter.

Research cont.

(when questioned about the proposed letter during a subsequent meeting Janet said that a letter from the Friends of the GTM Reserve Board would not be necessary.)

Janet announced that the Archeology Symposium starts Wed. 3/12/08. For 3 days there will be meetings at the GTM Research Reserve. The Friends of the GTM Reserve are encouraged to attend. The Friends of the GTM Reserve are providing snacks and coffee for the 3 day event.

The Lighthouse will host a reception for the Archeology Symposium on Thursday, March 13 at 7pm. Irene will attend and man the Friends of the GTM Reserve table. To date Irene and Michael T are set to attend.

Frank asked what the Friends of the GTM Reserve had agreed to donate to the Archeology Symposium.

Janet said that \$250 for the Lighthouse reception and \$250 for refreshments at the GTM Research Reserve for the March 12, 12, and 14 meetings for a total of \$500 to be donated by the Friends of the GTM Reserve.

Next Janet discussed the Birding and Foto Fest food table. The Friends of the GTM Reserve have been offered the opportunity to run the food table and collect all profit from sales as a donation to the Friends of the GTM Reserve. The St. Johns County Visitor and Convention Bureau will give the Friends of the GTM Reserve \$500 for food. Janet said that she has a "to do" list for the Friends of the GTM Reserve concerning the food table. The Birding and Foto Fest will run April 10, 11, 12, and 13. The food table would have to be open each of those days.

The "to do" items for the Board are:

- A letter to Publix requesting donations of food including bakery items
- Assign someone to purchase items and pick up food as the need arises
- Find people to run the food booth for all 4 days

Carl asked Frank if he would co chair the committee that will oversee the food booth for the Birding and Foto Fest.

Frank said that he and Jonathan would co chair that committee.

Chris asked what was served at the Birding and Foto Fest last year.

Janet said that Pizza, Fruit, and bakery items were served last year.

There was discussion about menu and suggestions for subs and wraps as well as a reminder that attendees will be in workshops and walking so take away food should be considered.

Janet said that the Finance Committee asked her to speak to Mike S. about Corporate Sponsorships and any parameters or restrictions. Mike S. said that these considerations are done on a case by case basis depending on what the event was and who the sponsor was. Things like banners, signs, and flyers or advertisements Research cont. with a sponsors logo or name would also be looked at on a case by case basis and no permanent displays would be allowed.

Mike S is interested in looking into the possibility of Starbucks becoming a sponsor and providing coffee at meetings at the GTM Research Reserve. Frank mentioned a contact he has at Vystar and that they may be a potential sponsor.

Janet said that the three main programs needing corporate sponsorship are:

- The Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
- National Estuaries Day
- The LIFE Bus program

Janet announced that September through November of 2009 the GTM Research Reserve will celebrate its 10th anniversary. There will be a celebration. The Reserve was designated in 1999.

Janet told the Board that in an effort to free up more time for her to focus on other projects Angel Gonzalez will work more with the Friends of the GTM Reserve Board. Janet feels that more involvement between the Board and Angel will create more synergy between the Friends of the GTM Reserve and the volunteers. Angels experience includes working with volunteers, starting CSOs (citizens support organization), and running special events. One of Angel's projects is to get the Friends of the GTM Reserve hooked into the annual CSO meeting. Janet said that meeting is a good place to network with other CSOs.

Carl asked Janet to prepare an announcement concerning the change and Teri will send it to all Board members.

A message from Mike S and the other managers at the GTM Research Reserve, they are working on presentations for the Friends of the GTM Reserve committees concerning future needs and will contact the appropriate committees by April or May to arrange for these presentations.

Other Business

Carl asked for other business.

Frank asked Janet if she or Mike S would speak to the Board about how to interface properly with the public. Something that would set the guidelines for what Board members should and shouldn't do or say when representing the Friends of the GTM Reserve in public.

Janet said that she and Angel will talk about how to make that presentation to the Board. One of them will make a presentation.

Frank asked if 30 minutes would be enough for that kind of presentation.

Other cont.

Angel said 30 minutes would be a good length of time.

Janet suggested that doing more than one presentation in 15 minute chunks may be a way to ensure that the meeting would not run over.

There was discussion about how to incorporate this presentation and ones about what the Friends of the GTM Reserve do into Board member and volunteer orientations.

Tom Barry said that as a volunteer he agrees with the need to communicate the Friends of the GTM Reserve function better to the volunteers. He said that most of the people he knows do not know what the Friends of the GTM Reserve do. Tom suggested adding a few lines to the newsletter that Janet puts out about the Friends of the GTM Reserves and their activities.

There was discussion about how to best get the information to volunteers linking the website to a PowerPoint presentation about the Friends of the GTM Reserve was one way suggested.

Carl explained to Tom that at one time the Friends of the GTM Reserve and the volunteers were the same group. The two have since been separated and the Friends function put simply is to raise funds to offset what the State does not provide for and to lobby to make sure the Research Reserve is protected. They will speak to county commissioners, congressmen, etc. about issues that affect the Research Reserve and its interests.

Angel invited the Friends of the GTM Reserve Board to send a representative to the volunteer quarterly meetings to do a presentation.

A quarterly Board update for the newsletter Janet writes was suggested and discussed.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:55 by Carl Hampp

The next monthly board meeting will be Tuesday, April 8, 2008