

# **Friends of the GTM NERR**

## **Minutes of Board Meeting: Tuesday, January 8, 2008**

### **Members Present:**

**Pierre Pierce, Anita Pierce, Chris Rich, Nancy Schachnovsky, Jonathan Katzen, Peter Difatta, Irene Kaufman, Bill Coleman, Craig O'Neal, Barb Starck, Frank Pixler**

### **Staff Present:**

Teri Webley, Mike Shirley

### **Guests:**

Tom Barry, Anne Campbell

### **Excused Absence:**

Carl Hampp, Michael Timpane - Michael spent the meeting locked outside.

### **Meeting called to order at 5 pm by Pierre Pierce at the EEC**

The meeting was opened with the Flag salute led by Pierre.

### **December Meeting Minutes Approval by Pierre Pierce**

Motion to approve the December meeting minutes was made by Bill.

Seconded by Peter.

All in favor none opposed the December meeting minutes were approved.

### **MAG Report by Pierre**

Pierre announced that Mike Shirley is the new head of the MAG. This post is expected to be temporary.

Pierre explained that the MAG's purpose is to advise State Officials on the Environmental activities in this area.

After some discussion about MAG activities Pierre outlined the MAG's involvement in the Water Resource Plan. The Fresh Water Commission is working to stop people from taking water from the St. Johns River. An example of the problem they hope to address is - Orlando has plans to build 5 water plants on the St. Johns River. According to reports the St. Johns River does not have the capacity to handle that load. Simply stated there is not enough water.

Pierre updated the Board about the 210 land acquisition issue. A MAG letter will be voted on at the next meeting. Pierre supplied the MAG with the Friends of the GTM Reserve letter. The MAG letter like the Friends of the GTM Reserve letter will oppose encroachment on or removal of any Research Reserve land. Pierre will provide a copy of the final draft of the MAG and Friends of the GTM Reserve letters to the Friends of the GTM Reserve Board members.

MAG cont.

Pierre informed the Board that he is a on the MAG board and said that anyone interested in serving on the MAG Board is encouraged to apply. The MAG is actively seeking Board members.

**Development Committee (mailing) Update by Jonathan Katzen**

Jonathan reported the latest membership numbers supplied him by Teri.

December 47 new members - \$3625

44 renewals ----- \$2885 total December membership \$ 6510

January as of 1/6/08 7 new -- \$410

12 renew-\$1100 total January membership \$ 1510

Brick111 4 8x8 ----- \$1200

16 4x8 ----- \$2400 total Brick111 sales to date \$ 3600

Total membership and Brick111 income for reported period -----\$11620

Jonathan explained that the Membership Committee is tracking donations by zip code and tracking the percentage of higher and lower donations in renewals.

Jonathan reported that the Friends of the GTM Reserve have just about recouped their expenses for the mail campaign and supplies for the year.

In answer to a question from the floor Teri told the Board that the bricks for Brick111 will be ordered early spring 08.

Frank explained that the direct mail campaign was done differently this year. The National Estuaries Day article from the Recorder was added to the packet. 7000 or 8000 households that have never seen the Friends of the GTM Reserve literature received it this year because the target area was changed.

Frank went on to explain that it takes 90 to 120 days to see where the mailings were successful. Everything being reported on the fund raising industry points to a decline in donations due to fear of a bad economy by the donors. It is still early in the campaign to see what effect this will have on the donations.

Peter asked when the packets for the Direct Mail Campaign went in the mail.

Frank answered that the packets were mailed the weekend after Thanksgiving. To date it has been about 6 weeks since the mailing. Last year the memberships were strong until about April.

Jonathan added that he expects the numbers to show that 32082, Ponte Vedra Beach to be the strongest donor area as it has been in the past.

**Development Committee Update by Frank Pixler**

Frank explained that he has not been able to meet with Mike or Janet about standardizing the Friends of the GTM Reserve new board member orientation and

Development update cont.

including staff in that orientation. The Friends of the GTM Reserve new board member orientation was discussed at the last Governance Committee meeting.

Frank discussed the need for a meeting of Friends of the GTM Reserve Board to evaluate the community contacts of each board member for fundraising purposes.

The preference for the meeting about community contacts is 4pm on the day of the next Board meeting. Frank will put together a list of potential contacts and supply it to Board members before the February 12, 08 meeting.

