

## **Galveston Bay Area Master Naturalists**

### **Board Meeting Minutes**

**December 3, 2019**

#### **Armand Bayou Nature Center**

The meeting was called to order at 11:10 a.m. George welcomed everyone to the December meeting and luncheon. He had made provisions for a wonderful lunch for all of us, and we had time to eat and visit before the business part of the meeting began. He went through the safety information about the building and exit routes. He also pointed out the restrooms that were closest to us. The actual business meeting began at 12:12 p.m.

The board members present were George Kyame, Cindy Lienen, Susette Mahaffey, Lynn Wright, Patty Trimmingham, Maureen Nolan-Wilde, Julie Massey, Jo Monday, Ellen Gerloff, Janet Mason, Monica Duran, Tiffany Cummings and Cindy Saxenian. This represents 93% of the board who were in attendance. Luxie Mohammed were absent.

Once the business meeting had convened, George thanked Armand Bayou Nature Center for letting us use Hana House for the meeting. Julie had made those arrangements for us. For those who did not know, George and Lynn have reached the end of their terms on the board. Lynn thanked George for his leadership and enthusiasm. The board presented George with a TMN jacket as a thank you for his boundless energy and guidance to the chapter.

#### **Old Business:**

1. The November board minutes were approved. Maureen made the motion to approve the minutes with Cindy Lienen seconding the motion. The motion passed. George commented at this point that he has never had to say 'all opposed' during his tenure as president.
2. Lynn went through the 2 ways that we could choose to approve the 2020 budget. In one column she cut all programs by 3% except restricted funds and funds for the new training class. The second option was to use monies left from the last two years to make the budget a zero-balance budget. Ellen commented that over the last couple of years we have been very financially responsible and have had money left over at the end of the year. She likes Lynn's second option, i.e., to take the monies left from the last two years and add it to the 2020 budget. Maureen made the motion that we take money from the previous years as needed to apply to 2020 to make a zero budget. Jo seconded the motion, and the motion to approve the 2020 budget passed. Julie asked about the project for Bayside Park. Sandy and Stennie had requested \$2,500.00 to cover the project. The MOU that we signed said that a budget should be presented to the commissioners by March to cover the costs. Julie does not think that we should do that. We presently have \$337 in Stewardship that can be used for the initial costs of the project. Julie says that the Coop

may be able to help with the costs as well. Ellen made the motion to table this expense until next year with Maureen seconding the motion. The motion passed.

3. Susette gave a report on the TMN Conference in 2020. This is the information from the November meeting in Houston:
  - A call for proposals will be sent out in January or February for the 2020 conference.
  - Mary Pearl wants to form a task force to plan the field trips. She wants 15 to 20 field trips offered with the request that travel time not exceed 45 minutes each way. There will be pre and post conference field trips which may allow for longer travel. There will be vehicles available to take people to the field trips. They typically hold 12 people. The vehicles are provided by TPWD. She would like a person from each of the chapters to help with this task of organizing field trips. Trips to Galveston are probably not within the time restraints. *Tiffany Cummings* would like to serve as our liaison for the chapter for the field trips.
  - The hotel contract allows the chapter members to stay at the conference rate for 3 days before and after the conference.
  - Mary Pearl will be looking for sponsors to help with the funding of the conference. She usually receives \$17,000.00 to \$20,000.00 in sponsorship. Monies received before June helps to lower the cost of the conference to Texas Master Naturalists. Monies received after June 1 are used to pay for other needs during the conference. If we have a sponsor who might be willing to support the conference, please notify Mary Pearl so that she may contact them. Levels of sponsorship are:
    - Friend -\$150
    - Ecologist -\$300
    - Steward - \$500
    - Conservationist - \$1,000
    - Naturalist -\$5,000
  - The addition of vendors has happened over the last couple of years. TMN charge \$200.00 for the table for the length of the conference.
  - No one is comped a room.
  - Needs for chapter help:
    - a. Silent Auction – Gulf Coast chapter has volunteered to do this. They will get 20% of the sales to oversee the auction.
    - b. Registration and help desk – Galveston Bay Area Chapter has volunteered for this. It should require 10 to 12 people to take turns to oversee this area.
    - c. Centerpieces – will need to make 60 to 70 centerpieces. This is new and may not happen/ be optional. They did not sell at the 2019 conference and were left to return to the chapter that made them.
    - d. Vendors – sort through the applications and make arrangements with the vendor for the table and sales. Check with the vendors throughout the conference.
    - e. General store (selling TMN paraphernalia) - the need of this is 4 to 5 people at the area throughout the day during the conference. The store will need to be setup on Friday morning with Sunday breakdown.
    - f. Bookstore – this is provided by Texas A & M

- g. Volunteers – unload and help reload the materials that are brought to the conference. They will also help with the AV materials. The need will be for 10 to 12 people throughout the conference. She would like this group to find room monitors to introduce the speaker and monitor the time.
  - h. Photo and art contest – need volunteers to set up the photos and artwork and decide the categories into which they belong. Need 1 to 2 people who will be onsite to answer questions. The rules are preset.
- Conference dates will be October 15 – 18.
  - Mary Pearl wants the field trips arranged by June 1 and speakers by July 1. Her goal is to have the program ready to send out to TMN's in July with registration opening on August 1, 2020. September will be the final lodging list.
  - The total cost of the conference is usually \$240,000.00 with TMN making around \$10,000.00. The contract cost with the Omni is \$137,000.00. The contract includes \$18.00 for breakfast, \$25.00 for lunch, and \$30.00 for dinner. We must guarantee a minimum of \$50,000 in food and beverage expenditures. The room rates will be \$125 per night for a single or double. \$135 for a triple and \$145 for a quad. This does not include local taxes.
  - There is no breakfast onsite for Friday morning.
  - Gala Fundraiser:  
She is looking at possible sites. The money raised goes into the endowment. She would like to have 100 people attend. The dinner is a dressier occasion with an auction. She said that trip packages are the most wanted item. She will ask chapters to offer items for the auction. The dinner is the Thursday night before the conference.

