

Friends of the GTM NERR

Minutes of Board Meeting: Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Members Present:

Joe Hutnan, Peter Difatta, Frank Pixler, Barb Stark, Irene Kaufman

Staff Present:

Teri Webley, Mike Shirley, and Janet Zimmerman.

Guests:

Craig O'Neal

Meeting called to order at 5:05pm by Joe Hutnan at the EEC

Quorum not present unable to vote on last weeks minutes.

Nominating Committee Report by Peter Difatta

Peter-The committee has received 3 resumes from interested candidates.
Two candidates have been interviewed and come highly recommended.

The resumes for Craig O'Neal and Jonathan Katzen were handed out to all board members present at this time.

Peter- Teri will email these resumes to all members unable to attend this meeting.

Vote for acceptance on the board for these two candidates was tabled until a quorum is available.

Peter-The third person who provided a resume to the Nominating Committee has not been interviewed by the committee yet; so her resume was not handed out.

Frank- Tommy from the Avid Angler is interested in board membership and would be a good candidate but is unable to attend Tuesday meetings due to a long term commitment.

Carl suggested that there is another body that Tommy could serve on provided they do not meet on Tuesdays. (The Management Advisory Group)

Janet- I will check with Carl and get more information about that committee.

Frank- Tommy would be a good voice for the fishing community. He does not have a resume; he is putting one together for us.

Peter- A full resume is not required a biography would be sufficient.

Nominating committee by Peter cont.

Discussion about the nominating process among board members.
The Friends of the GTMNERR board of directors currently has 3 candidates and 5 openings.

Joe- We will not vote tonight on board members because we do not have a full quorum.

Preliminary overview of the new marketing plan by Frank Pixler

Frank passed around handouts to all board members present.

Frank- What I tried to do this year was to see how we could be more successful in the business community. So we could generate more support and funds from businesses. Focusing on Flagler and St. Johns Counties. Because this is a small community I had Barb generate a membership list by zip code. This would be memberships obtained from our last mailing. I believe there is still revenue trickling in from that mailing in memberships and bricks.

Teri- The brick order was just placed and we received orders up to the order date. Memberships have been slow lately but we are receiving some.

Frank- We have had generally a good year with the mailing from last year. There was a strong feeling that we should go to Flagler County. What you see on the first handout is that we had a total of 9 responses from Flagler and Palm coast. About a third of the mailing went into Flagler County.

Part of the recommendation is going to be; until we can generate some kind of presence in the business community, that we do not go back and do mailings to Flagler County.

We can use our money better focusing on areas where we are getting support and recognition.

We can't ignore Flagler County but we will concentrate on St. Augustine and Jacksonville.

I spoke to Mike and Carl about joining the Flagler Chamber. We don't have anyone who lives in Flagler County or any real presence there. Until we can get a presence or board members who live in Flagler County maybe we can have a NERR staff member represent the Friends to the Chamber to create a presence and see what some of the need is.

Mike- First thing was to check with Tallahassee. The way it is stated is that the staff member would stand in for or serve as proxy for the Friends not representing. That way we keep the two groups separate. Keeping the two groups separate was their main concern. As for Chamber membership we could have the staff member stand in for a board member who would be the Chamber member of record.

Frank- We need to become more involved with Chamber groups.

Mike- There is a need for this facility to reach out to Flagler County.

Marketing plan by Frank cont.

Frank- Being exhibitors at chamber functions is only part of our job there.

We need to engage the other exhibitors as well as the spectators at these functions to get maximum benefit from our involvement.

Frank- describing handouts- The first is a list of Chambers of interest us.

The second is a list of other groups (rotaries etc.) we could do outreaches with.

Frank- A social for the top members of the 3 local Chambers would be a good idea.

Frank- A media event for the PR people from local media is another good way to establish a relationship with the media.

Frank- Starting in September do monthly renewals.

Joe- We've done that before and it was a lot of work. Once a year is easier.

Barb- I feel monthly would work better. Once a year is overwhelming.

Peter- Would Teri do once a month renewals?

Barb-Up to now I've done it. Teri is learning so between the two of us we can do it.

Peter- Barb and Teri can evaluate the work involved in monthly renewals and report back to the board.

Barb- Was the mass mailing done last year outsourced?

Frank- we did outsource the membership mass mailing last year.

Board discussion about the pros and cons of mass mailings for memberships.

Frank-We need a different brochure for mailings that speaks to the benefits of membership.

Joe- Do other organizations have brochures we can use as examples for our brochure?

Janet- I will check with other groups about what they use for brochures.

Joe- A brochure from each of the other NERRs would help.

Board discussion about where to get input about recruiting members and sponsors from the business community.

Frank- In closing we need a presence at area Chambers.

First draft of the Management Plan update by Mike

Mike- May 16 there will be a meeting at the EEC for the Management Advisory Board. Attendees will see that our connection with the community will grow with this plan.

Janet- Pierre Pierce is the Friends board member with a seat on the Management Advisory Board. You may want to check with him about his plans to attend the May 16th meeting. If he is unable to attend another Friends board member may want to sit in. You do have a vote.

