

Hampton Roads Bird Club  
EXCOM Meeting Notes (2020-21)

The Executive Committee (EXCOM) met on Zoom on July 28, 2020.

Meeting called to order at 6:33 p.m.

EXCOM Members and Committee Chairpersons Present:

President - Shawn Dash  
Vice president - Pete Peterman  
Treasurer - John Adair  
Secretary - Bill Boeh  
Director (2018-21) - Brian Magill  
Director (2019-22) - Barbara Abraham  
Director (2020-23) - Walt Harris  
Newsletter - Tom Charlock  
Website - Ellis and Wendy Maxey  
Field Trip - Rochelle and Harry Colestock  
Hospitality - Dianne Snyder  
Membership - Gwen Harris

EXCOM Members and Committee Chairpersons Absent:

Hospitality - Jane Frigo  
Publicity - Michael Meyer

Non-Committee Members in Attendance: None

1. Issues for discussion and EXCOM member reports:

a. President:

- i. Topic: Shawn brought up membership numbers status and club dues. Specifically: that member numbers may decrease with reduced activities; members may expect a dues reduction due to reduced activities; and what impact these factors may have on the club's financial status.

1. Discussion:

a. The treasurer advised that membership currently stood at 40 each single/family memberships (80 total). Dues paid at the current rates should cover our usual budgetary expenditures for the year. Last year the club way underspent the budgeted amount due to termination of speakers (due to cancellation of meetings for COVID-19) and the fact that the club did not award the \$500 scholarship.

b. Discussion ensued regarding the lowering of dues rates due to the reduction in club activities. The consensus was to leave rates as they are since they are not currently onerous and raising them later could prove difficult.

c. The Treasurer noted that dues collection could be impeded by the lack of physical club meetings. Bill Boeh suggested the Club explore the use of PayPal to online dues collection. The Treasurer advised he would consider the idea and reach out to Bill for more information.

d. Discussion ensued regarding how the Club should disburse the \$500 Educational Fund; i.e., if the EXCOM wanted to award the \$500 as a scholarship, or donate the funds to a particular

project that benefited birds in general. Dave Youker had suggested via a pre-meeting email that the club donate the \$500 to the Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas (VBBA), as this was the final year of the VBBA effort and funds were needed to execute the post-survey analysis of data collected. Generally the EXCOM agreed that funding the VBBA was the best way to expend the \$500 this year.

2. Action:

a. The Club will donate \$500 to the VBBA our Educational Fund Contribution to the VSO Virginia Breeding Bird Atlas 2 Project.

Note: It was noted post-meeting that an official tally of the EXCOM's vote on this issue was not taken during the meeting. The Treasurer requested that the President poll the EXCOM via email to obtain an official tally. The President did so and the measure passed.

b. The Treasurer will develop budget proposal for the forthcoming year, to include a recommended rate for honoraria.

ii. Topic: Newsletter.

1. Discussion: Shawn asked if we still needed to mail out newsletter, as the club could eliminate printing and mailing costs by going to 100% email distribution. Tom advised that there were still a few members who did not have email and still needed a paper copy mailed to them. Tom also noted that fewer members are submitting articles. Pete Peterman advised that he will send Tom a book review for newsletter.

2. Action: Tom will continue to mail paper copies to members who request them.

iii. Topic: Conduct of the Sunday Bird Walks and Field Trips. Shawn asked if walks/field trips should be conducted, and if so, whether the state COVID-19 safety protocols (i.e., limiting group size; maintaining social distancing; wearing of face masks; and non-sharing of snacks and equipment; and avoidance of ridesharing outside of immediate family).

1. Discussion:

a. Members advised that several Sunday walks had already taken place, but compliance with the safety protocols was inconsistent. Some members had stopped attending the walks due to noncompliance with the protocols.

b. Members advised that other bird clubs were doing walks/trips but compliance with protocols was better than they'd seen at the Sunday walks.

c. All agreed that Sunday walks and field trips could be conducted only if the protocols were enforced by terminating the activity if attendees did not comply. Groups will be limited to 8 or less by dividing the attendees into sub-groups who take different routes, as required.

iv. Action/resolution: Shawn will put out policy guidelines as follows: Sunday Walks and Field Trips will be limited to a group size that can follow a minimum 6-foot social distancing. The size of the group will be proportional to the ability for members to spread out, but will not exceed 8 persons. If more than 8 persons are present, the group will be divided to ensure spacing requirements. A face covering is required while recreating on all trips. Participants will be required to wear it whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained. Whereas in the past we encouraged carpooling, sharing equipment, and a glance through a friend's scope, NO materials will be shared on future trips. Failing to comply with social distancing guidelines, small group sizes, wearing a mask, and no sharing will cause the walk or field trip to be canceled on the spot.

v. Action/resolution:

vi.

vii. Need for liability insurance and/or release of liability needs to be investigated (by whom?). John may inquire Megan Tierney.

viii.

ix. Topic: HRBC liability. Ellis Maxey wondered if the club could be held liable specifically if someone contracted COVID-19, and more generally if they were injured during a club-sponsored activity. Members concluded that it would be difficult for someone to prove that they'd contracted COVID at a specific activity, but were unsure as to the club's liability for injury during an outing.

