

Minutes of the Hampton Roads Bird Club  
Executive Committee (EXCOM) Meeting  
August 16, 2018

1. The EXCOMM met at Shawn Dash's residence. The meeting was called to order at 5:17 p.m.

2. Attendance:

a. EXCOMM Members and Committee Chairpersons Present:

President: ..... Shawn Dash  
Vice President:..... Pete Peterman  
Secretary: ..... William Boeh  
Treasurer: ..... John Adair  
Board (7/16-6/19):..... Dave Youker  
Board (7/17-6/20):..... Walter Harris  
Board (7/18-6/21):..... Brian Magill  
Field Trip Coordinator: ..... Jason Strickland  
Web Editor:..... Ellis Maxey  
Hospitality: ..... Jane Frigo and Dianne Snyder  
Newsletter Editor:..... Thomas Charlock  
Publicity:..... Katrina Dash  
Membership: ..... Gwen Harris  
Leader, Sunday Newport News Walks:..... Jane Frigo  
Compiler, Christmas and Spring Bird Counts: .... Bill Boeh

b. Non-Committee Members in Attendance: None

c. EXCOMM Members and Committee Chairpersons Absent:

Web Editor:..... Wendy Maxey

3. Issues for discussion and EXCOM member reports:

a. Hosting of the Virginia Society of Ornithology (VSO) meeting. Shawn recounted his attempt to coordinate co-hosting of the 2020 VSO annual meeting with the president of the Williamsburg Bird Club (WBC). Shawn pointed out the potential benefits of co-hosting (including the fact that there were great birding sites and lower lodging costs available on the southern portion of the peninsula), and inquired the EXCOM as to a recommended way forward.

i. Discussion/: The EXCOM members discussed the issue and recommended that the WBC should be approached again.

- ii. Action: Shawn will email the WBC president again on the matter, and Dave Youker will contact Bill Williams(?) and see if Bill can help facilitate agreement on the part of the WBC to co-host the meeting with the HRBC.
  - iii. Issue status: Pends outcome of above actions.
- b. 2017-2018 Slate of Speakers at HRBC Meetings. Shawn provided kudos to Pete Peterman regarding the speakers he'd arranged during the past year; stating that in his opinion they'd been very good and Pete had struck a good balance between scientific/educational topics and less formal lectures on various members' personal birding trips. .
- i. Discussion: Pete advised the EXCOM regarding speakers he was considering for the upcoming year: Teeta Kain will speak on feeding birds in September; Susan Morris will speak on bird rehabilitation in October. Pete will seek a little more focus on conservation, and asked Dave Youker to speak on the Virginia Bird Breeding Atlas in February or March. Pete advised that he was considering asking Mary Elfner (of the Audubon Society) to speak about the Important Bird Areas, and requested help in finding someone to speak on bird calls and songs. Several members provided feedback on Pete's choice; Pete expressed his appreciation for the feedback.
  - ii. Action: Pete will investigate the recommended speakers.
  - iii. Issue status: Closed.
- c. HRBC support for Mariner's Museum Bird Walks. Ellis expressed concern on the lack of a designated leader for the monthly Mariner's Museum bird walks on the Noland Trail. Initially James Abbott had volunteered to lead the walks, but his work schedule will no longer allow him to serve as leader Ellis inquired as to if the club desires to continue the walks on a routine basis, and if so, whether the walks should be conducted as a supporting activity to the Museum or simply as another HRBC activity.
- i. Discussion: Shawn noted that there had not been a lot of public interest/attendance for the walks, and led discussion as to if/how the club intended to continue them. .
  - ii. Resolution/Action: After some debate, a vote was taken and the EXCOM approved the following way forward:
    1. The club would continue the walks as a club activity rather than as a supporting outreach activity to the Museum.
    2. The walks would be conducted on the last Sunday of the month during peak spring/fall migration (i.e., March, April, May, September, and October).

