

The Friends of Presqu'ile Park
Minutes Annual General Meeting

June 2, 2018

Chair Bev Cook called the meeting to order at 10:30 am. Over 50 members were in attendance, so there was a quorum. Bev welcomed guests Mayor Mark Walas, Councilor Mary Tadman, and researcher Jennifer Arnold.

The Agenda was approved on motion by David Crouch, seconded by Don Davis.

Opening Comments

2018 marks 30 years of sharing our Vision and Mission. In 1988 a group of regular Park users were asked to form the first Friends group. The first Board Chair, Dr. John Cole signed the first of many five year agreements with Ontario Parks. We are delighted to welcome two members of that first Board of Directors today – both Liz Chatten and Glenn Spence were recognized.

Our vision for Presqu'ile has never wavered in 30 years – the natural heritage of the Park must be preserved and protected for future generations to enjoy. We truly are where people and nature interact.

Approval of Previous Minutes

The Minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting, held June 3, 2017 were distributed for review. **The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved on motion by Phil McRae, seconded by Wayne Myers.**

Greetings from Brighton – Mayor Mark Walas

Mayor Walas outlined the many accomplishments of the Friends of Presqu'ile Park over 30 years noting the over five million dollars in funds and volunteer labour contributed to the Park during that time. Other highlights noted included the construction of the Marsh Boardwalk and Jobs Trail and the Kids 'n Nature School Program and Summer Camps. Mayor Walas' grandson, Carson McRae spoke about his experiences at the Kids 'n Nature camp, which he described as awesome!

Mayor Walas presented the Friends with a certificate of congratulations on 30 years of service to the community.

2017 Initiatives and Accomplishments

The chair outlined the key initiatives of the Friends during 2017 in the areas of Education & Interpretation, Environment, Infrastructure Enhancements, Fundraising Activities and Governance and Management. The work of the Friends is carried out by about 300 volunteers

who donate over 10,000 hours each year to make sure we can deliver on our mission and mandate.

Education and Interpretation - The School Program is a little known gem. The Friends hire summer students to visit local schools to teach young people about nature and the environment. School classes visit the Park to see nature in action. Spring flooding in 2017 meant the in-school programs were expanded. This is a free service to the community.

The Kids 'n Nature program provides children aged 8 to 11 with outdoor learning and fun. Last year, four camps were held, each with a different theme. Over 80 participants had a blast. A few spots remain for the 2018 camps; it is a great bargain at \$130 per child.

The Nature Centre is a major hub for Park activities 7 days a week. Last year, almost 11,000 visitors came to the centre. The Nature Centre coordinator is funded by the Friends. The Friends also cover 1/3 of the salaries for the staff working in the Natural Heritage Interpretation Program. Last year, staff delivered 173 programs to over 10,000 visitors. In addition, the Lighthouse Interpretive Centre attracted almost 27,000 visitors. Friends' volunteers supplement the interpreter activities.

In 2017, the Friends launched two new Bursary Programs to reward exceptional workers within all departments of the park and to encourage post secondary education. Four students received \$500 bursaries and one student received the \$1,000 Career Bursary. Congratulations to Kristen, Sinead, Mara, Quinley and Aly.

Environmental Initiatives – Friends supported the work of the staff in the removal of an invasive species – Buckthorn and planting native trees in its place. They also helped to transplant some of the nursery stock as that work had been delayed by the flooding. We also provided financial support for the Butterfly Banding and Birdseed programs.

Jennifer Arnold reported on the Common Tern research project in 2017. Because of the high water levels, the predator exclusion system was smaller; nevertheless the adult pairs averaged one young per nest. A video on the Tern project is available on the Friends website. “The Birds of North America” has been updated to include significant information about Common Terns as a result of Jennifer’s team’s research. In addition, two academic papers on the subject were published last year. Jennifer thanked the Friends for their continued financial support.

Infrastructure Enhancements – Friends volunteers helped Park staff to repair and build picnic tables lost and damaged by the floods last spring. They also helped to clean up felled trees and branches. This dedicated group of 20 volunteers was also able to build footbridges to detour wet or sensitive areas on Park trails.

Another group of volunteers act as Trail Monitors. They walk all the Park trails, boardwalks and the loop road. They report any damage or downed trees and offer friendly interaction with Park visitors.

Website – In 2017 we launched our ENewsletter offering quick, newsy articles on our website. In addition, we can now conduct business transactions online. Members can pay their dues, sign up to volunteer, sign up and pay for summer camp and register for Christmas @ Presqu'île. The free Wi-Fi at the Lighthouse Interpretive Centre also got a major upgrade. Special thanks to our IT Coordinator, Donal Gray.

Management and Governance – Oversight is a key role for the Board of Directors. We prepare annual plans and budgets after a priority setting workshop. Regular meetings allow us to monitor our progress on our plans. It also allows us to manage challenges and take advantage of new opportunities that may arise.

Over the past few months, we have also engaged in a significant Risk Management analysis. Under the leadership of Doug Zinnicker, the finance team has examined our banking practices, investment portfolio and strategies, cash receipts, payments and financial monitoring practices. Our financial transactions are capably managed by our treasurer, David Crouch. All transactions are also monitored by another director. Monthly financial position reports are shared with the Board and verified by a second director. All expenses are approved before payment. We have tightened up a few things, but generally our practices are sound and working smoothly.

Financial Statements 2017

The Chair presented the highlights of the 2017 accountant reviewed financial statements. Key revenue and expense items were highlighted along with the overall financial position. The Friends are in a healthy financial position.

