

SOCIETY OF GRASSLANDS NATURALISTS  
Minutes of Board Meeting November 5, 2019  
Hosted by Ian and Angela Turner..

Present: Hugh Armstrong (Chair), Betty Rainville (Secretary), Phil Horch, Eileen Cowtan, Ian and Angela Turner, Linda Fisher

1. Call to Order: 1:32 pm. Members present: 7
2. Review and Adoption of GN Board Minutes from October 8, 2019. **CARRIED.**
3. Additions to the Agenda:
  - a. **Letter to MH News from Phil:** See a copy in the October Chronicle of Phil's letter to the City Planning Department regarding the Municipal Development Plan. The MH News would not print the letter out of concern for showing bias toward one particular group over another. The Board decided that submission to County newspapers would not be effective, since they do not usually cover city-related topics.
  - b. **Applications to UERAB:** Dave McKenzie's position finishes in December of this year. Hugh reported that Gerry Ehlerst may be applying for this opening on the City Advisory Board.
  - c. **Praxis Science Olympics on October 26 at MHC:** Hugh reported that Rob Gardner and Ian Wallis provided birdwatching information for the Praxis event. At the October General Meeting, Marty had asked for volunteers who could offer their expertise on this topic.
  - d. **PCAP's Native Prairie Speakers Series Webinar Nov.21:** Hugh noted that he will submit this event to Milt for publishing in the Chronicle. Register at <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6177253539000557825>.
  - e. **Next Meeting with City Parks Department:** Hugh reported that a September meeting to continue discussions between GN and the City, did not take place. Hugh will talk to Scott Richter, Superintendent of Parks, about setting up another meeting date.
  - f. **Methanex Donation to CAP members:** Ian reported that Methanex would donate \$500.00 to GN since he is a member of the Methanex Community Advisory Committee. Ian suggested that it might be put toward efforts related to reductions in climate change.
4. Action Items:
  - a. **Openings on Operations Committee:** Hugh reported there is one opening available since Anne Bernhardt stepped down
  - b. **Committee Budgets due:** Please have budgets to Paul Thibault by November 15.
  - c. **Volunteers for November GM Set-Up:** Thank you to Milt and Elaine Spitzer, and Simonne Flynn for volunteering to set up the Nature Centre for the November General Meeting.
5. Reports:
  - a. **Treasurer's Report:** Eileen reported the GN "Club" Savings Account stands at \$16,505.95 as of November 5, 2019 and the Chequing Account balance is \$4,226.43 on November 5, 2019. Common shares are \$1.30 bringing Total Current Assets to \$20,733.68. Total Capital Assets include Prepaid Insurance Expense of \$244.55. Combined Current Assets and Capital Assets gives Total Assets of \$20,978.23  
The Casino Balance is \$12,806.95 on November 5, 2019.
  - b. **Membership:** No change at this time.
  - c. **Correspondence:** No correspondence received.
  - d. **Operations Committee/MHIP Report:** Hugh spoke briefly about the finances spent on the Nature Centre renovations. He still does not have a precise amount of the accountant's fee for the Nature Centre project audit.
  - e. **Issues Committee:** Martha Munz Gue submitted the following Report to the GN Board:
    1. **Climate Emergency.** Tina, John, Rob and Martha have attended several of the Friday at Four climate conversations, which have been happening every week since September. All are welcome. Individuals and people from various groups are attending: MHHS Earth Club, (CHHS and McCoy) too. Council of Canadians, Unisphere, SEAWA. MHC, etc. Good discussions. About 20 people attend. Check the website for MH Climate Conversations. Provincial Grants for energy conservation have been dropped. City grants continue, for now.**Recommend:**
      - Friday climate conversation in other cafes, places of work and play are encouraged.
      - Plans for connecting in various ways with city and citizens, including through MH News, and representations to City Council, and UERAB.
      - Adding to regular agenda of all associations and departments an item about energy conservation in everyday practices at home, at work, and at school and play. (Just like Exciting Sightings).
    2. **Alternative Energy.** John, Rob and Tina are leading a discussion by email on wind and solar energy and the footprint on land. Recent U. of A. alumni presentation in Medicine Hat on storage energy was relevant.  
**Energy Conservation.** Recommend sharing energy conservation tips, along with exciting sightings at meetings.

