

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS
Minutes of General Meeting, April 24, 2018
Police Point Park.

1. Call to Order 7:03 pm with Hugh Armstrong presiding and Betty Rainville, Secretary.
2. Review and Adoption of General Meeting Minutes from February 27, 2018. **CARRIED.**
3. Exciting Sightings: There were a high number of sightings noted by GN members at this evening's meeting. These included:
 - An Osprey and a Swan seen by Angela Turner at Echo Dale,
 - Cormorants and a Merganser, also at Echo Dale, seen by Linda Fisher.
 - A Cormorant spotted by Martha Munz Gue
 - A flock of 30 Pelicans seen by John Slater
 - A Ruby-crowned Kinglet by Milt Spitzer
 - Also a moose at Strathcona Island Park seen by Milt Spitzer
 - 8 Turkey Vultures seen by Rob Gardner
 - A Ferruginous Hawk taking down a Gull- N.E. of the City seen by Ian Wallis and Wendy Blackwell
 - A leucistic Blue Jay in Hugh Armstrong's backyard
 - A Yellow- rumped male Warbler seen by Bob Frew
 - 1 eaglet's head appearing over the nest, was reported to Corlaine Gardner
 - A Mourning Cloak butterfly spotted in Marlborough Coulee, by John Slater
4. Treasurer's report and Membership: Eileen reported the balance in the GN "Club" as of April 24, 2018 stood at \$23,331.19. This is the sum of \$19,945.50 in Savings and \$3,385.69 in Chequing. The Casino Account stood at \$11,996.54. Hugh and Eileen will prepare the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission Financial Report which is due on May14, 2018. Eileen reported a total of 89 memberships made up of family and individual memberships. 30 people have not renewed yet. Eileen will send out reminders.
5. Correspondence: Eileen noted that mail from Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin (PFSRB) was received.
6. Priority Business:
 - a. **Edmonton Nature Club request to assist with bird count organization:** Rob Gardner reported that Bob Parsons currently manages the Brooks and Writing on Stone bird count and will continue to do so. People are welcome to volunteer to help with the May long weekend count though.
 - b. **Devika Shaw of WWF re. partnering on a pilot project May-October:** Corlaine spoke to Hugh about this. WWF want individuals brought in from "outside" for this project which could potentially supply a substantial amount of funding .Hugh said jobs might consist of tree wrapping, for example, and suggested a group such as Boy Scouts might be suitable. He asked members with ideas to email himself or other Board members by Tuesday, May 1.
 - c. **Tribute to a GN Member:** Corlaine Gardner reported GN member Hans Mueller passed away on April 18, 2018. He was a photographer, and a wonderful storyteller, as well as being a strong supporter of the Interpretive Program.
 - d. **1 new member needed on MHIP/Operations Committee:** Corlaine noted that Simonne Flynn will be joining the committee. Thank you Simonne.
 - e. **Location of May General Meeting:** Corlaine was not sure of the location. She said it will likely be at the Nature Centre.
7. Interpretive Program Report: Corlaine was happy to report that construction at the Nature Centre has started. Thanks to John, Milt, Dave McKenzie, and Dan Schiebelbein for emptying the equipment room before the construction. Phase 1 of the project will see a new storage addition and bathroom. Corlaine noted the City wide cleanup took place on April 21. Thanks to everyone who volunteered. Thank you to the Geocaching Club, including 4 geocachers and Rob, who cleaned up Kiwanis River Park on Sunday evening-April 22. Throughout the summer, Corlaine noted that IP will be hosting events in parks and trails in the City. This means more volunteers will be needed for some of these programs. Let Corlaine know if you have a special area you would like to feature. Corlaine noted Meghan Morter, the new student, will start work May 7 or 8th. Rhea Wilson will be working part time.
8. Committee Reports:
 - a. **Issues Committee:** John Slater submitted a written report as well as attending the General Meeting in person:
 1. Martha, Dwayne and John attended the Brier Run development meeting with the City Land & Business Support as well as the Parks & Recreation Departments on April 18 to discuss the proposed development plan. The plan development contractor from Calgary presented the details of the proposed plan with emphasis on the site being an

integrated community for families of all ages with a school, recreation parks, natural areas and commercial and industrial areas. It was suggested that undisturbed natural areas be retained and traffic flow be limited within the community with speed no higher than 30km/hr. Also, shuttle buses with frequent service be implemented in the Brier Run community as well as all of NWCH and NECH to encourage people to use transit rather than private vehicles. Furthermore, free bus passes be given to students to attend schools as well as other activities to increase ridership. Reduced rate tickets could also be given to seniors and immigrant families for shopping, recreation facilities and to attend medical and dental appointments.

