

Friends of the GTM NERR

Minutes of Board Meeting: Tuesday, August 14, 2007

Members Present:

Joe Hutnan, Peter Difatta, Carl Hampp, Carol Travis, Pierre Pierce, Anita Pierce, Frank Pixler, Irene Kaufman, Chris Rich, Jonathan Katzen, Craig O'Neal, Nancy Schachnovsky

Staff Present:

Janet Zimmerman, Teri Webley, Marty Healy, Forrest Penny

Meeting called to order at 5:00pm by Joe Hutnan at the EEC

July Meeting Minutes Approval by Joe Hutnan

Joe asked if anyone is opposed to approving the July meeting minutes. No one opposed.

Motion to approve July meeting minutes by Jonathan, seconded by Frank, passed.

Development Committee Report by Frank Pixler

Frank handed out the budget proposal for the Development Committee to all present. Frank will email copies to those not present at this meeting.

This Budget is for the year starting October 1, 2007

Last year for the direct mail campaign we budgeted \$15,000 it cost about \$12,500. That figure includes all costs related to the direct mail campaign. This year there have been some cost increases like paper and postage. After re-bidding the direct mail it appears the cost will be close this year. What we need to discuss is if we want to include Flagler County in the direct mail campaign this year. We only had 3 responses out of 5 or 6 thousand pieces. Maybe we should wait until we have more of a presence in Flagler County before we do another mailing to that area.

Janet suggested that next fall may be a better time to try a mailing in Flagler County. Give us time to get a few more activities in that area.

Frank suggested that the next meeting may be a good time to make a decision about whether to include Flagler County in the direct mailing campaign.

Jonathan and Frank will do more research on the subject and be ready at the next meeting to give their findings.

Development Committee continued

Frank suggested that the direct mailings go out by about mid October for the fund raising season.

There has been discussion about how to better target businesses in the direct mail campaign.

Frank has budgeted in two direct mail campaigns for business to business. This includes membership in local Chambers of Commerce. The Board needs to decide if the cost of membership to the Chambers is worth the benefit.

For renewal mailings with postage and paper cost increases it will be slightly more than the \$900. spent last year.

The Friends of the GTMNERR is currently a member of the St. Johns and Ponte Vedra Chambers. We are going to join the Flagler County Chamber. Janet and Frank are going to go to the Flagler County Chamber functions to create a presence in Flagler County through the business community and the Flagler County Chamber.

The Economic Development Council is another group worth looking at. Frank said he doesn't know enough about it to make a recommendation yet.

Frank has been paying for his lunches and meetings with the Chambers of Commerce for the last couple of years. The Friends of the GTMNERR needs to look at the cost of attending these lunches and who wants to go and whether that cost should become a budget item.

The estimate for the Flagler Chamber may change because they are changing how they operate.

Frank stated that in his opinion becoming active in local Chambers of Commerce is the only logical way to gain recognition in the business community.

Frank suggested that if the Friends of the GTMNERR is going do be successful in a direct mail campaign to businesses, a brochure (different from the one used for private citizens) aimed at the business community is needed.

Frank suggested the cost of equipment used each time a radio does a broadcast at the Research Reserve become a budget item.

Frank pointed out that according to Diana, Whitney Lab is doing a give away for Estuaries Day. The Friends of the GTMNERR may want to consider including similar giveaways for events and include this as a budget item.

Development Committee continued

Pierre asked what would be different about a business brochure from the one sent to the consuming public.

Frank explained that the business brochure would be a different size and structured to the business community. It would explain what we need from them and the value to them, their employees, and to the families of their employees. Offer sponsorship opportunities and things they could get involved with like the school bus program.

Joe inquired about timing for this brochure.

Frank said the direct mailing campaigns need to be done middle of the fall.

Janet pointed out that the mailing for renewals is Oct. 1, 2007.

Frank passed around the renewal letter for inactive members who have not renewed in the past two years for suggestions or comments which can be given to Frank via email or phone in the next couple of days, after being read by Board members.

Frank explained that the letters to inactive members will go out announcing the Friends of the GTMNERR intent to contact these individuals by phone.