1. Discussion:

a. John Adair advised that the Club currently has no liability insurance.

b. Shawn expressed the desire to investigate need for any liability insurance and/or the need to have members sign a release of liability.

c. Tom Charlock advised insurance is expensive and that having it might actually invite lawsuits.

d. Bill Boeh said not sure if board is liable; he noted that the Peninsula Master Naturalist chapter had determined a need for insurance to cover its board members (but had not yet obtained such insurance).

e. Action/resolution: John Adair advised that he is the club's Master Naturalist liaison; he can inquire the Peninsula Master Naturalists' advisor regarding the club's liability.

x. Topic: Conduct of monthly meetings via Zoom. Shawn advised that he has conducted several events via Zoom and that people are generally becoming familiar with the application. Since COVID-19 protocols have rendered physical meetings inadvisable, Shawn asked if the club wanted to conduct monthly meetings via Zoom.

1. Discussion:

a. Multiple members agreed that we should use Zoom and not conduct physical meetings until it is safe to do so.

b. Shawn advised that he can host; he has an upgraded account that allows longer meetings with more participants. He is not sure if a video could be presented in lieu of a live speaker, and will need to investigate that in conjunction with Pete Peterman.

2. Action/resolution: Shawn will host meetings via Zoom. Pete & Shawn will determine if video presentation via Zoom will work.

xi. Topic: Guest Speakers.

1. Discussion:

a. Pete Peterman advised that Chance Hines, from the Conservation in Biology Center in Williamsburg, will be the guest speaker for the September 10 meeting. Pete needs more candidates to flesh out the lineup for the year.

b. Shawn advised that he knows several potential speakers (colleagues). He noted that using Zoom eliminates expense/time spent traveling, and asked if the club should suspend or reduce the honorarium for guest speakers, since that is nominally awarded to defray travel expenses.

c. Pete recommended that the club still provide some sort of honorarium for the time/effort expended putting the presentation together.

2. Action/resolution:

a. Club will use Zoom for monthly meetings and guest speakers.

- b. Shawn and Pete will determine if video can be shown via Zoom.
- c. The honorarium amount will be determined based on the budget proposal.

xii. Topic: Birding 101 course.

1. Discussion:

a. Shawn advised that he has a course put together, could do that ICW with meetings via Zoom.

b. Some members pointed out that members who cannot use Zoom would not be able to participate.

c. Shawn advised that he will record the session and post it on YouTube for viewing.

2. Action/resolution: Shawn will give the course ICW meetings and post the lessons on YouTube.

3. Topic: Outreach—School speaking engagements via Zoom. Shawn advised that schools were requesting the club provide speakers, but recommended that any engagements with schools be conducted via Zoom

4. Action/resolution: All agreed that any engagement should be via Zoom.

xiii. Topic: Weekly photo contest

1. Discussion:

a. Shawn would like to facilitate more connectivity between club members via this activity. Members would submit photos each month for review; members would vote to select winning photo via email.

b. Tom advised that he would publish the photo in the newsletter and volunteered to call the winning photographer and get a “story” or caption for the picture.

2. Action/resolution: All agreed that that was a good idea and that the Club will proceed with the initiative.

xiv. Topic: Fort Wool seabird sanctuary: Ellis and Wendy advised they’d visited the newly established seabird sanctuary by boat and seen species in excess of those mentioned in the Daily Press’s August 1 article, including Cattle and Snow Egrets. They recommended that the Club should send a thank you letter to the officials that enabled creation of the sanctuary.

1. Discussion:

a. Shawn agreed that a letter of appreciation from the Club was appropriate, and would ask Barb Abraham if she will draft the letter

b. Shawn suggested that the Maxey’s write a newsletter article about their visit; they agreed to do so.

2. Action/resolution: The Maxey’s will write an article. Club will write a thank you letter; Shawn will ask Barb Abraham if she will draft the letter.

2. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.