

Soil and Water Conservation Society—Empire State Chapter

Council Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2018

2:00 – 4:00 PM

The Natural Resource Center
7413 County House Road
Auburn, NY 13021

1) Welcome

- a. Peter Wright called the meeting to order at 2:05pm.
- b. Ray Mueller, Scott Fonte, Lisa Miller, and Peter Wright were present.
- c. Heath Eisele, Jess Sargis, Nicole Kubiczki, Don Kuhn, Scott Fitscher, and Brad Schwab joined via teleconference.

2) Review of Minutes from the January 18, 2018 meeting

- a. The meeting minutes were prepared by Brad Schwab.
- b. It was noted that the renewal of the Lisa Miller MOU was not clearly described in the minutes and that they should be enhanced.
- c. Ray moved to accept the updated minutes and all Council members were in favor.

3) Review of the Treasurer's report & budget discussion

- a. Ray Mueller presented the Treasurer's Report to the Council and shared the account balances in detail.
- b. Lisa described the QuickBooks process she is using to keep the Empire State Pedologists Society funds isolated to be used for the Mini-grant program. She also explained that what is currently listed as "Interest Income" in QuickBooks will be called "Investment Income" going forward.
- c. The budgeting process was discussed. Peter suggested that we use "average" investment returns in our budget so that our activities do not have to mirror the health of the stock market.
- d. **ACTION ITEM:** Ray and Peter will revise the budget to be presented at the next Council meeting.
- e. Scott Fonte moved to accept the Treasurer's Report as submitted. All Council members were in favor.

4) Annual Meeting

- a. The Annual Meeting from the previous month was discussed. All agreed that the meeting was informative and seemed to be valued by all who attended. Peter started a discussion about meeting attendance and Ray added some thoughts about extended mailing lists.

5) Mini-grant Program

- a. A general discussion about the Mini-grant program identified the following questions:

- i. How can the Chapter advertise the program's availability?
- ii. Can the program fund regional meetings?
- iii. Can the Council match ongoing projects that we are aware of to the funds?
- iv. Should the Envirothon and Conservation Skills Workshop be required to request funding through the Mini-grant program?
- b. **ACTION ITEM:** Scott Fitscher will write (or find) a paragraph describing the program that we can use to promote it. He will also send the application form to the Envirothon organizers who requested funding.

6) 2018 Goals

- a. The website needs to be updated. **ACTION ITEM:** Peter will contact Carol Barry to discuss the website.
- b. The transition of Council members needs to be a focus and the Annual Meeting planning should start soon. **ACTION ITEM:** Peter will contact Scott Fickbohm to begin this process.
- c. There seems to be an issue with our emails being blocked by NRCS junk mail systems. **ACTION ITEM:** Ray will work with Heath to try to learn more.
- d. Nicole agreed to take control of the Chapter's social media accounts and to represent the Chapter at the upcoming Water Quality Symposium. Scott Fonte offered to share his display area at the event with Nicole. **ACTION ITEM:** Ray will get new membership applications from Ankeny for Nicole to distribute.
- e. The Scholarship program was discussed.
 - i. Ray proposed that the program be reinstated and that the Council should not expect short-term impacts.
 - ii. Brad suggested that the money be used instead to bolster membership. He suspects that other Chapters include membership with their Annual Meeting fee and subsidize the difference in cost between the meeting fee and the membership. Our Chapter could do this with the money that would have otherwise been used for the scholarships.
 - iii. Ray proposed developing an Environmental Excellence award.
- f. Regional & National Meetings were discussed.
 - i. The Council had a preliminary discussion of topics for the regional meetings to be held this year. Solar farms and Lake Ontario water levels were proposed.
 - ii. The Council decided that it was a worthwhile cause to fund National Meeting attendance again this year.

7) Adjourn

- a. At 3:50pm the meeting was adjourned. The next scheduled meeting is April 19, 2018 at 1pm.

Minutes taken by Brad Schwab, Secretary