3. **Water.** Martha and Tina are on the SEAWA Communications Committee; Tina has agreed to be secretary for the SEAWA Board. Riparian Health Assessments of the entire Seven Persons Creek watershed, and the restoration of 9 km of Seven Persons Creek shoreline have provided a focus and means whereby GN members can connect with the work of SEAWA. The spring and fall SEAWA public forums provide scientific research results about water. The spring forum may include presentations about invasives in the Watershed. See [seawa.ca](http://seawa.ca) for information. Government cuts may curtail the work of SEAWA, though application for grants from other institutions may continue to help with the work of SEAWA. SEAWA Water Art show is located in the Arcade Building. Please come and visit at noon on Tuesday or Thursday. We open 11:30 am to 1:30 pm or by appointment with the SEAWA office.
4. **Wildflowers and Pollinators.** Dave McKenzie and Martha. The November 1 SEAWA Forum included an enthusiastic and informed speaker from Alberta Bee Council. The council is two years old and run by volunteers. The most important thing we can do to protect native bees is to retain the native grasslands (including coulees and riparian areas). They are full of opportunity for food, shelter, and housing for native bees. Most are solitary and lay eggs in holes in the ground. Wildflower seeds have been collected by SEAWA for planting on vacant spots like the edges of parking areas in the city, for example. Planting pockets of wildflowers is a gift to bees, butterflies and countless other species, especially in urban centres.
5. **Invasives.** Gerry Ehlert. Three organizations are tackling invasives:
  - SEAWA removal of invasives is part of the riparian restoration project. It is possible that the spring Forum will focus on research about invasive species.
  - Grasslands Naturalists report invasives seen on the weekly wildflower walks- on EDDMaps. The Issues Committee is collecting brochures and websites from other organizations about invasive species.
  - City Parks will remove invasive species that are reported. (Sandy). Watch for website and/or brochure on invasives.
6. **Environmental Advisement.** Still an issue. New members needed on all advisory boards.

f. **Indoor Committee:** Linda Fisher reported Alyssa Friesen, liaison between the Centre for Conservation Research and other departments at the Calgary Zoo, will be the November GM speaker. Lacey Hebert was unable to come to Medicine Hat as speaker for November 26<sup>th</sup>.

December 15 will be the potluck and Annual Bird Count, with no General Meeting or speaker.

The February speaker is Roxanne Doerksen on the use of Red Wiggler worms for reclamation.

Brian Keating will likely be the speaker for May.

Moved that the Speaker fee for Brian Keating for the May General Meeting, be \$450.00. **CARRIED**

g. **Fund Raising Committee:** Hugh noted there is nothing to report at this time.

h. **Field Trip Committee:** Hugh reported that Neighbourhood Walks are finished for the year because of the weather.

Paul van Huene, GN member, has invited other members to visit his ranch south of Irvine to enjoy the wildlife.

The Board agreed that a Field Trip in the spring would provide more chances to view birds and vegetation.

i. **Communication Committee:** Angela reported the Committee needs to purchase more name tags.'

j. **Birding Trails:** Phil said there is nothing to report at this time.

He is attempting to contact Lonna Hoggan, Executive Director, at Canadian Badlands Tourism.

k. **Bird Tales:** Hugh reported for Paul and Dee that the group is meeting every Thursday, except for next Thursday.

They will meet two times in December, but will take a break when Hugh and Dee are away later in December and early January.

l. **Nature Alberta:** Ian and Angela submitted highlights from the NA October 9 teleconference in the November Chronicle.

The meeting discussed the Strategic Plan for 2020 to 2023 and By-Law Revisions.

m. **Web Cam Update:** Hugh reported Paul is away at this time.

The bird feeder at the Nature Centre is in operation.

## 6. Other Business

a. **Filing Cabinet Sorting:** Phil reported he talked to Dennis Baresco, a long time GN member, who said he would be willing to work on sorting GN material. Phil will assist Dennis. Thank you to Dennis and Phil for taking on this worthy project.

The filing cabinet is in a storage room at Police Point Park.

b. **Further A/V training for GM Presentations:** Linda Fisher said she would practice working on operating the A/V.

Written instructions are located at the Nature Centre for any questions about setting up A/V for monthly speakers.

c. **SEAWA Public Forum November 1:** Ian and Angela, and several other GN members, attended this Forum held at St. Barnabas Church on Friday from 1 to 4:00 pm.

d. **Annual Bird Count and Potluck Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>:** Sign up with Marty for a designated area of the City.

- e. **New Terminal at the Nature Centre:** Hugh reported a new Point-of-Sale (POS) Terminal is being purchased for the Nature Centre.
- f. **Next Board Meeting** 6:30 pm., December 3, 2019 at Hugh and Dee's house.
- g. **Adjournment:** 2:45 pm.
- h. **Refreshments**