

## **Friends of the GTM NERR**

### **Minutes of Board Meeting: Tuesday June 8, 2010**

#### **Members Present:**

**Jonathan Katzen, Chris Rich, Rob Matthews, Ellyn Cavin, Peter Difatta  
Kay Henderson via conference call**

#### **Staff Present:**

Matt Love, Teri Webley, Jake Fitzroy, Mike Shirley, Angie Golubovich

#### **Excused Absence:**

Carl Hampp, Nancy Schachnovsky, Irene Kaufman, Tom Barry, Pierre Pierce, Anita Pierce, Mike Timpane

#### **Guest:**

Chris Kelly (Ripple Effect), Marcy Silkenbaken and Angel Diaz (Connect Us)

### **Meeting called to order at 5pm by Jonathan Katzen**

### **May Meeting Minutes Approval by Jonathan Katzen**

Because there was not a quorum present at this meeting, May meeting minutes approval has been tabled until the July Board meeting.

### **Connect Us Presentation by Marcy Silkenbaken and Angel Diaz**

Jonathan introduced Marcy and Angel to the Board. He explained briefly that the project they are going to speak about tonight has an effect on the GTM NERR and that if the Board approves he would like to provide them with a letter of support.

In February 2010 Connect Us reviewed plans with St Johns County to install a multipurpose walkway cutting a swath through the GTM NERR. Those plans were denied by the Florida Fish and Wildlife.

The plan to put a road through the GTM NERR has been going on for ten years. Connect Us is a group of people from the community that have developed an alternative solution to get this moving.

This plan is the one that Connect Us is asking the Friends of the GTM Reserve to support.

The plan is for an urban sidewalk that consists of 3 sidewalk connectors. The goal is to create a safe transport area for people.

One reason for the need for this sidewalk is that Florida was called the deadliest state for pedestrians and cyclists.

Some benefits of the sidewalk would be:

- Safety for pedestrians and cyclists
- Support of local businesses – easier for pedestrians and cyclists to access local businesses

### Connect Us cont.

- Recreational – walking, cycling, skating, etc
- Better pedestrian / non vehicular access to beaches / mitigate some of the beach parking
- Possible benefit to the county in increased property values

The need has been established and Connect Us believes the funding is there.

Some cost estimates are:

\$1.8 million for 2.5 miles of 8' wide walk

It is a very low estimate but it creates a baseline for the project.

Timing is essential

Dangerous conditions will continue until a solution is found

The funds that have been identified for this project could ultimately be rerouted and lost.

Lost economic benefits if delayed in increased construction costs

The goal of this plan is to not use land from GTM NERR.

The route of the walkway using easement space that would not include GTMNERR space for the walk was discussed.

Mike Shirley supports the Friends of the GTM NERR moving forward to support this plan As long as FWC is OK with it.

After discussion and questions from the Board members present the matter was tabled for future vote because there was not a quorum at this meeting.

Jonathan explained that one reason for bringing this to the Board is that, periodically someone looking for land (county, developers, high school, etc). This could be a solution to that.

### **Presidents Report by Jonathan Katzen**

The Executive and Finance Committees met. One of the issues discussed was the GTM NERR staff budgeted items procedure used to fund projects last year.

Benefits to this procedure were identified as

- Projects being funded well before the need thus eliminating the tendency of staff to request emergency funds at Board meetings for most needs
- Looking at the needs of the GTM NERR for the year all at once
- Ability to prioritize projects

Some things that were identified as needing to be looked at and possibly changed for next year

- How the budgeted funds are paid out to staff
- Timing of payout sometimes did not coincide with the actual need resulting in funds being provided to Harry months before they were needed.
- The Friends Board looking more closely at some of the projects offered by NERR staff as well as identifying some projects of their own that they wish to support.

### President cont

- How funded projects are reported to the Friends of the GTM Reserve.

Kay will put a report together to get the ball rolling on a Friends of the GTM Reserve budget for next year.

Kay requested the input of the committees to identify expenses such as chamber memberships for the report.