The financial statements were accepted following a motion by Wayne Myers, seconded by David Bilton.

A motion was made by John Cockburn, seconded by Steve Sinclair and carried to appoint Welch LLP as the accountants for 2018. The Board was authorized to set appropriate remuneration.

Park Update

Superintendent Rob Cunningham reported on some new initiatives this season. These include three roofed accommodations, new washrooms at Beach One, and ongoing repairs to the flood damage on the Marsh Boardwalk. On the environmental front, the common tern project is continuing on Gull Island, the turtle fencing appears to be holding up well, the beach is in great shape, and invasive species removal continues on a regular basis. It was noted that the 2017 floods killed off many cedar trees in the pannes, but this renews the pannes habitat.

Rob concluded by thanking the Friends for 30 years of contributions. The Friends of Presqu'île have made an extremely important impact on the park's ability to respond and act on environmental concerns. The Friends support over 30% of the NHE program. The Friends and the park have an amazing relationship that has withstood the test of time. The Friends of

Presqu'île are one of the most efficient, professional Friends groups in the province. Rob concluded that he has always appreciated the Friends open hands, when the park needs help!

Election of Board of Directors

Two directors have completed their maximum six year terms. Both John Cockburn and Janine McClintock have been great ambassadors for the Friends. Although they are leaving the Board, both have agreed to continue to serve the Friends: Janine will carry on with our Education programs and John will head up the Trail Monitors. They were warmly thanked by all in attendance.

Five directors will continue their terms. They are: Bev Cook, David Crouch, Phil McRae, Tim Lawley and Doug Zinnicker. Two directors – Peter Ramsden and Kari Anne Scaletta were unable to complete their terms.

In addition to the five incumbents, two new candidates are being recommended to the membership by the Board. Donal Gray and Larry Paradis were introduced to the membership through a brief bio presentation.

The election of the new Board of Directors was conducted by Don Boucher and approved by the members. The 2018-19 Board of Directors will be: Bev Cook, David Crouch, Donal Gray, Tim Lawley, Phil McRae, Larry Paradis and Doug Zinnicker. The Board will continue to look for a couple more directors to fill the slate.

Life Membership Awards

The chair reported that Life Memberships are awarded to individuals who have given significant, sustained high-quality service to the Friends over a period of many years. They are rewarded for their dedication to the values of the Friends of Presqu'île.

This year, two couples were awarded Life Memberships. They are **John and Eileen Cockburn** and **Nancy and Brian Sutton**. Both couples began their involvement with the Park as campers and then as Park Hosts. Eileen Cockburn is also a key member of the organizing committee for Christmas @ Presqu'île. John developed our Trail Monitor program and spearheaded the team that has revitalized trails throughout the park. John served as Director of Operations for six years.

Brian Sutton has been a volunteer on the trail revitalization team. He looks after the parking team for Christmas @ Presqu'île and manages the summer fundraising raffle. Both Brian and Nancy are key members of the weekly Barbecue team. Nancy is our Volunteer Coordinator, making sure we have enough help to run our various events. She places almost 100 volunteers at Christmas @ Presqu'île alone. She also makes sure we have volunteers at community and park events and can usually be found volunteering there herself.

The Cockburns and Suttons were presented with a Life member certificate. They will enjoy free membership in the Friends of Presqu'ile.

Previous Life Member Recognition

In honour of our 30th Anniversary, the Friends want to recognize those who came before us and made this all possible. Each previous Life member received a certificate acknowledging their importance to the Friends. Several of the prior Life Members were in attendance and received their certificates in person. They included: Don & Joyce Boucher, Isabelle Brose, Liz Chatten, Don Davis, Fred & Lois Helleiner, Janette Johnston, Craig & Ruth Kerr, Ernie & Carolyn Payette, Stephen & Nancy Sinclair, Glenn & Gerry Spence, Ron Waddling and Audrey Wilson. Plaques will be mailed to those who could not attend.

John Cole Award – Volunteer of the Year

The John Cole Award is presented annually to the Volunteer of the Year. It is named in honour of the first Board Chair of the Friends. The selection of the Volunteer of the Year is a difficult task for the Board of Directors as there are so many deserving candidates who have been a shining example of the values of our organization over a period of many years. This year's recipient certainly meets these criteria in spades.

Joyce Boucher is the force behind the Friends of Presqu'ile Gift Shop located in the Lighthouse Interpretive Centre. The gift shop is a major fund raiser for the Friends. Of equal importance is Joyce's role as the face of the Friends to many visitors to Presqu'ile Provincial Park. They know they can receive reliable advice about The Friends, The Park and the town of Brighton. They can buy a membership, make a donation or purchase a raffle ticket at the gift shop.

Joyce and her husband Don take care of purchasing the entire inventory, organizing the shop, training staff and volunteer helpers. Their involvement also includes picking up and sorting our mail and handling the phone answering service. This adds up to over 900 hours each year – a remarkable contribution!

Brighton Civic Award Winner – Outstanding Youth

Members were advised that a young Friends volunteer, **Ryan Pearce**, had been awarded the Outstanding Youth Award at the recent Brighton Civic Awards ceremony. Ryan can be found lending a helping hand at the summer barbecues, the Lighthouse Interpretive Centre, on the trails and at Christmas @ Presqu'ile. His cheerful smile and can-do attitude make him a pleasure to work with.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 am. It was followed by a 30th Anniversary Tree Planting Ceremony and a Luncheon.