

Bonnet Shores Land Trust
Meeting Minutes
June 23, 2018

In Attendance: Eliot Gersten (Chair), David Stenmark (Vice Chair), Nancy Cordy (Secretary), George Monaghan, Neal Colman

AGENDA ITEMS

- **Call To Order**

The meeting was called to order by EG at 1:06 pm

- **Approval of the May 24th LT Meeting Minutes**

DS made a motion and GM 2nd it to approve the 5/24/18 Meeting Minutes (vote in favor 5-0).

- **Walkway Project Updates**

-DS reported that the Town's Planning Dept.(Jill Sabo) responded to our request for a Zoning Hearing. They are asking about Maintenance of the Walkway (making sure they are not responsible) and what the costs may be to maintain it. DS will review that letter and respond within the next couple of weeks after which time Planning will schedule Zoning meeting. As a reference to the maintenance of the Walkway, Neal, pointed out that the Walkway at Kelly Beach has needed very little if any maintenance and DS said Bristol AS Walkway, built in 2001, has not spent any money on maintenance. Our Walkway would be of a similar material.

-The deadline for the request for Engineering Bids (Structural and Geo) was 6/22. DS said that two of five have come in. They are both over 30 pages long. It will take some time to review and make sure they match our scope of work requested. David and George will review them together and report back to the Board.

-NCordy reported that she received a letter from the RI Foundation stating that the LT did not get the \$10,000.00 grant due to a very strong response to the grant program this year which far exceeds the funds available at this time. The Champlin Foundation sent a letter requesting more information as to our progress with the project as far as other funding, building process, etc... before they can make a final determination. We have until the end of September to submit these things. Nancy emphasized the importance of getting the \$60,000.00 "seed money" from the FDistrict in order to proceed with obtaining the necessary permits and begin our fundraising campaign.

-LT Advisory Committee: Terry Duffy reported that at the last LTAC meeting which was earlier today, two issues were discussed: 1) the need for a Special Meeting to occur before the Annual Mtng (on 6/28) for the purpose of clarifying how the \$60K line item for the Walkway went from the FD Capital Budget to the LT Operating Budget (which must be voted on at the Annual Meeting). There's been no clear explanation of this from the Council. There was a request for a Special Meeting by three of the Council Members to the Council Chair almost 3 weeks ago which has had no follow through to date form the Chair.

2) There is a concern about the venue of the Annual Meeting which is being held at the Bonnet Shores Beach Club in the "Pit" where the bar will be open during the meeting. The LTAC feels it is inappropriate to have it there and there is nothing in the Charter that says the meeting can't be moved to a different date in order to use one of the Narr.

Schools, in fact it has happened in the past.

There seems to be some attractability to keeping the public as well as some Council Members completely in the dark as this moves forward and time is running out. There is only 5 days left for a resolution of these two issues. Paul Haas asked Terry to read the section of the Charter re: Special Meetings. Three people of the Council may request a Special Meeting any time in writing to the Clerk. Terry said he assumed it must be posted a minimum of 48 hours in advance.

- **Old Business**

-LT Operating Budget: Nancy C. expressed her concern about the \$60,000.00 being mixed in with the \$4000.00 (the true Operating Budget) on the ballot at the Annual Meeting. She posed the question if people vote down the whole \$64,000.00 then there is no money for the LT to operate for the year. Eliot stated that the \$60K is seed money for the cost of the Engineer to tell us if this is a viable project and the \$4K is for Operating Budget, which we will need to make sure the voters understand at the meeting.

-Audubon Society Land Acquisition update: DS spoke with Seth Handy (AS Legal Dept) who is preparing the documents to transfer AS properties to the BSLT. These documents include the deeds, an Easement document which is a flexible document of what they feel our intentions may be for the land and a Maintenance Document which captures what the land looks like now so that in the future they can refer to it if there are changes the LT wants to make. Upon receipt of the documents, the LT will review them and decide whether they feel the need for an attorney to review it, vote on whether to accept it and then bring it to the FD Council for their approval. DS stated this is an ongoing process. We have built in money in the Operating Budget for any fees we may incur in this process.

- **New Business**

-Information on NonProfit Status: Nancy C. reported on information she has gathered from the IRS regarding accepting donations and grants for the Walkway Project. The LT was a 501(c)3 (from late '90's to 2004) but is no longer. The IRS said the LT never filed while they were a 501(c)3 and they don't know why it was dropped. The LT could reapply using the long form and the process could take several months. The LT falls under the quasi municipality status of the Fire District, which is a tax exempt governmental body which can accept donations. There is a 4076c Governmental Information Letter that would be given to donors. The LT could use that tax exempt status instead of being a 501(c)3. The merits of both were discussed. Paul Haas asked if the LT/FD starting accepting donations as a quasi municipality and then became a 501(c)3, could that money be transferred over? Eliot commented that LT will need to work with FD Council to establish a separate account for any monies donated for the Walkway Project.

- **Public Comment:**

Tony Lupino asked about the \$60K being co-mingled with \$4K, how did that happen and it should be adjusted before the Annual Meeting? The meeting he attended stated the money was in the Capital Budget. If it gets voted down, he would challenge it with the Ethics Commission that it was changed without the notice of the Public. Terry Duffy explained that it is two, separate accounts and will appear that way on the ballot. Nancy C. asked if there will be an explanation for it prior to the meeting. Paul Haas expressed his concern again for the Council's Special Meeting to put the \$60K back in the Capital Budget. It is in danger of being voted down which would impede the Walkway Project going forward. Eliot reiterated that it is the responsibility of the Council members to file their request with the Clerk and it is not the responsibility of the land Trust Council.

Angelo Bellini asked about the designs of the Walkway, estimated costs and Building Permit process and how is the money being raised?. Eliot explained the process thus far.

Marlene Bellini asked how did the Walkway become a LT Project not a FD Project? She views a LT as an entity that "takes over properties and keeping land green". EG explained that the LT owns the land the Walkway will be on and the LT feels the need to create a safe way for people to travel across that section of road. Nancy C. stated that the LT Council saw the great Safety need for this Walkway and the Council fully endorses it. The LT also felt it would enhance the property just as their other long range plans such as developing nature/walking trails, water runoff mitigation and land donations. DS went on to answer the question about CRMC's suggestion to provide 6 parking spaces as it reads in the CRMC Preliminary Determination Report.

- **The next Land Trust meeting will be 7/12/18 at 6:00pm**
- **Adjournment**

- EG made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:12p.m., Neal C. 2nd it, motion carried 4-0 (GM had to leave before meeting was adjourned).

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Cordy