Jonathan asked the committees to start looking into and identifying projects for the 10/11 fiscal year and to set priorities.

The overall sense of the project funding procedure implemented for the 09/10 fiscal year is a move in the right direction.

The other item for discussion at the committee meeting was grant procedure. A more detailed report will come soon.

The grant procedure is working effectively and grants are being funded.

There are grants that are specific to Friends groups and these may make a good addition to the grant program.

### **Nominating Committee by Rob Matthews**

#### **Director Candidate**

The Nominating Committee met with David Ray from Nocatee. He is with one of the management consultants at Nocatee for the community development district. Some reasons David wishes to join the Friends of the GTM Reserve Board are:

He wants to be a “good neighbor” to the Reserve

He also enjoys the Reserve as a visitor

David has a CPA background although he does not currently practice.

The Nominating Committee is recommending David Ray as a Board member candidate.

The vote was tabled until there is a quorum present.

### **Events Committee by Chris Rich**

The following events are scheduled for this year

- August 28, 2010 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
- September 25, 2010 National Estuaries Day Event
- October 23, 2010 Friends of the GTM Reserve food fundraiser – (note- subsequently named Ocean Wise / An Evening for the Estuary)
- December 3, 2010 State of the Reserve event

### **Research Reserve Update by Mike Shirley**

The Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW) designation portions of the southern component of the GTM NERR has hit a snag in Palm Coast.

A rumor has been circulating that the OFW designation would negatively impact fishing and boating in the area.

### RR cont.

This rumor has caused negative feedback at the meeting Mike S attended concerning the designation in Palm Coast.

The correct information on what the OFW designation would mean to boating and fishing is being distributed.

Another rumor being circulated is that the GTM NERR is in favor of limiting fishing and boating in the area. This is also incorrect.

Even with these rumors circulating most of the letters going to DEP on the subject are in favor of the OFW designation.

Some GTM staff including Mike S are involved in the Deepwater Horizon response in the Gulf. The DEP is a primary responder so by reason of the relationship to the DEP GTM staff have been tapped to participate.

One project that GTM staff is participating in is to create a baseline on Florida's coast ecology so in the event that the oil in the Gulf reaches Florida's southern and eastern beaches changes to the ecology can be identified and those responsible can be held accountable.

If we see anything here it will most likely be tar balls.

Links to the Florida DEP, NOAA, and the Deepwater Horizon Response websites can be found on the Friends home page at

[www.GTMNERR.org](http://www.GTMNERR.org) for current information.

Local news is not always accurate.

### **Treasurers Report by Kay Henderson**

The May and year to date finance report was handed out to Board members present.

Kay explained some of the line items on the report including a new grant received for \$948 and some of the other restricted funds.

Kay and Teri met with Rosemarie from Davis and Davis (the Friends accountant) and were able to correct the reporting issue between the POS in the Nature Store and the QuickBooks program in the Friends office.

One item that is now being reported correctly is the \$500 per year budget that the GTM NERR has with the Nature Store for items donated for special events.

With Mike S' approval NERR staff will select items from the Nature Store for giveaways to VIPs visiting the NERR, for events attended by NERR staff, as gifts for special events, etc.

A sister program to this is when a Friends of the GTM Reserve Board member acting for the Board will donate an item or gift basket from the Nature Store to a special event in the community usually as a door prize or action item.

These contributions can now be tracked by the back office accounting system and reported through the inventory.

## **Other Business**

The question of how corporate donors are recognized. Currently they are sent a letter of gratitude and in the case of donors to specific projects (kiosks) the donor's name is added to the finished project.

Some changes to how corporate and large donors are recognized were discussed. Photos of the project or program including the donor's name/logo and the donor when possible would be sent to the press in a press release upon completion.

Donors to be listed in newsletters from the Friends and NERR upon completion of the program or project.

Donors included in all announcements and media about the project or program they donate to.

Jonathan adjourned the meeting at 5:55pm

No motion because there was not a quorum present at this meeting

The next Friends of the GTM Reserve Board meeting will be July 13, 2010