2. Some Committee members and other GN members participated in the City-Wide Cleanup last Saturday morning April 21st with focus on picking up litter in Police Point Park as well as along a section of Parkview Drive NE by Ranchlands. Martha Munz Gue & David Gue helped SEAWA with cleanup of the pond along College Drive SE, and Dave McKenzie participated with UERAB members to pick up litter along TransCanada Way SE.
 3. The City/GN project for 2018 has commenced with a survey along the river concerning beaver tree damage. Once wire is available from the Parks Dept. wrapping trees will begin in Strathcona Island Park and along River Road below the Veterans Park as well as in Police Point Park. Cleanup of Lions Park is still needed. In a month, surveys of invasive species such as Baby's Breath, Leafy Spurge, Black Henbane and Flowering Rush will commence to report the location to the Parks Dept. for their action. More volunteers are welcome to participate in activities. The City programs to interpreting "bat houses" and Pollinator Garden will be coordinated through MHIP.
 4. Distribution of the Wildflower Brochure is continuing in conjunction with the MHIP public events.
 5. City Municipal Development Plan: Kitchen Table Conversation Guide available on the website www.mymh.city Martha has invited members to come to her house on this Friday morning at 10 am for preliminary conversation and planning.
- b. MHIP Operations Committee:** Reported by John Slater
1. Many thanks to Corlaine and staff as well as volunteers for the very successful Easter programs March 19 to April 2, as well as Seedy Saturday April 14th.
 2. Bob Townsend, Elaine Spitzer and Anne Bernhardt offered to remain on the committee, and we are grateful for Simonne Flynn joining the committee.
 3. Next MHIP events to include: Crocuses in the East Glen Sunday May 13; and Spring Bird and Wildflower Counts May 27.
 4. Next committee meeting planned for Monday May 7th, 2018 (revised date from April 30th).
- c. Field Trips:** John reported the following upcoming events:
1. Neighbourhood Walk "Search for Crocuses" in East Glen Nature Park, tomorrow Wednesday April 25th, 11:00 am; contact Dwayne Myers and Ian Wallis.
 2. Neighbourhood Walk "Spring Wildflowers & Butterflies & Airshed Facility" near McCoy High School, Saturday April 28, 10:30 am; contact Martha Munz Gue, Dave McKenzie and David Gue.
 3. Neighbourhood Walk "Saratoga Park and Seven Persons Creek" Wednesday May 2, 10:30 am; meet at the bottom of Scholten Hill. Contact John Slater.
 4. Phil Horch led Annual Birding Sauder's & Murray Reservoirs Trail # 2; Saturday May 5. Meet 7:30 am at A & W Gershaw Drive to arrange carpooling. Finished by 2 pm.
 5. Neighbourhood Walk "NECH Ponds and Trail" May 9, 10:30 am. Meet at Coop Liquor Store Northland Shopping Centre. Contact Elaine Spitzer.
 6. Milt Spitzer led Birding to Taber Trail # 14; Saturday May 12 (International Migratory Birding Day). Meet 7:00 am at the A & W on Gershaw Drive to arrange carpooling.
 7. Neighbourhood Walk May 16, SE Hill Trailhead at east end of 11st St SE at 10:30 am; contact John Slater.
 8. Waterton Wildflower Festival. June 16-18. See the website. Contact Martha for more information. David Gue also explained some of the Waterton walks to GN members this evening.
- d. Indoor Program Speakers:** Linda Fisher reported that Toby Newton will be talking on May 22nd about his hobby of urban bee keeping. Hugh said that Randy Taves, with the City, offered to come and speak on Parks and Recreation as a future Indoor Program speaker.
- e. Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh said there is nothing to report at this time.
- f. Birding Trails Project:** Rob Gardner reported he has been busy distributing the Birding Trails Guides. Local people may download the guide chapter by chapter as needed for actual City Trails. Rob requested that any members who will be travelling in North America let him know, so that more Guides could be distributed
- g. Bird Tales Update:** Dee Armstrong reported her group had a slow start in Sunnyside/South Country Village because of a lockdown. Dee said they should have some news by May 3. She said the Bird Tales group will need volunteers in order to redo the walk and help make the courtyard safe.
- h. Communications Committee:** Angela Turner reported she has booked a GN table for 1 day each in May, June, and September at the Saturday morning Farmer's Market. Two volunteers will be needed each time.

- i. **Nature Alberta:** Ian and Angela attended a meeting by teleconference on May 8th.

Moved that all previous reports be accepted as presented. **CARRIED**

9. New Business: None

10 Other Business:

- a. **Next Board Meeting** Tuesday May 1st, 2018 at Anne Bernhardt's house
- b. **Adjournment** at 7:47 pm. Attendance 23 people for the General meeting.
- c. Refreshment Break.
- d. **Program start** 8:10 pm. Attendance 28. Speaker: Dr. Gail Michener on Richardson's Ground Squirrels