A phone script will be supplied by Barb Stark to use when Board members call the inactive members of the Friends of the GTMNERR.

Joe asked if the sum of all the items in the proposed budget that Frank passed out at the beginning of the meeting would be the entire budget.

Frank said that it is the entire budget at this time.

Joe asked if the proposed budget is for now through December 07.

Frank said the proposed Budget is for October 1, 07 through September of 08.

Joe inquired about the status of the Friends of the GTMNERR accounts. The financial statement was not available at this meeting.

Joe stated that after Frank summarizes each section the Finance Committee would review the budget and financial statements and advise the Board.

Jonathan asked if any of the proposed budget items were time sensitive.

Frank said timing is relevant for a lot of the budget items with the renewal budget being the most pressing right now.

Development Committee continued

Joe suggested that the renewal portion of the proposed budget be approved now. The rest of the proposed budget will wait for Finance Committee review.

Carl made a motion to approve the direct mail portion of the Development Committee budget. Craig seconded and it was approved by the Board.

In the interest of timing Joe suggested that the inactive member renewal letter be passed around the Board for reading and comment.

There was discussion about the inactive member renewal letter content among Board members and staff present.

It was decided that Frank and Janet would work together on the next draft of the renewal letter for inactive members and that Janet would have a draft ready for review by next week.

It was decided through Board discussion and Janet's input that it is not necessary to offer free gifts to Research Reserve guests on National Estuaries Day.

Nominating Committee Report by Carl Hampp

Carl presented the Nominating Committee's recommendations for office.

Pierre Pierce – President

Peter Difatta – Vice President

Irene Kaufman – Secretary

Nancy Schachnovsky – Treasurer

The Friends of the GTMNERR Board of Directors will vote for the officers at the Board meeting on September 11, 2007.

Peter suggested that the Board should have Officers and Committees in place before starting a membership drive. That the timing of these events should possibly be adjusted to be better organized and prepared. For example the Board could move officers' elections to earlier in the year.

Janet suggested that one way to become more organized would be for the Governance and Executive Committees to have a calendar prepared before the beginning of the fiscal year.

MAG Update by Pierre Pierce

Pierre gave a brief overview of what takes place at the MAG meetings.

A subject of concern for the Friends of the GTMNERR at the MAG meeting was a proposal to use a strip of land belonging to the GTM Research Reserve for highway expansion on State Road 210. This is not the first time such a proposal has been made. Historically the Friends of the GTMNERR have been against using GTM Research Reserve property this way. Commissioner Dan Rich is in the same position as before, against the taking of GTM Research Reserve property. It appears that the law supports the Friends of the GTMNERR position in not allowing the property to be used for road expansion.

Jim Darby has requested a letter voicing the Friends of the GTMNERR position on the subject of using GTM Research Reserve property to expand S R 210.

Hurricane evacuation is expected to be the reason of record for the expansion of S R 210. There are other options that do not use GTM Research Reserve property to widen S R 210.

The population in Ponte Vedra has not grown.

Nocatee was suggested as the reason for the proposal to widen S R 210. Pierre stated that it was actually said at the MAG meeting that a reason for the road expansion is that some Nocatee residents want an easier route to dinner.

Pierre pointed out that there have been letters from Carl and from the Friends of the GTMNERR to the Governor when GTM Research Reserve property was targeted before. The position has been that road expansion is not a proper or appropriate use for GTM Research Reserve property.

Pierre read a letter he prepared voicing the Friends of the GTMNERR position against using GTM Research Reserve property for the S R 210 highway expansion.

Janet stated that at this time no official request has been made for the strip of GTM Research Reserve property for the purpose of widening S R 210. Janet also stated that this is a good time to be pro active. Write letters voicing the Friends of the GTMNERR position against using GTM Research Reserve property for road expansion on S R 210.

Janet explained that MAG will draft a letter and needs to know the Friends of the GTMNERR position concerning using GTM Research Reserve property for road expansion on SR 210.

MAG continued

Janet was not sure of who at MAG the Friends of the GTMNERR letter should be address to. Pierre suggested that Jim Darby would be a good person to address the letter concerning the proposed 210 expansion to.

