

The Friends of Presqu'ile Park

Minutes Annual General Meeting September 10, 2020

Approved June 17, 2021 AGM

Amphitheatre – Presqu'ile Provincial Park

Board Chair Bev Cook called the meeting to order at 10:30am. Over 64 members were in attendance, so there was a quorum. *Because of Covid-19 no paper copies were distributed to attendees, all materials were sent in advance. A series of slides were shown on the amphitheatre screen.*

Agenda – Moved by Phil McRae and seconded by David Crouch that the agenda be approved as presented. Carried.

Opening Comments – Bev Cook showed a slide outlining Friends' vision. The Friends exist to enhance the Park experience by working with Park staff and Friends' volunteers to make that happen.

Minutes of Previous Meeting – June 1, 2019 – It was moved by Linda Collins and seconded by Janet Zinnicker that the minutes as published be approved. Carried.

Greetings from the Municipality of Brighton

Mayor Brian Ostrander brought greetings from council and thanked Friends for their service. He has been to other Parks that did not have a Friends' group and could tell the difference that a Friends' group make. He had seen images of reconstruction of the boardwalk and was very impressed. The Chair indicated that councillor Mary Tadman was also present and thanked Brian and Mary for their support.

2019-20 Initiatives in support of our Mission

The Chair outlined some of the key accomplishments of the various projects that support our Mission. They cover Education and Interpretation, Environmental Initiatives, Infrastructure Enhancements, Volunteer Fundraising Activities, Governance and Management.

Education and Interpretation – In 2019 over 1,300 students participated in the School Program. Classes had the option of our interpreter visiting their classroom and the class visiting the Park, 600 students came to visit last year despite the spring flooding. Covid-19 cancelled the program for 2020. It is hoped to develop some virtual tools this fall and winter.

The Presqu'ile to You Outreach Program 2019 included programs at local libraries, visited Day Camps and Children's Centres, mentored youth volunteers. This program was cancelled for 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Natural Heritage Education and Interpretation – the Nature Centre Coordinator was funded by Friends in 2019. There were over 10,000 visitors to the Nature Centre and over 20,000 to the Lighthouse Interpretive Centre. There has been limited programming at the Nature Centre in 2020, the Lighthouse Interpretive Centre has been closed. Bev gave kudos to the team who provided limited outdoor programming in the evenings – a major hit.

Environmental Initiatives – The team continues to assist the Park staff with the removal of invasive species and the planting of native trees. We supported the planting of nursery stock for transplanting in the Park and will continue to do so in 2020. The Labour Day weekend Monarch butterfly banding program continued with a presentation at the Amphitheatre. The winter bird feeding program will also continue in 2020.

The Common Tern Research programme continues. Spring flooding in 2019 washed away many grids and nests on Gull Island. New grids were built on High Bluff Island and 75 healthy chicks survived. This programme is fully funded by the Friends. Early indications are that 2020 was also a success with over 85 nests under the grids. It is believed that 75-80 chicks fledged.

A new programme has been initiated – the Memorial Tree Program – whereby supporters may make a \$100 (or more) donation to have a native tree planted in the Park to celebrate a loved one or a milestone. Trees will be planted in the Park by staff this fall. To date 10 trees have already been purchased.

Infrastructure Enhancements – In 2019, the Trail Repair Team have built a new Lighthouse Viewing Deck, built an accessible walkway to the washroom at Beach 1, built a boardwalk to access Owen Point comfort station and trail, and repaired the Amphitheatre stage.

The 2020 project was “Raise the Boardwalk!”. Thanks to a Canada Helps Giving Campaign we were able to raise around \$18,000 in less than a month. A plan to use jacks to raise the boardwalk was successful and work is progressing.

Our volunteer Trail Monitors walk the trails and boardwalks on a bi-weekly basis and report downed trees and damage to Park management. This involves friendly interactions with Park visitors. Over 700 volunteer hours were recorded in 2019. The program was cancelled in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Communications – Our communications are now all electronic. The Friends' website is now used for membership sign-up, renewals, donations, sign ups, and promotion of all events. Our quarterly ENewsletter has solid readership numbers and is sent to 600 recipients. New for 2020 – we have our own Facebook page. We have achieved great reach with major cost savings!

Management and Governance – Oversight is a key role for the Board of Directors. We will be holding a workshop in the Fall with a professional facilitator to set priorities for the coming year. Regular meetings allow us to monitor our progress on our Annual Plans and Budgets and allow us to manage challenges and take advantage of new opportunities that may arise. We continually monitor our banking practices, investment portfolio and strategies, cash receipts, payments, financial monitoring practices. We have tightened up a few things, but generally our practices are sound and working smoothly. Our financial transactions are capably managed by our Treasurer, Linda Alkenbrack. All transactions are also monitored by our Finance Chair, Doreen Cable and by the Chair. We have an annual financial plan and individual program budgets. Monthly financial position reports are shared with the Board and verified by a second Director. All expenses are approved before payment.

