

**The Friends of Presqu'ile Park
35th Annual General Meeting
June 3, 2023
Park Amphitheatre**

Draft Minutes

Board Chair Phil McRae called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and started the meeting with a "Recognition of the Traditional Keepers of the Land" Parliamentary Bev Cook declared the required quorum of 15 members was met. 39 members were in attendance.

Approval of the Agenda

Phil advised that the agenda had been posted on the Friends website and quickly reviewed it. No amendments were requested. Moved by Wayne Meyers and seconded by Fred Helleiner that the agenda be approved as presented. Carried.

Opening Comments

The Chair welcomed the attendees, noting that it was a wonderful day. After the pandemic restrictions of 2020 and 2021, 2022 proved to be a very successful year for the Friends, both in accomplishments and in volunteer opportunities. We hope 2023 will be even better.

This is the Friends 35th anniversary - keep the evening of July 29 free - we are planning a Big Band Evening of entertainment with a dance and complementary cupcakes.

We started the year with a strong full board, but regrettably lost three directors during the course of the year. We are looking to fill these vacancies in the future with interested Friends members who have specific skill sets. If you are interested in serving on the board, please talk to one of our board members for more information.

In the audience today we have some interesting people, who you may want to chat with, Don Davis the Monarch butterfly expert, Cindy Conlin, a noted nature photographer, and Fred Helleiner, a noted bird watcher.

The chair thanked Nancy Sutton, who is retiring after many years of service as volunteer coordinator, and thanked Michelle Buchkowsky, who has volunteered to replace her. He thanked Janine McClintock and Bev Cook for the invaluable support they have given the board this year and to him personally, and to Kristen Osborne for helping him develop the Power Point presentation. Cindy Conlin was thanked for standing in as the meeting photographer, and the Chair also thanked board members Larry Paradis, and Terry Buchkowsky, plus volunteers Ted Cook, Bev Cook, Janine McClintock, and Michelle Buchkowsky for taking on the background tasks that make this AGM a success.

Minutes of previous meeting - June 11, 2022

The Chair asked if there were any amendments to the draft minutes that had been posted on the Friends web site. There being no amendments requested, it was moved by Larry Paradis and seconded by Don Davis that the draft 2022 Minutes be approved. Carried.

Greetings from Brighton Mayor Brian Ostrander

Mayor Ostrander advised that he was impressed with the Friends' volunteerism and how they have managed through the covid hangover. Brighton has an army of volunteers who are willing to come out. He commented that the Friends organization is amazing. He thanked Rob Cunningham for keeping the Park open. The Mayor noted that Deputy Mayor Ron Anderson was present at the meeting as well as former Councilor Dave Cutler.

2022 Accomplishments & 2023 Plans

Communications

The Communications team had a minimum of three posts per week on Facebook, reaching over 39,000 people. These posts were cross promoted to other social media as appropriate. An E-Newsletter was produced in Spring and Fall. Radio was used for interviews, advertising and promoting special events. Bev Cook gave an amazing interview and spoke for 15 minutes about the Friends of Presqu'ile. The Park tabloid has four pages devoted to the Friends of Presqu'ile. Waterfowl Weekend, Warblers and Whimbrels, the Park's 100th Anniversary, Monarchs and Migrants were all promoted. Bev made presentations to both Rotary and PROBUS in 2022. An article about the 100th Anniversary of the Park was published in 2022 in the Brighton Beacon and in 2023 an article was published describing the Presqu'ile Forest, both written by Bev Cook.

Work continues on the enhancement of the website. We are considering hiring professional assistance to run the site. There were over 42,000 visits to the website last year, the most popular being the Walking Trails brochure and the Birding brochure. The virtual field trips and the Newsroom had most views. The Membership Application - Volunteer Section - A redesign and data sorting system has been developed to better capture the skills and interests of our members. Promotional posters were prepared and distributed to Park display boards, promoting BBQ, Gift Shop, Bursary and Memorial Tree Planting programs. Internet was provided at the LIC and this and other activities will continue in 2023.

Education

Student Bursaries - The \$3,000 J Beverlie Cook Career Bursary was won by Clarissa Duthie, currently enrolled in the Environmental Science program at Guelph University. The \$1,000 Staff Bursary was won by Emma Sabine-Craig, currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Science program at Carlton University. The Bursary program continues unchanged in 2023.

Community Outreach - We promoted the use of Kids & Nature videos to teachers and libraries.

Discovery Staffing - We supported 7-week top-ups for the Nature Centre and LIC Interpreters. We will support 6-week top-ups in 2023. No Nature Centre coordinator was hired last year or this year, but some of the budgeted funding was and will be used to hire a discovery staff person to assist in setting up the Nature Centre.

Park 100th Anniversary - we supported this park initiative by paying for the Big Band and complimentary cupcakes.

Environment

Common Tern Research - We have financially supported this study for 10 years and will continue in 2023. A record of over 265 chicks fledged in 2022. Due to continued travel restrictions, Stephen Oswald was only able to make a few short visits to the park in 2022. Don Tyerman and his staff undertook to set up, maintain and monitor the grid system and related equipment. Each year Jennifer Arnold and Stephen Oswald have provided us with a summary of their research, which we have posted on our website, and recognized the Friends' support in their academic papers.

