TPE Board of Directors Meeting

September 5, 2007

ACTION ITEMS IN BLUE

Attendees

Directors: Evanne Hunt, Kathy Henderson, Rich Henderson, Jack Kussmaul, Jim Rogala, Richard Oberle, Victoria Oberle, Nick Faessler, Dan Mueller

Visitors: Amy Staffen, Tom Brock, Jim O'Brien

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. on September 5, 2007.

Old Business

1. July 15th Meeting Minutes

- Item #11: Hunt proposed that we add the words "Land Trust" to the logo; she did not want to change the name of The Prairie Enthusiasts. Under "Visitors," Ms. Yahr's name is "Laurie."
- Motion to approve July 15th minutes with above changes (R. Oberle). Seconded (Kussmaul). Motion passed.

3. Treasurer's Report (K. Henderson)

- LIP grants cause negative numbers to appear in assets entries. Values will be restored to positive figures once we are reimbursed for expenses.
- Membership is up $1,300 since last report.
- Office expenses are a new budget item, but total administration expenses have decreased overall.
- This year's conference generated less money than usual; we pretty much broke even.
- Although accounting and bookkeeping expenses have increased since last year, tax audit expenses have decreased by $5,000.
- Over all, our expenses are higher, and our net income is lower than those of last year.
- R. Henderson is working with Claudia Vlisides to develop 'restricted' versus 'unrestricted' budget categories, to move toward cleaner accounting with stewardship grants. Right now, we are not making this distinction in our accounting ledger, which makes it difficult to accurately track cash flow and balances.
- R. Oberle would like to know how actual budget compares to our planned budget. Are we on track? K. Henderson will ask Claudia to send a report to Hunt tomorrow (September 6), and request that she include such a report in all future accounting statements.

4. **Membership Report** (V. Oberle)

- The upcoming issue of the Prairie Promoter is being done (layed out and mailed) by Advantage Printing. The most recent mailing list was sent to them this week. The newsletter is scheduled to be mailed September 12.
- Renewal letters for individuals with memberships expiring between August and December of this year will be sent out soon, to avoid any conflict with Annual Appeal mailing.

5. **President's Report** (Hunt)

- Gathering Waters is offering a workshop entitled "Financial Management for Land Trusts" on September 27 in Madison. The cost is $40. Claudia will be attending. Hunt can forward information upon request.
- Milwaukee-Area Wild Ones sent an inquiry as to whether TPE would like to have a table at their October 13 "Sustainable Landscapes in Our Yards" conference. The decision was "no," since there has been little interest in TPE in that area (reflected by the lack of a chapter).
- Further discussion of adding "Land Trust" to logo was initiated. R. Henderson suggests "A Land Trust, and much more." K. Henderson feels that this is too flowery and marketing-like. Mueller points out that The Nature Conservancy has successfully marketed its 'brand' without modifying its logo; we should be able to as well. Due to lack of support, Hunt will abandon idea for now.

6. Committee Reports

Endowment and Fundraising (R. Oberle)

The committee has six recommendations for Board consideration and action:

a. A motion that recommends that the Board of Directors immediately start looking for a replacement for the Executive Director.
   - The Board unanimously agrees that we should seek out a new E.D., but not before we secure sufficient funding to attract a suitable candidate. No motion made.

b. A recommendation that the Board adopt The Compass Plan 2007-2010 and The Fund raising plan in conjunction with The Compass Plan 2007-2010 as the guiding documents for the organization's future financial management.
   - R. Henderson requests several modifications to the donor options stated on page 2 under "Background -Operational Fundraising and The Compass Plan:"
     - There need to be three separate endowments, not just two: Operations, Easement Monitoring and Land Management.
     - A separate fund (restricted) needs to be created to provide up-front money for land management grants that only provide reimbursement of expenses after they've been paid by grantee (*e.g.*, Landowner Incentive Program). He suggests a goal of $150,000. Suggested names include "Grants Cash Flow Fund," and "Stewardship Fund."
   - It was agreed that the wording on page 6 under "Program Grants" needs to be softened. *("All grants must include a minimum of 10% for administrative and accounting fees.")* It may not be possible or reasonable to secure this type of overhead money in all situations. Suggested modification: "*Whenever possible, all grants …"*
   - Motion to adopt The Compass Plan 2007-2010 with above changes (Kussmaul). Seconded (K. Henderson). Motion passed.
   - Hunt reminds Board that this document can and most likely will be changed over time. Board approval today merely equates with activating the E/F Committee to begin fundraising, following the Plan's principles.