Joe asked if it is the opinion of the Board that a letter should be drafted to the MAG group defining the Friends of the GTM Reserves opposition to the plan to use GTM Research Reserve property in the widening of SR 210.

Pierre pointed out that giving even the smallest piece of land will set an unfortunate precedent that will spread thorough the estuaries and Federal land all over the country.

Craig said he was familiar with the high school issue in reference to using GTM Research Reserve land and the letter writing campaign was successful in preventing the use of GTM Research Reserve land for that project.

Janet said there will be a MAG meeting at the EEC the second Wed. of Dec. and the subject of a MAG letter concerning the proposed use of GTM Research Reserve land for the widening of S R 210 would be addressed then. That date is 12/12/07 at 6pm.

Carl asked that a representative from the DOT be present at the MAG meeting to make a presentation about widening S R 210.

Janet said Mike was doing the agenda for the MAG 12/12 meeting and that she would pass the request along to him.

There was some question whether the DOT is involved in the widening of S R 210 at this point.

Joe said that the letter voicing the position of the Friends of the GTMNERR concerning the use of GTM Research Reserve property to widen S R 210 will be written then reviewed by the Executive Committee before being sent to MAG.

Peter explained that he was not necessarily 100% opposed to the use of GTM Research Reserve land to widen S R 210. He felt the high school issue a different matter.

Joe said that his opinion was that if you give an inch they will keep taking more land. It is more of a precedent issue than which piece of land is asked for. Several Board members voiced their agreement with Joe's position.

MAG continued

Joe asked if it will require a vote to do the letter to MAG concerning the use of GTM Research Reserve land to widen S R 210.

Carl said that a vote was not needed and the Executive Committee could approve the letter.

Research Committee Update by Pierre Pierce

Marty gave the Board details about the need for \$700. by the Research Committee for an Archaeological Survey done by LAMP for the GTM Research Reserve. The survey was originally offered for free but state funds are frozen and LAMP needs reimbursement for expenses incurred doing the survey for GTM Research Reserve.

Marty said that a survey like the one done by LAMP would normally cost \$50,000. The Friends of the GTMNERR are not being asked to pay for time and equipment. The reimbursement is for fuel and oil used during the GTM Research Reserve part of the project.

Further explanation by Marty-The equipment was used to measure water level this information goes into calibration certification of our circulation stats. Also a wave sensor installed because of extensive erosion. Water quality information was gathered. The existing tower for this information is leaning possibly due to erosion. The Archeological survey was needed in order to replace the tower. State law says an Archeological survey must be done before the tower can be repaired.

There was discussion among Board members about the availability of \$700 in the budget.

Janet explained that according to her figures there is plenty of money in the budget to pay for the survey.

After some discussion about budget and the treasurer Nancy motioned to approve the \$700 and Carl seconded. The Board approved the \$700 to be paid to LAMP after an invoice and receipts are provided to the Friends of the GTMNERR by LAMP.

NERR Update by Janet Zimmerman

International Coastal Cleanup is Saturday Sept.15. St Johns County participates at all of the county beach access points and the GTM Research Reserve will work the Guana beach access points.

NERR continued

National Estuaries day is two weeks later on Saturday Sept. 29. Janet passed out National Estuaries Day fliers announcing the activities at the GTM Research Reserve for that day.

The Friends of the GTMNERR is a sponsor of the National Estuaries Day event at the GTM Research Reserve.

The two activities that Janet needs information from the Friends of the GTMNERR on are the Friends of the GTMNERR membership information table and If the Friends of the GTMNERR are going to offer food and drink for free at the event.

Janet provided a volunteer signup sheet for the Friends of the GTMNERR member information table and the food booth.

The menu for the Friends of the GTMNERR food booth was discussed. Hot dogs and soda will be the menu and bottled water will be provided at the door for free. A donation box will be located at the free water and food locations.