Habitat Regeneration - We support the park nursery both financially and with volunteers when required. Our nursery is unique to Ontario Parks. Park staff collect seeds from park trees in the Fall and nurture them to saplings in the park nursery and then replant them in the park. This will be an important source of saplings to replace the dying ash trees. We will continue to support this activity in 2023.

Tree Planting - This reforestation activity is done in late October and early November by park staff hired by the Friends, and Friends volunteers. Over 600 trees were planted in 2022. We will continue to support this activity in 2023.

Buckthorn Removal - In the past the Buckthorn trees were cut and dragged away, and the stumps sprayed with Round Up. The park is experimenting with a new technique. A section of bark is removed from the tree trunk, the bare area of trunk is sprayed with Round Up in the Fall, Round up is drawn into the roots and the tree dies. Support for this program will continue in 2023.

Bird Seed Supply - A cheque and seed supply were donated by The Birdhouse Nature Store. The Birdhouse was given a thank you letter and certificate of recognition. We will

provide money for bird seeds in 2023. This feeder is part of a research project tracking winter birds.

Operations

Viewing Platform repaired - located behind the Lighthouse Interpretive Centre, this platform was damaged by a huge tree that blew over in an early Spring storm. This platform is very popular with birdwatchers.

Picnic Table Construction - Many tables disappear or get damaged. New picnic tables were constructed in early 2022. We will continue this activity in 2023.

Trail Maintenance - Wood chips were dumped on low areas and walkways were repaired on Newcastle, Pioneer and Jobe's Trails. We will continue this activity in 2023 as required.

Boardwalk - We replaced the large sign in the parking lot, installed new signs at information stations, and repaired damage in early 2023 due to a major storm.

Trail Monitors - Friends volunteers are scheduled to walk the trails, clean up small problems as required and notify the park of any major problems. This activity will continue in 2023. A special thank you to coordinator John Cockburn, who is retiring after coordinating this group for many years.

Miscellaneous projects as the need arose - Replaced the camp permit receptacle at the Camp Office. We will continue this activity in 2023 as the need arises.

Nature Centre - There will be 2023 volunteer opportunities for repair work in the "off" season.

Clarke-Denson Cottage - There will be 2023 volunteer opportunities for repair work in the "off" season.

Fundraising

Memorial Tree Planting - This has been a very successful program. 37 trees were planted in April and October 2022 and 22 trees were planted in April 2023 on the grass island between the residential road and the entrance to the campgrounds. We will continue this activity in October 2023.

BBQ - Bob Engley and his team of enthusiastic volunteers offer hot dogs, hamburgers, sausages, peameal bacon sandwiches, drinks and cookies on Saturdays in July and August and at special events. The BBQ has proved to be very popular with campers. This activity will continue in 2023. Special thanks to Napoleon and Rene's Total Home Comfort Ltd in Brighton for donating a large new BBQ. Thank you letters and a tax receipt have been issued.

Raffle - We had no raffle in 2022, however we are launching an exciting raffle in 2023 "Paddle Around the Waters of Presqu'ile". Prizes include a canoe, paddle board and an inflatable kayak. Special thanks to Canadian Tire in Trenton for donating the inflatable kayak and offering us a discount on the purchase of the canoe and paddle board. Thanks are also in order to the Park for the donation of three park passes to accompany the prizes. To make this raffle a success, we need volunteers to sell tickets at the BBQs and LIC. Please see Wayne Meyers if you can help. Wayne is selling raffle tickets starting today at the AGM.

Lighthouse Gift Shop - Following our 2022 AGM, volunteers Michelle, Darlene, Sandy, Teresa, and Janet expressed an interest in opening the Gift Shop. They successfully opened on July 30, and on weekends until Labour Day, selling merchandise left over from 2020. Over 2,500 customers visited the Gift Shop. This year they are extending the days they will be open in June through August and will have a new array of product offerings, including works by local artisans, fudge, jam and jellies, and chilled bottled water, along with clothing and toys and craft items. Special thanks to Joyce and Don Boucher who can finally retire after so many years of dedicated service.

Donations - Donations to our Environmental Fund and our General Fund are always appreciated.

2022 Financial Statements

The Chair recognized Linda Alkenbrack's contribution to the board as Treasurer and for developing the draft Financial Statement that was posted on our website. A review of our draft Financial Statement has been conducted by Accountants Welch LLP and the reviewed statement has been accepted by the Board. Page #4 tells the story. Our revenue of \$36,236 was greater than our expenses of \$34,679 by \$1,557. The market value of our investments was down by \$13,365. However, we are still in a strong financial position with net assets of \$196,672. Note # 6 better describes the amount generated from the 25th Anniversary Fund that must be spent on environmental initiatives in 2022 - \$8,256. We actually spent \$9,407. A question was asked about the fundraiser Christmas at Presqu'ile - the Nature Centre will not be available, but there may be other ways to hold the event in the future, but Friends have definitely not lost sight of it. It was moved by Bev Cook and seconded by Stephen Sinclair that the financial report be accepted. Carried.

