

**Meeting of the Board of Directors (BoD) of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club
Monday September 16, 2019 – 7:00 p.m.**

Minutes

Fletcher Wildlife Garden Resource Centre, CEF, Ottawa, 7:00 p.m.

Chair: Diane Lepage

Directors and ex officio members present: Henry Steger, Ted Farnworth, Catherine Hessian, Anouk Hoedeman, Jakob Mueller, Annie Belair, Diane Kitching, Bob Cermak, Bev McBride, Fenja Brodo, Jeff Saarela, Elizabeth Moore, Eleanor Zurbrigg, Gordon Robertson, Ken Young, Owen Clarkin

Directors absent: Ann MacKenzie

1. Approval of the Agenda – approved as circulated
2. Acceptance of Minutes from June, 2019 – **Moved by** Elizabeth Moore, seconded by Bev McBride, acceptance of the June, 2019 minutes. **CARRIED** - subject to correction of Jane Topping's name under item 4.
3. Business Arising from Minutes
 - a. Painting of FWG RC floor - Diane had spoken to Robert Ranger but had heard nothing back. She rang him today and was advised that there is a new system of requests. If the issue is merely cosmetic, it will take a long time to be addressed. If there is a problem, e.g. mold, AAFC will take care of it. There have been some issues with mold so AAFC will come and look at the floor but it will not be considered a priority.
4. Communications – the latest issues of Toronto Field Naturalist and CFN were circulated.
5. Treasurer's Report – Ann had send an email requesting that outstanding invoices be submitted.
6. Issues for Discussion/Decisions
 - a. OFNC Budget for FY2020 (Ken) - Ken had previously sent around a request for budget submissions. The Finance Committee met over the summer, reviewed the submissions and produced a proposed budget which had been circulated by email. The committee had no concerns about the submissions they had received. Where appropriate information was lacking, the committee had proposed some figures. Ken went through the proposed budget, giving the BoD the opportunity to comment on the various committees' submissions. The proposed budget shows figures for expenditure to date in the current fiscal year and projections for the next fiscal year. Also shown are the committees' actual submissions with background detail. Of note:
 - Membership fees - budget same this year as last year.
 - Some sales e.g at monthly meeting, plant sale and advertising in T&L.
 - Increase in FWG budget as increased takings at plant sale. Possible reasons included ability to take credit card payments and increased social media profile. Two local councillors had advertised the event on social media. FWG budget proposal from committee was noted

to be relatively low. There are currently no large projects anticipated although Gord noted recently that the bridge may need repair or even replacement. Ken pointed out that amendments can be made before the final budget is brought to the October meeting for a vote.

- Donations impossible to forecast but committee has made a prediction. A bequest of \$1000 is expected.

- The CFN subscription revenue estimate is down this year, and even that may be optimistic. Jeff noted that many natural history journals are experiencing a similar downturn in subscriptions. CFN expenses should be reduced due to a new (less expensive) individual doing layout.

- T&L - Annie estimates savings of about \$2,000 by condensing events content.

- No Pelee trip this year.

- Expecting approximately \$38,000 interest.

- Awards – no significant change.

- Birds – no significant change.

- Safewings – no significant change.

- Macoun Club – Increased spending on Macoun Camfield account last year for special events and efforts to increase membership which have been successful.

- Education & Publicity - no significant change.

- Events – no significant change.

- Research grants - budgeting same for current year.

- \$5000 for school bus trips (this year will not show until paid in September).

- Operating expenses are expected to be similar to last year.

- On-line advertising – item added by Finance Committee who would like to promote social media advertising e.g. if communications committee were formed.

- Ken suggested that a discussion about the overall OFNC financial position (i.e., our deficit) should await the financial statements in December/January. He anticipates less of a deficit than previously, but still significant.

b. Election involvement, political activities – in response to a position paper regarding election practice sent to Ken by Bob, Ken had circulated a note regarding activities that must be avoided by charitable organisations in order not to contravene the Income Tax Act and/or the Canada Elections Act, namely:

1. express support for a particular political party or candidate;

2. spending over \$500 discussing a political issue; or

3. discuss political issues that do not involve our charitable purposes.

Ken suggested that it was unlikely that the OFNC would fall foul of these requirements. It was noted, however, that members should avoid intemperate comments in any forum as even unpublished comments could prove to be an issue.

c. Meeting with Marissa Croteau – Museum of Nature (Diane) – Sandy Garland had been approached by a member of the club who thinks OFNC should re-establish a partnership with Museum. Several members of the BoD will meet with Marissa Croteau on October 2 at 7.00 p.m. Diane, Jakob, Sandy, Anouk and Fenja will attend. Owen and Bev also expressed interest. Jeff, who works at the museum, will discuss this initiative with appropriate members of the museum staff.

d. Bird books donation from Dr. Ron Bedford (Diane) – Dr. Bedford, a previous chair of the Publications Committee and long-time honorary member, has donated a large number of bird books. Leslie will look at these books and add any of interest to the library. The rest will be auctioned at Awards Night. **Action: Diane will acknowledge this gift.**

e. Conservation Authorities (Owen) – Conservation Authorities received letters from the Provincial Government on August 16 instructing them to shut down programs that do not relate to their "core mandate". Owen had circulated a proposed letter to the Environment and Conservation Minister opposing this plan. Some members of the BoD supported this proposal. Others felt a more general letter of concern would be appropriate. Others suggested that OFNC should wait until the government makes its plans clearer.