Janet explained that the time for input for the Management plan was approaching. The portion of the Management plan available for review can be found on the state link at the Friends of the GTMNERR website. Meetings for public comment on the Management plan will be:

September 26 – 6pm at Whitney Lab

September 27 – 6pm at the EEC

Interested Board members are encouraged to attend.

Janet informed the Board of the change in ownership and name of the kayak tour vendor at the GTM Research Reserve. Coastal Kayak is now Ripple Effect Eco Tours owned by Chris Kelly. Ripple Effect will not only continue offering river tours he will offer lake tours.

Janet requested a petty cash fund to be kept at the Marineland GTM Research Reserve office for expenses that do not qualify for reimbursement by the state at that location. Currently individuals are paying out of pocket for these expenses. An example is boat washing. The carwash does not provide receipts so Katie can not get reimbursed when she washes the boat. The Marineland office petty cash would be smaller than the one needed at the EEC location. This request will be sent to the Research Committee.

Another funds request by Janet will be sent to the Education Committee. It is for funding for busses for the Learning In Florida's Environment

NERR continued

program. The program is aimed at low performing high minority schools. In the past the students have been asked to pay \$9.00 each for bus transportation to the EEC. This is a hardship for a large percentage of them. The program through funding from the Friends of the GTMNERR pays for the busses. The LIFE program is an award winning program that provides learning opportunities to students that would otherwise lose those opportunities.

For the Christmas Season World Golf Village invites companies and groups to decorate trees that are then auctioned off at World Golf Village. Those funds are donated to charity. The GTM Research Reserve Volunteers would like to do a GTM Volunteer Christmas tree for the auction. That request will be sent to the Education Committee.

Janet reminded the Board that the Annual Friends of the GTMNERR meeting is coming up soon. The meeting last year was on National Estuaries Day.

After a short discussion the Board decided to have the Annual Friends of the GTMNERR meeting on National Estuaries Day again.

The subject of having a financial report came up. Nancy will work on developing a report. Teri will show Nancy where all the financial information is and assist her in developing the report.

Other Business

Frank said that Rick has committed to doing the radio show for The GTM Research Reserve National Estuaries Day event. Frank requested that two weeks before that the National Estuaries Day event and broadcast be discussed on Rick's show. Rick is willing to do that so Frank will work out the details.

Frank told the Board about the Chamber of Commerce meeting that was held at the EEC two weeks prior. 25 people from the St. Augustine Chamber attended. Janet did a presentation and Frank talked about the Friends of the GTMNERR. People stayed after and picked up membership brochures and showed interest in joining. Frank collected business cards and held a drawing for a hat from the Nature Store. Frank feels meetings like this held at the EEC are a great tool to create interest and traffic here, and a networking opportunity as well.

Frank passed Friends of the GTMNERR business cards out to the new Board members and anyone else who needed some.

Other continued

Chris spoke about her experience with the Crew of 72. The Friends of A1A have a program that involves 72 miles of A1A. Information about the program has already been sent to all of the Board members for review. Because GTM Research Reserve runs along some of that 72 miles membership in Crew of 72 should be considered by the Board for the Friends of the GTMNERR.

Irene is on the Board for the Friends of A1A and said she believes that the Crew of 72 is a corporate sponsorship program.

The Friends of the GTMNERR already partner with the Friends of A1A. Irene will look into membership in Crew of 72 and report back to the Board.

Chris explained that her interest in joining Crew of 72 is for the marketing benefits of membership. The name of the GTM Research Reserve could be put before a larger audience and help to generate interest and recognition of the GTM Research Reserve.

Janet mentioned that Committee assignments were needed for the new members of the Board.

It was decided that Committee assignments would be done after the election at the September 11 Board meeting.

Frank said he was contacted by Diana Eissing who is on staff at the EEC. She told him about a volunteer (Mitchell) that is looking into programming on public broadcasting about the GTM Research Reserve. We would need to produce 3-12 30 minute radio programs about the Research Reserve. At this point the project is being researched and Frank will report back to the Board when he has more information.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:30pm by Joe

Peter – Motion to adjourn
Frank – Seconded

Reminder:

The September Board meeting will be Tuesday September 11, 07

Elections are scheduled for this meeting.