3. Club members will be advised and have an opportunity to sign up for the activity during applicable monthly meetings, starting in September 2018.
  4. The Museum would be advised as to when the club would be conducting the walks and that the public was welcome to join in (this will allow the Museum to advertise the walks to the public).
- d. Disposition of Williamsburg Birding and Wildlife Trail brochures. John Adair advised that the club had supported the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' (DGIF) development of the brochures with members' expertise as well as monetary support in the amount of \$500.00. DGIF provided the club 200 copies of the brochure as gesture of appreciation. John requested EXCOM determination as to how to dispose of the brochures.
- i. Discussion/Resolution/Action: The EXCOM discussed several options. Consensus was reached that Gwen Harris would take custody of the brochures; include one in every new member packet; ensure copies are available for members at each meeting; and execute any future EXCOM direction regarding disposition of remaining brochures. Issue closed.
- e. Birding education for club members. Shawn revisited the idea of initiating a series of educational presentations by the club's more expert birders to boost the expertise/skills of less expert members. Classroom instruction could be reinforced through targeted species on Sunday bird walks or field trips. He advised the EXCOM that he has permission to utilize Hampton University classrooms at no cost for this purpose.
- i. Discussion/Resolution/Action: The EXCOM discussed the idea; Dave Youker recommended surveying the membership to gauge interest before moving forward with the initiative. Shawn agreed, and will survey the membership as suggested. Resolution of the issue pends outcome of the survey.
- f. Boosting Club Membership. Shawn advised the EXCOM that there'd been a modest decline in membership over the past year of approximately 15 members. Shawn requested EXCOM feedback as to whether the club should undertake a more pro-active approach to obtain new members, recommending a focus on acquiring younger members since the average age of the current membership was becoming more advanced. Several recommendations were made.
- i. Discussion: The EXCOM discussed several options as follows:
    1. Request local birding supply stores make club business cards available to customers (i.e., have the cards available at the checkout counter).
    2. Design a club t-shirt that members could purchase and wear during club activities, at birding festivals, etc., to generate interest in the club.

3. Increase club participation in local outreach opportunities such as the Go Green Expo, talks at local schools, etc. Shawn noted that the membership had not demonstrated much interest in supporting outreach. Dave Youker agreed; his opinion was that it was unwise for the EXCOM to try to press the membership into supporting activities they weren't interested in, which could result in an increased loss of membership.
- ii. Resolution/Action: The EXCOM generally agreed with Dave Youker's assessment regarding outreach; Jason Strickland offered to investigate the club T-shirt idea. Business cards will be distributed to local bird stores. Other options may be considered at future EXCOM meetings.
- g. Field Trip Committee Report.
- i. Issue: Craney Island visit offer: Jason advised that the club had been offered the opportunity to visit Craney Island (tentative date of Wednesday, September 5). Jason advised that he understood that this was a weekday, but that opportunities to visit Craney were rare and he believed the trip would be well supported by the club. He also advised that he would be unable to lead the trip and would seek another club member to act as coordinator. Jason requested an EXCOM vote to accept or decline the offer.
    1. Resolution/Action: After some discussion, a vote was taken with the EXCOM approving acceptance of the offer. Jason will publicize the opportunity to the membership and find an alternate coordinator. Issue closed.
  - ii. Remaining trips for the year: Jason advised that he favored Kiptopeake/Eastern Shore for the October trip. Various options, including Pleasure House Road and a boat trip, were suggested for future trips..
    1. Resolution/Action: Jason will firm up the slate of trips for the year over the coming weeks. Issue closed.
- h. Treasurer's Report:
- i. John presented the club's financial status and proposed budget to the EXCOM for discussion and permission to present the budget to the membership for approval.
    1. Discussion: The following budget-related items were discussed:
      - a. Annual dues rates. John advised that the club was still expected to take in approximately the same amount in dues as was budgeted for the coming year, recommending no changes to the current rates (\$15 for individuals and \$20 per family).

- b. The budgets for various club activities and projects was discussed, with John recommending that they remain at last year's levels.
  - c. \$500 sponsorship for a local college student. Shawn inquired as to whether the EXCOM supported continued sponsorship, and if so, whether could anyone recommend a candidate. John advised that Michael Meyer, PhD, a CNU Associate Professor and the Organismal and Environmental Biology Department Chair, was a club member. He recommended Dr. Meyer as a good source for a suitable sponsorship candidate.
2. Resolution/Action: The committee approved the recommended budget and John will present it to the membership for approval at the September meeting. Presuming budget approval by the membership, this issue is considered closed.
- i. Host Committee Report: Jane solicited the EXCOM for volunteers to provide the snacks for the September and October meetings. Sufficient members volunteered to cover those meetings.
  - j. Newsletter Editor Report: Tom advised that a few members still receive the Newsletter via the Postal Service. Therefore, it was important to get the newsletter in the mail no later than the first of the month to ensure those members receive it at least a week before the monthly field trips. Tom asked that all please try to provide any articles to him by the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month to enable him to get the letter in the mail in a timely manner.
  - k. Web Editor Report: Ellis requested assistance with configuring the site to display properly when viewed by a smart phone. Shawn offered to assist Ellis with the issue.
4. The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.
5. Next Club meeting will be Thursday, September 13, 2018, 6:30 PM, Sandy Bottom Nature Park.