TPE Board of Directors Meeting

March 11, 2007 The Manor Inn, Menomonie, WI

ACTION ITEMS IN BOLD

Attendees

Directors:
Evanne Hunt, Renae Mitchell, Bonnie Maffitt, Kathy Henderson, Rich Henderson, Jack Kussmaul, Jim Rogala, Nick Faessler, Dan Mueller (on speakerphone), Richard Oberle, Victoria Oberle

Visitors: Ted Cochrane, Andrea Mueller, Ruthann Yaeger

The meeting was called to order at 9:20 a.m. on March 11, 2007.

Old Business

1. Approve minutes of the January 17 meeting

The following **changes** were identified:

Second page, $10K donation: name misspelled; should be O'Brien.

Second page, #3, third sentence was unclear to Rich. Victoria sent a clarification; her change was not incorporated into the meeting minutes before distribution, but will be.

Third page, #6, committee has a $13K grant they can apply for, pending board approval, not a pool of money they can access.

Last page, top, second paragraph: the word "which" should be "with".

Rich Henderson made a motion to approve the minutes with the aforementioned changes. Kathy Henderson seconded the motion. The motion passed.

2. Treasurer's Report

Kathy reported there is nothing new since the last meeting; just a few checks came in.

The 2006 audit is underway; includes tax paperwork.

3. Membership Report

Victoria had nothing significant to report since January meeting. There are a couple new members; one is a monarch member thanks to Jack Kussmaul.

Renae reported, that there is a two-month lag between a donation arriving and thank you note going out. If anyone complains, please explain to them that it is recorded in

membership database once a month then goes to Kathy for deposit, then letters are sent out. Victoria, Kathy and Renae are working to cut that wait to one month.

4. President's Report

Nothing to report.

5. Executive Director's Report

Renae thanked everyone for a great conference; especially to the Fundraising and Endowment Committee for the Bump-Up campaign.

Renae recapped the Brocks' land donation and how it is progressing (TPE is trying to purchase the Spring Green property and then transfer title to TNC); we need more match in credits (~$200K) or cash (~$100K).

The Southwest Chapter is working on an acquisition near Fenimore. The land has been managed by TPE for quite some time.

Eric Tarmand-Ramcheck is working on the baseline for the Brock property. He is also working on a database of TPE land holdings and reviewing Wisconsin grants to which we can apply.

Renae brought a resolution re 3 properties to the board for approval authorizing her to accept this TNC real estate on behalf of TPE (see land protection committee report below)

The Outreach and Education Committee is working on the 20th anniversary issue of the Prairie Promoter and case studies. Paul Jacobson has resigned from the board so we need a new board member to lead the committee.

Annual Report – Renae asked whether we should change the format and print in color. Discussion ensued. It was decided to make it B&W for members, Color Print outs for donors and put on the web in color.

Committee Reports

6. Community Outreach and Education. Jim Rogala reported that they are adding more resource information to the website, but otherwise the committee is just getting started. They are evaluating new keywords (to add to the meta tags on the HTML pages) to raise our profile in search engines. **Please send ideas for links and your chapter's meeting and work party dates to him to post at jrogala@usgs.gov**

7. Finance committee. There was quite a bit of discussion surrounding grants. There was general agreement that this fell under the purview of the Finance committee. **Make sure you have a chapter representative on this committee if you want to help shape these policies**. **Contact Scott Fulton, chair at scottfulton@charter.net**

Policy issues coming up include:

- Do grants need approval before they are submitted?

- 10% for admin costs is an issue for some chapters; can it be less?
- Renae stressed that the board needs to know about all grant agreements because the corporation is ultimately responsible for fulfilling the requirements of the grant. Claudia can help everyone with billing and we prefer to do it centrally since we need to keep the records anyway.

The board directed the Finance committee (Scott Fulton) to write a policy and procedure document for grant applications by chapters. Evanne to contact Scott.

8) Fundraising committee is now the **Endowment and Fundraising Committee**. Richard reported that the Bump Up campaign was their first activity. It debuted at the conference, but the activity will continue through chapters by individual committee members.

At last count, 15 members were Bumped Up at the conference; the final total may be different.

The Committee also plans to increase membership and contact life members.

They are also working on the Compass Plan as their vision and strategy to accomplish the committee's mission.

Richard will be sending chapter presidents the Committee's expectations for increasing membership and a list of activities they can try to accomplish it.