Appointment of Accountants - Welch LLP

It was moved by Phil McRae and seconded by Carol Anderson that we engage Accountants Welsh LLP for review of the Friends 2023 Financial Statement. Carried.

Management and Governance

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

Risk Management - we continually monitor our banking practices, investment portfolio and strategies, cash receipts, payments and financial monitoring practices. We have tightened up a few things, but generally our practices are sound and working smoothly.

Financial Transactions are capably managed by our Treasurer Linda Alkenbrack. All transactions are also monitored by our Vice Chair Terry Buchkowsky and the Chair. We have an annual financial plan and individual program budgets. Monthly financial reports are shared and reviewed by the Board. All expenses are approved before payment.

Park Update

Park Superintendent Rob Cunningham thanked all the volunteers and all Friends whose contributions make Presqu'île special. Many parks have groups, but not a lot are lucky enough to have the kind of group that we do.

During the pandemic things were exceedingly challenging and that seems to be echoing in 2023. The park was always a fun place to work, but there are now challenges in recruitment and staff quit on a daily basis. Finding leaders is also a challenge. This affects the whole operation and how the park is run - 90% of the employees are around 18 years of age.

Rob is saddened to see the number of ash trees that are dying - this is happening at Ferris as well and there is nothing that can be done about it. The next five years will see lots of trees cut down and the park will not look the same. Next spring some of the dead trees will have to come down.

The storm at Christmas hit High Bluff particularly hard. The cleanup was challenging, especially finding people to help. Staff did an amazing job keeping things going. Don Tyerman and his team will start replacing trees in the campgrounds.

On a positive note, the roofed accommodation are proving to be very popular - there are currently eight, plus the Clarke Denson Cottage.

Visitation is sliding down which, from the park's perspective, is okay. The visitation for 21/22 blew records - the park needs a breather. The amount of garbage and visitors was out of control. We hope to get back to the 2019 numbers this year.

There are now new people who love the park. People have found Brighton and Presqu'île. Park staff meet so many people at the gate who say it is awesome and they will be back.

A cupola is to be installed on top of the lighthouse - the building has challenges, and we need to be sure it is safe. An environmental assessment is being done on the building. A public presentation will be made, and people will have the chance to make comments.

The day use system has successfully managed the number of people entering the park. Now the park can be used by people coming from far away as they can be sure to obtain a spot by pre-booking. It also lets the park know how many people to expect.

Rob thanked Friends for their support during last year's 100th anniversary.

Lake water levels are stabilizing. The day use area cannot handle too many floods, the road is getting closer to the lake and the causeway is disintegrating. It was suggested a message be sent to the government to ask that Plan 2014 be monitored a little more carefully. Cottage owners should also ask questions and find out what the government is doing.

Mayor Brian Ostrander was asked what council is doing - he said that the International Joint Commission (IJC) plan 2014 was never put on hiatus. In 2017 we were flooded out. This year the IJC opened the dam a little bit. The reality is that we have to live with it. The Province is doing nothing. We must all be as loud as we can.

Board of Directors

The chair introduced parliamentarian Bev Cook

Incumbents

Parliamentarian Bev Cook introduced board incumbents Linda Alkenbrack, Terry Buchkowsky, and Larry Paradis.

Nominees

Parliamentarian Bev Cook advised that nominees, Bjorn Jakobsen, Phil McRae, and Wayne Meyers, had agreed to stand again, and Michelle Buchkowsky who was an observer had agreed to stand. Bev called for nominations from the floor - there were none.

Election - Moved by Sandy Meyers, seconded by Brian Sutton, all four nominees were elected.

Recognition of original board

Following the election of the Friends 35th Board of Directors, Chair Phil McRae felt it an appropriate time to name and recognize the original board members:

John Cole
Elizabeth Chatten
Margaret Jean Bain
Glenn Spence
Jane Irvine (nee Law)
Nick Quickert

We thank them for establishing this wonderful organization that has given so much to the park in the areas of Education, the Environment and Infrastructure. All but John Cole are still living. Glenn Spence and Liz Chatten are still local residents. Margaret Bain is in Cobourg and Nick Quickert is in Trenton - they are still avid bird watchers. Glenn Spence was present at the AGM and was introduced. Glenn is still an active member of the BBQ volunteers.

Life Membership

Chair Phil McRae presented Bev Cook with a Life Membership in Friends. Bev has been an active volunteer for several years, served on the board for 6 years as Corporate Secretary and then Chair. She continues her strong support for Friends through her Communications activity and valuable advice and input at board meetings.

Questions - there were no questions.

Final Comments

Chair Phil McRae offered thanks to everyone for attending and taking an active role in this 35th Friends AGM. He hoped the AGM had been both meaningful and informative, and that everyone will continue to support the Friends as members and volunteers.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45am on a motion made by Ted Cook. A boxed lunch was then served.

Footnote: It was noted that several members who advised that they would attend the AGM, did not attend. We were disappointed and left with several box lunches that were committed for, had to be ordered in advance and paid for. The same situation occurred in 2022. A lot of preparation goes into the AGM. If you commit to attend, please attend.