Frank brought up the need for a brochure directed at the local business community. He asked the Board members to consider the business brochure for future discussion.

Frank asked Michael for time to discuss the issue of volunteer awareness concerning the function of the Friends of the GTM Reserve Board of Directors at the GTM Research Reserve. He also will be asking Mike and Janet for their input on the matter.

Peter asked if the awareness information would be part of volunteer orientation.

Frank said that is part of what he needs to discuss with Michael, Mike, and Janet.

Bill spoke about the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner hosted by the Friends of the GTM Reserve and that his experience was that the volunteers he spoke to did not know what the Friends of the GTM Reserve function was.

Bill suggested that a brief presentation at future Volunteer Appreciation Dinners explaining the Friends of the GTM Reserve and what they do as an option.

Tom Barry added that he has been a 4 day a week volunteer at the GTM Research Reserve for some time and he has no idea what the Friends of the GTM Reserve do.

**Finance Committee Report by Nancy Schachnovsky**

After reading all accessible Friends of the GTM Reserve Records as far back as 1994 Nancy explained she was not able to find solid evidence of actual policies concerning some of the items needed by the accountant for the tax returns.

Nancy asked that any Board member who has kept the policies please forward copies to her. She explained that most of the information she has are proposed policies never voted into policy according to her information.

The policies she needs are:

Fraud Policy

Whistle Blower Policy

Document Retention Policy

If those are not available Nancy has arranged for the accountant to supply boiler plate to cover these needs. Nancy explained that she is working with the

Finance cont.

assumption that the Board is aligned with the norm on these issues. Nancy said she could provide this information to the Board if needed.

Peter suggested that Nancy send the information to all Board members via email since some Board members are not present at this meeting. Some of those absent may have copies of what she needs.

Bill said he does have a copy of the investment policy and will forward a copy to Nancy.

As for the other needed policies there is not record of them in the available information.

Nancy said that she will need an Institutional Memory Committee. Nancy asked why the by laws still say proposed.

Peter said that the by laws were discussed at the last Governance Committee meeting. That is when he became aware that there is more than one copy of proposed by laws out there. Janet's copy was different than Peters. Janet was going to send Teri everything she had in an attempt to get everything in one place and put a useable version together.

Nancy explained that she has uncovered 6 copies of by laws. She will send Peter pertinent policy information.

Peter suggested that the best of the by laws and the other policies be assembled then voted on by the Board. The process would include distribution of the assembled policies to Board members about a month prior to voting for review.

Nancy said all the information is there. It is not organized.

Nancy is working on financial policies. She went on to explain the dual signature for expenditures is solely a Board issue. The bank only requires one signature no matter the amount of the check.

Pierre asked if Nancy had a financial report.

Nancy explained that the accounts are fine and that due to her other projects as Treasurer she did not prepare a report for this meeting.

**Education and Communications Committee Update by Pierre in Michael's absence**

Pierre was at the last Education and Communications Committee meeting. One result of the meeting was the realization that the projects proposed to the Education and Communications Committee is going to take more time than originally expected.

Education Cont.

As more information is available on these projects that information will be presented to the Board.

**Research Reserve Update by Mike Shirley**

Mike said that the staff is working on prioritizing projects for 2008 and the staff will be ready to present their projected needs to the Board soon.

Another area the staff is focusing on is to plug into corresponding Friends of the GTM Reserve Committees for their projects. This will help the Committees to plan their year.

A new Volunteer Coordinator has been hired. Angel Gonzales will start on 1/15/08.

A project that Mike and staff have been looking into is to have a designation of National Heritage Area placed on the Research Reserve and watershed area. There is a possibility of working with the Lighthouse and others to recognize the heritage of this area.

A designation of National Heritage Area includes the possibility of \$15 million in federal money.

Jonathan asked if Mike was heading the project.

Mike said it is still too early to name a project leader. The project is still in the feasibility phase. This step could take two years.

Bill raised the issue of getting a better handle on the Research Reserve Staffs projected needs for 2008 so a realistic budget can be created.

Bill asked that Mike direct his staff to attach a projected dollar amount to the project needs that they will present to the Board.

Mike said that after the staff has prioritized their needs for the year they will go back and budget for the year based on the prioritized list.

Pierre said that Angie attended the Education and Communications meeting. She made an informative presentation about her projected needs and plans for 2008. The presentation included a slide show and took about 15 minutes.