How do we achieve all of this? - Friends have over 300 volunteers who devote around 10,000 hours to the Park every year. Despite this, new volunteers are always needed. These hours include our fundraising events and activities – Christmas at Presqu'île, the Lighthouse Gift Shop, raffles, and barbeques (cancelled for 2020), donations and grants.

Revenues 2020 – Revenues come from memberships, donations, grants and - coming soon - a

new venture – an Online Store where clothing items can be purchased. Most of our 2020 Fund Raising programs were cancelled for 2020, including Christmas @ Presqu'île, the Barbecues, the Gift Shop and Raffles. We are currently missing \$50,000 in revenue. The financial projection for 2020 includes a loss of \$25,000 to \$30,000 despite the cancellation of several expenditures. We will be able to use surplus monies and our Reserve Fund – it will be tough, but we can manage.

Financial Statements 2019 – Year-end statements sent out to you in advance have been accepted by the Board. They have been reviewed by external accountants (Welch LLP) for compliance as required by law. These will be presented to you today for your review and approval. They will be submitted to CRA for charitable status review and will be posted on our website and CRA website.

The balance sheet (page 3) shows Net Assets Restricted of \$140,000. There is an operating reserve developed six years ago in the event of a catastrophe. We have an accumulated surplus for this and into next year.

The financial statements were accepted following a motion by Steve Sinclair, seconded by Wayne Myers.

A motion was made by Doreen Cable, seconded by Linda Collins, and carried to appoint Welch LLP as the accountants for 2020. The Board was authorized to set appropriate remuneration.

Park Update

Park Superintendent Rob Cunningham spoke about the challenges and stresses caused by Covid-19 of dealing with the hundreds of new visitors who came to the Park during the summer, the pass holders who were not able to gain access because of early closures, especially on the weekends, and the challenges of access for the residents. He thanked the town for putting up No Parking signs on the access road to the Park gates. He thanked his staff who proved awesome in dealing with unbelievable extra garbage, deep cleaning of the washrooms in the heat, and abuse from visitors. Rob believes that the Park will never be the same as it was – Presqu'île has been discovered! It is hoped that the new office will be ready for occupancy at the end of October.

There are no plans to do anything about the erosion of the lakeshore. The roadway is due for repainting.

A presentation of a gift from Out on a Limb was made to bird lover David Bree who is retiring after a 32-year career with Ontario Parks. David has served in 6 different Parks over the years. He came to Presqu'île 12 years ago – we are glad he did. Although the title of the nature program has changed over the years, David is still our Nature Program leader. Every year David leads a team of enthusiastic young people who also want to make the Park experience a great one for all visitors, young and old alike, David is also a willing volunteer for Friends, a valued member of the Communications committee, regular contributor to our ENewsletter and signage mastermind for Christmas at Presqu'île.

The Chair thanked Rob and his team – Rachel, David, Don, Steve, and Eve, for their support. The senior and seasonal staff have been amazingly cheerful and polite during these trying times.

Election of Board of Directors

The Chair noted that two directors had retired – Rachel Howard and Pam Perrault. David Crouch has now done 6 years on the Board, he was thanked for his service to The Friends. Bev has

retired as Chair but will continue to work with Communications.

There are four incumbent directors – Linda Alkenbrack, Doreen Cable, Donal Gray and Larry Paradis. In addition, four new candidates were introduced – Lorie Cater, Christine McIvor who becomes Board Chair, Phil McRae and Wayne Meyers.

The election of the Board of Directors was carried out by David Crouch and approved by the members.

A presentation was made to Bev Cook as retiring chair.

Volunteer of the Year – John Cole Award

The John Cole Award is presented annually to the Volunteer of the Year. It is named in honour of the first Board Chair of Friends. The selection of the Volunteer of the Year is a difficult task for the Board of Directors as there are so many deserving candidates who have been a shining example of the values of our organization over a period of many years. This year's recipient certainly meets these criteria.

John Warner has given hundreds of hours to the Friends, outdoors in all kinds of weather. He is very handy with a hammer and has a meticulous eye for detail. He works every bit as hard as everyone on the crew. John has been in charge of our Park Improvements Team for the past couple of years and was a devoted member before that. John is always willing to step up, no matter how great the challenge, to make improvements to our trails and viewing platforms to make them safer and more enjoyable to the public. John is playing a lead role in our 2020 marque project – Raise the Boardwalk.

Special Presentation

New member Michael McLeod, an avid photographer, presented Friends with the gift of a framed photograph of the lighthouse to be hung in the Friends' office in the new Park building.

Questions and Answers

As retiring President Bev thanked members for their support, the enthusiasm of the volunteers, and the dedication of Board members. She again thanked all the Park staff.

Adjournment – the meeting was adjourned at 11:42am on motion made by Phil McRae.