### **New Business:**

Maureen wanted to share about the State of the Bay Symposium. The Symposium is January 22 & 23 at Moody Gardens. We will have three of our chapter members speak – Maureen, Rick Becker, and Stennie - as well as a table to share what our chapter does. The registration fee is \$125.00 per person. Maureen is asking the board to cover the cost for one of the chapter members to attend. Julie said that it was a huge honor for our members to be accepted to be speakers at the symposium. The symposium falls very much in line with what our chapter has done historically. Maureen shared that this was a great opportunity for the chapter. Lynn said that under CHA 08 State and Regional Meeting Scholarships, there is \$500 set aside which would be enough to cover all 4 registration fees. That money will be used for this symposium.

### **Board Reports:**

1. **President:** George was asked by Patty about Day Away planning and setting goals for 2020. Day Away will be planned for Tuesday, January 7 from 9:00 to 2:00. Jo will check to see if we can use one of the houses at Galveston Island State Park. This meeting will combine the monthly board meeting with a session to set goals for the upcoming year. Maureen shared what it has been historically, and Julie added that it was necessary to plan the coming year. George asked if anyone was going to go the meeting where Jim

Duron would receive the 2019 Prairie Volunteer Award. George said that he would be attending. He has also selected a chairperson for the Ad Hoc committee to determine guidelines for scholarships. Ellen asked him to share the names of the nominees for the executive board. George said that they were: Susette Mahaffey – President, Mike Pettitt – Vice President, Cindy Lienen – Treasurer, and Beverly Morrison – Secretary. George said that he had solicited nominations for the new officers and had not received any. He also said that they had solicited nominations for Treasures of the Bay awards and had received a good many of those.

2. **Vice President:** Cindy did not have anything to report.
3. **Secretary:** Susette did not have anything further to report.
4. **Treasurer:** Lynn reviewed the Statement of Financial Position and the other reports. She had been through most of the information when she was talking about the 2020 budget. Ellen asked if the bookstore would be open at the December meeting, and Julie said that she did not think so. Patty made the motion to accept the treasurer's report with Cindy L. seconding the motion. The motion passed.
5. **Membership:** Patty shared that 18 members of the new class had completed their initial certification. She still needs 9 more of the initial certification pins for those new class members. She said that the impact numbers were up because of the Walk About at GISP in November. So far 16 people have paid their dues for 2020. The dues are \$20, and people need to sign the 'hold harmless' agreement. 322 people have visited our website over the last month.
6. **VS Director:** Jo shared that the committee had met and will be presenting changes to update the opportunities and consolidate some of them. Patty is working on getting the VMS system updated.
7. **AT Director:** Ellen shared her report. The Ecology Part 4 training in November had 38 people in attendance. Scheduled for 2020 are:
  - Monday, February 24 Diurnal Raptors presented by John and Lynn Wright
  - Tuesday, April 21 Is Taxonomy Really Taxing? presented by Emmeline Dodd
  - Tuesday, May 19 Botany: Plants are Precious presented by Emmeline Dodd
  - Tuesday, June 16 Botany II: Plant Taxonomy presented by Diane Humes

All these sessions will be at Carbide in the afternoon and will be for 3 hours. The exact times have not yet been determined.

8. **New Class:** Janet said that the Meet and Greet in November went well. The applications are due Friday, December 6, 2019. The Volunteer luncheon will be January 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m.
9. **Communications:** Maureen shared the article about the oyster gardening that was in the newspaper. She said that Facebook was still up and running. She also shared that the Sea Grant people are going to work with us on Facebook. She said that she, Alan, and Chuck had put together the slide show for the December chapter meeting. Maureen shared that we had over 43,000 hours of volunteer service for this year.
10. **Class Reps:** Cindy said that the centerpieces for the gala were moving along well. Tiffany said that they had done nothing until November. 10 of their class had volunteered

with the theme of Upcycle/ Refurbish. They had some questions about money to help defray costs and when to arrive at Walter Hall Park to set up. Monica wanted to know what was the first day for the new class – February 20, 2020. She asked how to begin to plan for the lunch for the new class and how many people to plan for. Several other board members gave her suggestions to answer these questions.

11. **Sponsor:** Julie said that she was looking forward to the Thursday chapter meeting. Her new boss from Sea Grant was to be in attendance. She had received a good number of nominations for Treasures of the Bay and had the plaques ready for Thursday night. She said the Dolphin Challenge would be February 1, and Treasures of the Bay would be June 23, 24, and 25. She would need volunteers for both. She thanked all the board members and especially both George and Lynn for their service to the board.

George said that with no other business before the board, he would entertain a motion to adjourn. Lynn made the motion to adjourn with Patty seconding the motion. The motion passed. We adjourned at 2:16 p.m.