**EEC Requests by Teri Webley**

Due to Janet's absence Teri was asked to present the requests in her place. There has been a request by front desk personnel and event staff that Friends of the GTMNERR members be provided with membership cards. This would identify members for events that allow free or discounted admission for them. Teri added that some members have expressed a desire to have a membership card. Teri passed a copy of the proposed card around the room. It could be mailed to members with their tax letter.

EEC cont.

No vote was required for the approval of a membership card. Teri was instructed to proceed with distribution of the card.

Teri asked if the Board wanted her to send cards to all current members or start now sending them out in all future tax letters.

The Board decided that the membership card would be sent with the tax letters. Members will receive cards as they join or renew.

The other topic is the Artist Reception. The reception will be on January 25, 08 from 6pm-8pm. We will need bartenders. Teri gave Bill an inventory of the beverages in the storage room. Bill will check with Carl about needed quantities and make sure the beverages are purchased.

Diana will purchase all the other supplies needed for the reception. She will get money from petty cash.

**Other Business**

Mike announced the Bryan Tutton memorial.

Nancy asked if a designation has been attached to the memorial funds.

Teri spoke to the family and they had not expressed a desire to place a designation on the memorial funds.

Teri was directed to contact the family and find out if they have a preference for the use of the memorial funds.

(as of the writing of these minutes only \$150 has been donated to the memorial fund. \$100 of that was designated by the donor for their own membership.)

Teri will ask about desired designations for funds when setting up future memorials.

The Board agreed that memorial donations and the designation of their funds was a subject that needed more in-depth exploring. Pierre suggested that they think about the subject and some decisions would be made at a later time.

Pierre made some suggestions for the event signage. This started discussion about the options for new signage.

Frank suggested a changeable marquee in a glass case.

Pierre updated the Board on his progress with the spy cam. He contacted the National Geographic Society's David Marshall who invented the spy cam. He has not responded.

Pierre also contacted Tom Harvey who does satellite pop up tags on marlin. He has not responded.

Other cont.

Mike introduced Tom Barry to the Board. Tom is a volunteer who works on a lot of projects around the Research Reserve. Tom explained that he was curious about the Board's function at the Research Reserve so he is attending a meeting to get a better understanding of the relationship.

Pierre said that he is researching books about N/E Florida in particular the area that makes up the GTM Research Reserve. One book he was able to find was the Environmental History of N/E Florida.

Pierre said he discussed the need to find a local author to write a book about the GTM Research Reserve property and history.

Mike pointed out the relationship between the National Heritage designation and a written history.

Tom said as part of a volunteer project he gathered all the cultural and archeological information he could find on the area. He offered the information to the book project.

Tom said he was introduced to a man who was researching the possibility of doing a book using his information.

Mike explained that he spoke to the same man and his concept is a user guide for the entire area. Not as much a history as a guide to natural recreational opportunities in the area.

Mike explained the difficulty in writing a history book of the area because of the volume of information. And that as each society replaced the prior they disturbed the historical remnants of the previous.

Pierre pointed out the mention of the GTM Research Reserve as Guana State Park in a 2008 tourist information book.

Pierre suggested the commonly used name be Research Reserve at Guana.

Mike explained that while it will help with recognition of the facility here there is the southern component to consider. Using the Guana designation leaves them out.

Frank explained how he addressed branding in the direct mail campaign. GTMNERR was changed to GTM Research Reserve whenever the facility was addressed. Friends of the GTM Reserve was used wherever the Friends group was mentioned.

Frank announced the Sawgrass event invitation. The Friends will have a table that they will share with Research Reserve staff. Frank and Jonathan will attend. The event is Feb. 19, 08

Chris asked if they would need a pop up display for the event.

Other cont.

Chris said she would arrange for a Friends of the GTM Reserve pop up display.

Teri will bring enough of the packets used in the direct mail campaign for each board member to get 5 to distribute however they see fit.

Pierre asked Mike for free admission passes to hand out at the Sawgrass event. Mike said that would not be a problem.

Pierre announced that Mike will speak at the Civic Round Table in Feb. Pierre asked if there was any other business.

Bill motioned to adjourn, Irene seconded, all in favor, none opposed.

**Meeting Adjourned at 6:00 by Pierre Pierce**

The next monthly board meeting will be Tuesday, February 12, 2008.