Victoria told the board that she heard surprise in the audience when Renae mentioned that only 7% of our income comes from membership dues. This tells us that we need to do a better job of explaining our financial structure to individual members.

Renae expressed concern about needing to coordinate certain fundraising activities by individual chapters. She re-iterated that we must collect sales tax on all goods sold and that our combined income cannot exceed a certain amount before jeopardizing our non-profit status. Rich H. suggested that the F&E committee write a policy governing what activities can be done. Andrea cautioned that excessive policies and procedures could suck the energy and enthusiasm away from chapter's fundraising activities.

Evanne brought up the North American Prairie Conference. It is July 2008 in Winona. To ensure we maximize our participation, Evanne will coordinate activities among the Prairie Smoke chapter, Coulee Region chapter, Fundraising/Endowment committee, and Outreach/Education committee.

9) Land Protection committee.

Jack made a motion to accept title to the following properties from TNC. Richard seconded the motion.

- Black Earth Rettenmund Prairie ($50 per year)
- Schluckebier Sand Prairie ($50K per year)
- Gasser Sand Barrens ($50K per year)

Kathy asked if we would own this property; is any endowment provided? The answer was no, there is no endowment provided.

Rich amended the motion to add asking TNC to give TPE access to their members to request donations, endowments, and manpower to manage these properties.

The motion is passed.

Jack reported that he is working on a standard Management Agreement and Lease form. The bigger issue is deciding what requirements we need for endowments on properties we accept. He will consult with Renae and Rich to come up with a policy. He will have a report for the next meeting.

Bonnie asked if the forms, and any policies and procedures, would be reviewed by all chapters. The answer was that the committee members come from all chapters and are expected to communicate this information back to their chapters. A wider discussion on committee member participation on committees ensued. **A quick fix to the problem of communication was that Renae has put a description and contact info for the committees in the newsletter and the board directed Jim Rogala to post committees and their members on the website. In addition, committee chairs will contact their members, and the chapter presidents, to verify they still want to participate. Committee activities will be reported at each board meeting.**

Rich reported that annually for Stewardship he contacts the chapter presidents and committee members to verify they are the right representatives for their chapter. This is a best practice that could be used by all committees.

10) Land Stewardship committee

Rich re-iterated that all land management plans are to be reviewed by the Land Stewardship committee.

Rich reported that he has a draft hunting policy written. Other polices relating to land management (chainsaw safety, work party, burning) policies are in progress.

Rich also reported that he has standard signage available for lands TPE manages if you need any.

New Business

11) No Mow Signs. Rich showed the TPE sign, but the supply is depleted. Requests for more signs come to Renae and she wants to make more signs. She showed a suggested new format. A rousing discussion ensued regarding wording, placement of the words, the sign material to be used, and the number of signs to make. Incredibly, we reached consensus. **Renae will have 50 signs made initially. They will be available for sale on the website.**

12) Request from St. Croix Valley Chapter. Evanne asked the Corporation for a $5000 re-allocation to pay for management work on a LIP grant. In-kind match will be completed this spring, summer, and fall, but the chapter wants to pay the contractor now.

Richard made a motion to reallocate money to the St. Croix Valley chapter. Jack K. seconded it. The motion was passed.

13) More new Board members needed. Rich mentioned that Rumi and John O'Brien have become very active and should be considered, along with Doug Caves and Mark Runi, an attorney in Mt. Horeb. **Chapters are asked to inform Renae or Evanne of any potential candidates.**

14) Vice-President exploratory committee. Brief discussion.

15) Training sessions for finances, fundraising and other committees. Renae will schedule a training session for chapter treasurers and board members with our accountant Claudia in May. A training session for fundraising may be scheduled in June. **The summer picnic in LaCrosse (July 2007) might be good place for committees to meet face to face.**

16) Merchandise for sale. The Fundraising committee is directed to start a discussion about consolidating all information re sale items and putting them on the website.

18) Future Meetings
Next Banquet/Conference will be in LaCrosse; hosted by the Coulee Region chapter.
The summer picnic will be July 15 at the Holland Sand Prairie near Holmen, WI. This is also hosted by the Coulee Region chapter.

Next Meeting

The next board meeting is May 9, from 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. via teleconference.

Kathy Henderson made a motion to adjoin; Nick Faessler seconded.
The meeting was adjoined at 12:30 p.m.

The executive committee met briefly after.

Recorded by Evanne Hunt.