MOVED by Owen Clarkin, seconded by Ken Young, that a letter expressing concern, based on the draft circulated and revised based on the comments made by members of the BoD, be sent to the Minister. The motion was put to the vote: **CARRIED** with 14 votes in favour and 3 against. **Action: Owen**

f. Committee Updates

a) Education & Publicity – Gord: has put up more story boards and two more species maps: deciduous trees and vines.

b) Safewings – Anouk: fall migration has started. OC Transpo has agreed to look at mitigating factors on bus shelters, e.g. feather friendly dots. Queen's University is planning to adopt bird friendly design practices. This means that Queen's, Carleton and Ottawa Universities are all on board

c) FWG – Ted: there has been a good turnout of volunteers this year. There are some trees that need removing. AAFC advise that they understand OFNC has money and should pay for this work. FWG will attempt removal of some black walnuts, locusts and Manitoba maples using volunteers. Ken suggested submitting a budget for tree work. Ted had brought the problem of the lack of a bus route to deliver both volunteers and visitors to FWG to the attention of Keith Egli who said it is a "question of numbers". Now the LRT is running, the city is going to rejig some routes and they may be able to consider this issue. They would need some idea of the numbers of people who would use a bus. **Action: Ted**. The front door has finally been fixed. Two windows have been repaired with plastic rather than glass. Jakob, who had attempted to steam clean the RC carpet, suggested that the carpet was not being adequately vacuumed. **Action: Eleanor/Ted to follow up with the cleaners.**

d) Macoun Club – Diane: good turnout at first indoor meeting and last weekend a field trip to the Sarsaparilla Trail had been attended by 25 youth, including 8 new members.

e) Membership - nil

f) Publications – Jeff/Annie: new typesetter is doing well. Next issue of CFN will be out later this month or early next month. Next issue of T&L going to press tomorrow. There had been a good response to Annie's request for articles.

g) Conservation – Owen: Jakob discovered an apparently new population for the Ottawa district of a woody plant (American Hazelnut at Constance Bay). Further surveys will be conducted to more firmly establish how much is present. Owen is working on formalizing a plan for a survey of one of Ontario's rarest and most threatened woody plants (Rhodora, S1/SH in Ontario) in 2020, following an unsuccessful casual search in 2019.

h) Events – Jakob: T&L events listings have been abbreviated to encourage website use. Annie has had no complaints. It was suggested that it might be useful to post events at monthly meetings. The possibility of organising a trip in the Pelee off year was suggested.

i) Awards – Eleanor: nil

j) Birds – Bob reported:

- a request from the Lowertown community "to find out how to engage the community in bird watching" at the Porter's Island Bridge area on the Rideau River. The City wants to demolish this bridge, last used as a foot bridge, now in poor condition, blocked off and unused. The Lowertown community is opposed. Board suggested no action be taken.

- City of Ottawa voted to end the support of Royal Swans on the Rideau River
- Birds Committee (BC) received a suggestion that OFNC make improvements to the Shirley's Bay causeway to improve viewing and accessibility. Would include removal of invasive species and improvements to the trail. BC did not support changes to the area because the dyke is not intended to be a public trail and biodiversity might be reduced
- 2019 Seedathon donations comparable to last year but birders participation in the field was very disappointing. BC will consider how participation in this event can be improved.
- Bob reported that some birders had voiced their opinion that OFNC should not be asking for donations since they currently have significant assets. He suggested that it would be worthwhile for someone to provide an article for T&L outlining OFNC's short and long term plans for their assets. It was noted that other charitable organizations typically continue to seek financial support for their activities no matter their financial position.
- VIA Rail Police have not responded to BC response to them with suggested text urging all birders to refrain from trespassing on railway property.
- OFNC area bird records documentation including rare bird records compiled by Dave Britton has been added to the website. See Birds, Reference Documents of interest.
- Bob will email a copy of Phase 1 report of the Carp Barrens: Impacts of Trail Construction and Use written by Holly Bickerton for the Friends of the Carp Hills. OFNC grants program provided funding for this report and OFNC members participated by conducting bird surveys.

7. Adjournment – there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Moore

Upcoming Meeting Dates

October 22, 2019

November 18, 2019

December 16, 2019

January 20, 2020

February 10, 2020

March 16, 2020