First draft by Mike cont.

Joe- Teri please send an email to Pierre about attending the May 16th meeting.

If he is not attending we will see that someone attends.

Peter- Has this meeting been announced to the public?

Janet- We have taken all the required steps to inform the public of this meeting.

Mike- This is a partial draft. We have another meeting in July where we will present more of the Management Plan. It is going to take a few meetings do the whole plan.

Joe- Are the Friends referenced in the plan?

Mike- Yes the Friends is referenced. One of the things we are looking for is community feedback. The friends is our way of connecting with the community.

Janet- There is a PDF version of the draft available if you let me know I will get it out to you. To find it online go to the GTM Friends website and click on the State link. It will be on the front page of the State site.

Board discussion about the purpose for the Management Plan and how they work.

NERR update by Janet

Janet- Memorial donations provided a touch tank. We will be accepting delivery

By July. We will come to the Friends for those Memorial funds.

Joe- Are those funds identified in the account?

Janet- Yes they are separated from the other donations.

Janet- The volunteer dinner is on Friday 5 18. We still need some RSVPs.

Will need checks for expenses; this was already approved by the board.

We have enough beverages for the volunteer dinner.

Janet- We will be asking Bill to speak at the volunteer dinner.

The board members will be recognized at the volunteer dinner also

Janet- June 22 6-8 is the next Artist Reception for Harry Hellas.

We will need beverages and bartenders.

Tentatively- Irene, Joe, Carl, Frank, and Peter will bartend at the reception.

Janet- Offer from the Rembrandts summer Camp to do a summer art camp here.

This will be a week long daily camp for elementary and middle school students. Focus will be nature for art projects.

They will charge \$15.00 per person for the camp. Will the Friends want to increase that by \$2. or \$3.?

Peter- Will NERR staff be needed for these classes?

Janet- They will use the facility but will not need NERR staff.

We are looking for board approval run the program using the Friends name. I feel it is something that would benefit the NERR.

Peter-What would be the benefit to the NERR? What is the cost to the NERR

Janet- The benefit is this program reaches out to the community. Creates awareness of nature and the NERR in participants.

NERR by Janet cont.

Board consensus- No need to raise the price if there is another benefit to the NERR.

Janet- The July 10 Friends board meeting is going to be rolled into the social for The Friends of the GTMNERR and the NERR staff.

Janet- The winner of the National Estuaries Day 4th Grade Art Contest has been decided. The winning poster will be turned into a tee shirt.

Janet- The week of July 17 is the annual 312 evaluation for the Reserve. The folks from Washington D C and NOAA come down and evaluate how the GTM Reserve is operating. They would like to speak to our partners of which the Friends of the GTMNERR is an important one. When we get closer to that time I will let the Friends know what days they will be here so someone can be available.

Janet- The end of July the International Visitor Corps will be in Jacksonville. July 30 the NERR will host the group. This is an international, multi cultural group. They will hear about things like restoration and local ecology, pesticides in the environment, innovative technologies in natural resources, and more. The list of attendees come from China, Japan, Iran, Afghanistan, Lebanon, etc. a very diverse group.

Joe-What type of group is this?

Janet- The International Visitor Corps helps to bring invited international visitors to the area and provide interaction between the two. They operate as a non profit organization.

Mike- The visit is going to be a media event. There will be press releases and coverage. We may have some input in Tallahassee about that. It coincides the Governor wrapping up a summit on climate change and issues on global climate. There may be a link between the visitor corps event and summit that would result in someone from Tallahassee coming here.

Janet- We have a budget for the visitor corps event but may need additional funds from the Friends. Will get back to the board with details.

Other Business

Frank- Spoke to Rick Rowles about the Sports Show. He has given me a verbal yes. There are fees to do the show. Will need Friends support for those. Will do the show Estuaries Day in the morning. Waiting for a written confirmation. It involves a \$200. equipment rental fee.

Frank- There is a new group in St. Johns county called the St. Johns Cultural Council of the Arts. They are trying to do art programs at different facilities with children. Some children's art exhibits and such. I told my contact that I would share his information with the Board.

Other Business cont.

Frank cont.- I will get his contact information to Janet.

Peter- My apologies to Craig O'Neal. He is a candidate before the Nominating Committee for the Board of Directors. He attended tonight's meeting to see what we do. I did not introduce him at the beginning of the meeting.

Teri- The bricks for the Paving the way to the future phase 2 have been ordered. The brick layer has been contacted and is waiting for delivery of the bricks to do their part.

Barb- How many bricks did we end up with?

Teri- 53 bricks were ordered.

Teri- Still working on increasing the traffic in the Nature Store.

Mike- We will add a Nature Store Sign to the GTMNERR sign.

Peter- Do people know they don't have to pay admission to go to the Nature Store?

Janet- The staff is aware and will tell guests if they ask.

Peter- Should the sign say that no fee is required to go the Nature Store?

Janet- We have found that the public does not read signs.

Teri- Targeting school groups by including a pre-order form with a limited list of items available to order over the phone before their visit in the confirmation package. Diana sends these.

Janet and Teri- This is the slow time of year.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:10 by Joe