c. A recommendation that the Board create a zero-base budget concept.
   - Rogala concerned that if Chapter budgets are rolled over annually, Chapters will be compelled to adopt a counter-productive 'use-it-or-lose-it' mentality, spending money at the end of the fiscal year whether they need to or not. Also, this may inhibit long-term fundraising over multiple years.

- Key elements to successful plan, as a result of Board discussion:
    - Chapters must submit annual budget (R. Henderson)
    - Board must prevent misuse of money and damage to Chapters' funding potential (Hunt)
    - Board must track budgets for Chapters (Hunt)
    - Divide each chapter budget into two components: short-term (1 year) needs and long-term (> 1 year) expenses
- Motion to support concepts of zero-based budget, with request to refer to Finance Committee for further evaluation, and development of a firm proposal for the Board (Kussmaul). Seconded (K. Henderson). Motion passed.

d. A recommendation that the Board establish a set of goals for the 2007 annual fund campaign.
    - R. Oberle wants to stress importance of recognizing TPE members who volunteer their time but may not make donations; R. Henderson recommends one line stating this in Annual Appeal letter.
    - Hunt recommends putting 'fundraising thermometer' on website to document progress toward fundraising goal.
    - V. Oberle recommends sending email updates as well to update members on fundraising progress.
    - Board recommends setting a $50,000 fundraising target, with $100/member set as request amount. No formal motion made.

e. A recommendation that the Board establish a process for the chapters to help in identify potential major donors to the organization.

f. A recommendation that the Board direct each subunit chapter to establish a membership and fundraising committee.
    - Board denies codification of these principles, and requests that the E/F Committee continue to serve as umbrella coordinator for all chapter fundraising initiatives. The Committee should offer guidance, help set goals, and provide resources. The Committee should also continue to request major donor names from Chapter leaders.
    - Hunt points out that when we hire a Development Director, they can direct much of this work, particularly contacting major donors.
    - R. Oberle clarifies that the E/F Committee is willing to come up with ideas, but not call or meet with donors.
    - R. Henderson recommends developing a script with talking points for fundraisers to use.
    - It is confirmed that members of E/F Committee are invited to the TPE Retreat in September.

Land Stewardship Committee (R. Henderson)

- TPE's new Hunting Policy, Version B is almost finalized, with a few corrections still necessary:
    - Change date at bottom of document
    - Under "Fees" section, the clause providing for Illinois to charge fees needs to be changed to match the policy for Wisconsin and Illinois. (If fee policy is implemented as requested by Illinois chapter, our insurance company will need to charge us $25 per acre hunted.)
    - Create signature line for TPE Secretary (in this case, Amy Staffen, as acting Secretary).
    - Chapters will be responsible for getting appropriate signage in place for their preserves. If this or other hunting coordination issues pose an issue for this season, chapters have the option of not holding a hunting season this year.
- Motion to approve Hunting Policy with above corrections (R. Oberle). Seconded (Faessler). Motion passed.
- A preproposal to the Wildlife Conservation Society has been submitted. If final proposal is requested, R. Henderson will bring before Board for approval.
- .R. Henderson reminds Board that a policy is now in place requiring Board approval of all grant applications.

7. November 7th Meeting Date

- Date changed to Thursday, November 8th.

8. Annual Appeal

- Tom Brock will help with 'nuts and bolts' of Annual Appeal.
- Target is early October mailing.
- E/F Committee will meet this weekend to work on this task exclusively.
- E/F Committee needs to:
    - Review and finalize Hunts letter
    - Send complete kit and instructions to Chapter presidents. This will include personalized (mail-merged) Hunt letters and envelopes for their respective members, donation cards, return envelopes, and deadlines.
    - Use envelopes with old TPE address

New Business

9. Future Meetings

- November 8th – next regular Board meeting
- September 29th – Board retreat
- January 9th –tentative regular Board meeting

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Recorded by Amy Staffen.