

GBAC-TMN Board Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2020
Zoom Remote Meeting

Attendees:

Susette Mahaffey, Mike Pettit, Cindy Liening, Pam House, Patty Trimmingham, Janet Mason, Maureen Nolan-Wilde, Ellen Gerloff, Jo Monday, Kristie Huffman, Walter Meyer, Leann Criswell (non-voting), and Sponsor Julie Massey

Absent: George Kyame

This represents 93% of voting members present.

The meeting was called to order by President Susette Mahaffey at 1:03 pm. She welcomed the board to the Zoom meeting and expressed her thanks to Maureen for making it run smoothly.

Old Business:

1. The May minutes that had been previously emailed to the board members were offered for discussion. A motion was made by Maureen and seconded by Walter to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Susette informed the board that Beverly Morrison had transferred to the Gulf Coast chapter of TMN and that the position of Secretary needed to be filled. She reviewed the procedure under our bylaws for filling open positions and nominated Pam House to be Secretary for the remainder of Bev's term. Jo seconded the nomination. A vote was taken, and Pam was unanimously elected Secretary.
3. Susette informed the board that with Pam's change in status, Walter and Kristie are now the class representatives for the 2020 class and Leann Criswell is the alternate representative for that class.
4. Susette gave an update on the Bayside Regional Park Project. She had followed up on the board's requests at the April meeting and discussed them with Stennie Meadours and reported that the group accepted those requests.

Since the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) needed to be renewed for another year, there was discussion about whether formal approval needed to be made. Maureen made a motion to renew the MOU for the Bayside Regional Park project for another year, Patty seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Susette reported that the Bayside Park volunteers were scheduled to meet at 2:00 pm this afternoon. Since this conflicted with the previously scheduled board meeting, they have been requested to schedule in the future for another day of the week. Several new people have joined the group, including members of the new class. Also, Julie reported that the county has cleared an area for a native plant, butterfly area.

New Business:

1. Board Reports
 - a. Susette: President

Susette reported that Mel's wife Shirley had surgery for cancer recently. Also Nancy Saint fell and broke her arm. She shared two thank you notes that the chapter had received: from Joanna for flowers received; and from Armand Bayou in thanks for our donation and for the wonderful relationship with GBAC and its members. Susette requested that if any announcements need to be made at the chapter meeting on Thursday, please let her know. Maureen indicated that they would need to know in time to prepare for the rehearsal scheduled for tomorrow. Janet, Patty and Julie indicated they would have short announcements and that Mike would introduce Diane as the speaker.

- b. George: Past President
Absent and no report
- c. Mike: Vice President
No report
- d. Pam: Secretary
No report
- e. Cindy: Treasurer
Cindy reviewed the financial report showing the chapter is financially sound. Susette explained for the benefit of new board members that the chapter maintains a balance to protect itself in crisis and lean times. Maureen pointed out that grants on which the chapter has relied may be at risk in these economic uncertain times. Patty made a motion to accept the financial report and Jo seconded. The vote to accept was unanimous.
- f. Patty: Membership
There are currently 223 paid members, with dues pending for 8. 10 members will be dropped pending future payment of dues. 1200.5 volunteer hours were reported in May. 401.25 hrs of AT and 31 impacts were reported. Two members of the 2019 class met their initial certification hours; six members of the 2020 class have certified; 74 chapter members have recertified. Agnes Asscherick has reached the 15000 volunteer hour milestone. Because of the cost of mailing most earned pens will be handed out in person by Patty as she encounters people. Julie and Patty will coordinate about any background checks which still need to be completed.
- g. Jo: Volunteer Service
We have been cleared for wave 2 on volunteer service guidelines. Safety first and follow partner organization guidelines. Maureen expressed thanks to Susette and the members for providing guidance and leadership through these tense difficult times. Susette offered special thanks to the medical professionals in the chapter who helped in explaining the need for and supporting decisions made by the leadership. Jo commented that her experience was that 99% of the chapter members were supportive and understanding.
- h. Ellen: Advanced Training
There have been four more AT's since the last board meeting. There have been 11 chapter AT opportunities, with a total of 15 hours, provided this year. Five more are on the schedule through the middle of July. Master Gardeners are now invited to join the Zoom sessions. It is planned that the future sessions will be moved to weekday afternoons to prevent conflict with reopening of field volunteer opportunities in the mornings. There will be no AT session the week proceeding July 4. It is anticipated that ATs will probably continue through the whole summer. Susette offered our thanks to the AT committee for providing the opportunities for AT and for chapter members to stay in touch. There were over 100 people in attendance at each of the last two AT sessions.
- i. Janet: Class Coordinator
The last training class was on May 7. We were able to hold three in person classes and six on Zoom. She praised the 2020 class for their continued enthusiasm and support. There is still planning underway for field experiences for the class in the fall. They are hoping to visit GISP for marshland exploration and kayaking; TAMU on the trawler; and back to Armand Bayou for prairie exploration and ride on the pontoon boat. She expressed her thanks to Maureen and Chuck for all they did to make the Zoom classes possible. Susette hoped that the visit at GISP would take time to visit the statue of the Eskimo Curlew that was erected as part of the Lost Bird project.
- j. Maureen: Communications
Beginning with a slide show, Maureen reported that 9092 messages went out on Constant Comment in May. Over 50% of those messages were opened, which is a quite high rate. The

Facebook page has 1371 followers, including the Heartwood Chapter of TMN. The highest number of hits for a single post was the new class member announcement with over 1000 hits. Four additional Zoom hosts were trained: Patty Trimmingham, Cindy Liening, Gene Fisseler, and Chris Anastas. Another training session for Zoom is planned in June. The website will be updated in July.

k. Kristie and Walter: Class Representatives
No reports

l. Julie: Chapter Sponsor

Praised the amazing Zoom team that allowed chapter to continue through the shut down and to show other chapters how to do it. The “Stump the Master Naturalist” was praised at the state level. Currently the office is operating at ½ staff working from home, ½ at the office and alternating weekly. Although the office is open, appointments are preferred. Visitors are restricted to the lobby to limit the exposure of staff. Meetings can be ten or less, including the staff, with strict protocols for cleaning prior and after. July will have slightly looser rules.

There was discussion about the likelihood of the August general meeting being back at Carbide. Mike asked about what the actual capacity of the meeting rooms was. Julie indicated that the fire marshal had not officially rated the rooms. However, the tables are six foot tables, so under current social distancing guidelines, only one person could be seated at each table with either staggered seating per row or wider rows. Mike suggested that determining the numbers that could be accommodated with social distancing would help with future planning. Susette suggested and there was a general consensus that the August meeting would also be held as a Zoom meeting.

Julie reviewed the need that chapter members be reminded that dignity, courtesy, and respect were required when dealing with one another even when there are disagreements. As she stated: “words matter.”

Other Business

Mike reported from the state representative meeting that plans are preceding for the state meeting in October, but that the form of that meeting is still very much up in the air. The in-person convention is unlikely, but perhaps might be held virtually.

Susette said the same concerns were discussed at the state presidents’ meeting. Since there is no way to socially distance at the hotel and meeting area planned, it seemed unlikely that the in-person convention could be held. Some chapters had cancelled their planned classes due to the pandemic.

Wrap-Up

It was recognized that this was supposed to be day 2 at Camp Wild and hopes were expressed that it will return next summer. The next board meeting will be held by Zoom July 7 at 1:00 PM.

Motion to adjourn was made by Patty, seconded by Walter. Motion approved unanimously. Susette adjourned the meeting at 2:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Pamela House
GBAC-TMN Secretary