

NORTHEASTERN CAVE CONSERVANCY, INC.

Board Meeting Minutes

Submitted by Christa Hay

03/20/05 Cave House, Howes Cave, NY 11:00 am

Meeting called to order at 11:02 am

1. Introduction and greetings – President Bob Addis
2. Attendance:
Officers: B. Addis, B. Folsom, J. Levinson, C. Hay
Trustees: J. Allison, J. Armstrong, J. DeGross (11:12), V. Kappler, A. Lehmann, P. Murphy, J. Siemion, M. Warner (11:23), P. Youngbaer
3. President's Report – Bob Addis- Attachment A (all attachments are at end of minutes)
 - Peter Youngbaer appointed to head ad hoc committee on Officers & Directors Liability Insurance.
4. Vice President's Report –Bill Folsom - Attachment B
5. Treasurer's Report – Joe Levinson – Attachment C
6. Secretary's Report – Christa Hay
 - Status-quo
7. Acquisitions Committee Report –Chuck Porter
 - Since the last Board meeting we have taken further steps towards the acquisition of Joober Hole, Tunnel and Pompeys caves but have no specific progress to report at this time. The situation at Schroeders Pants remains as before.
8. Conservation Committee Report - Joe Armstrong – Attachment D
 - No new news, the clean-up has begun at Baugh Cave. The newest NE Caver has an article in it about the cave.
9. Publications/Publicity Committee Report - Christa Hay
 - NCC will be at Howe Caverns on April 30, 11-4 for Earth Day.
 - Earth Day at Troy Waterfront – May 1, noon till 6pm – need to reserve booth space.
 - Brochure has been updated.
10. Fundraising Committee Report - Alan Traino
 - Nothing to report – waiting for next purchase.
11. Nomination Committee Report – Mike Martuscello
 - At this time, the Nominating Committee requests that anyone interested in running for the Board this year please contact the Committee no later than Monday, April 11th, 2005.
12. Office Committee Report – Emily Davis / Mike Warner
 - Plans: We continue to deposit and send reports every two weeks or more often if the mail is heavy. We will have a gap in office reports in Feb. but this is usually a slow time. We plan to continue this as in the past.
 - Progress: We have sent out dues due notices through those due on 4/20/05.
 - Problems: The additional work of membership secretary is getting a bit grinding. The new data base and/or a membership secretary would be very helpful.

13. Knox Cave Preserve Report – Emily Davis
 - Plans: Jay Siemion has volunteered to work with me on Knox Cave starting the end of his school year in May. He wants to build a kiosk and help with other on site chores. I am very pleased. I know we can work together well and I trust Jay to take care of the cave when I am out of town. Having Jay aboard with smooth out any bumps in summer use. I plan to have him check in and coordinate with the Cox's when I am out of town.
 - Progress: See above
 - Problems: None at this time.
14. Onesquethaw Cave Preserve Report – Thom Engel
 - No report
15. Sellecks Karst Preserve Report - Jon Allison
 - Nothing to report – quiet time of year.
16. Clarksville Preserve Report – Mike Chu, Thom Engel, Chuck Porter – Attachment E
17. Ella Armstrong Preserve Report – Joe Armstrong
 - Status-quo – quite time of year
18. Website Subcommittee Report – Norm Berg
 - The website has had no major changes. The development of a membership database continues, with a goal of it being ready to use by the next NCC board meeting.
19. Land Trust Liaison Committee Report – Jon Allison
 - Nothing to report at this time.
20. NCKMS 2005 Report - Mike Warner
 - Brief meeting following NCC meeting.
21. Legal Committee Report – Dan Werner
 - No report
22. Special and Group Use Coordinators – Aaron and Amy Cox
 - No report
23. Financial and Investments Committee – Paul Murphy
 - Due to the limited funds available for investment and our current investment contract, it is suggested that the control of investments remain with the Treasurer. We already have an act that gives the Treasurer some authority to do this.

ACT **10-18** The Treasurer is authorized to invest part of the Northeastern Cave conservancy's checking account balance in liquid assets such as, but not limited to savings or certificates of deposit in order to receive interest over the short term.

24. Addis moved to open the Committee of the Whole. The Vice President will preside.
 2nd by Levinson
Passed unanimously
 - Davis – Clarksville managers are struggling with the stewardship program – we need to move forward on this as summer is just around the corner.
 - Allison – trail markers are in, will deliver to the preserves, enough to sell to people.
 - Armstrong – Tunnel Cave – talking with owner, he has liability concerns, survey will be happening this April.
 - Addis – Mitchells Cave – Royland Vinyard is speaking with owner. NSS still does not have the karst model –is this already paid for? Joe L. to research.

- Folsom – Surprise Cave – still have not heard anything.
- Simmons – Indian Oven Cave – status quo.
- Youngbaer- Aeolis Bat Cave – Thom Engel made contact, Management plane done by Fall 2005.
- Simmons – Spring NRO – May 20-23 downstate.
- Addis – received phone call on bat counts in MA – will contact Al Hicks

25. Folsom moved to close the Committee of the Whole.

2nd by Allison

Passed unanimously

26. Hay moved to accept the minutes of the December 5, 2004 meeting.

2nd by Kappler

Passed unanimously

27. Levinson moved to accept the Cave and Karst Acquisition Policy.

2nd by Siemion

Call the question (to limit debate)

2nd by Levinson

For – Hay, Kappler, Warner, Murphy, Levinson, DeGroff, Lehmann, Armstrong

Opposed – Rest

For – Rest, Opposed – Allison, Siemion, Folsom

Passed

28. Levinson moved that the Membership Committee is established and defined as follows: The membership committee's purpose is to recruit new members (especially at various events) and retain existing members. The membership committee will work with the office committee in greeting new members (possibly with a welcome letter), and assist with sending out renewal notices.

2nd by Youngbaer

Passed (Hay absent)

29. Levinson moved that Sean Ryan be appointed Chairman of the Membership Committee.

2nd by Murphy

Passed unanimously

(There were two candidates for position – Ken Nichols and Sean Ryan- board voted Nichols – Warner, Youngbaer, Allison, Murphy, DeGroff, Lehmann
Ryan – Kappler, Hay, Siemion, Armstrong, Folsom, Levinson, Addis)

30. Kappler moved Norm Berg is nominated to represent the NCC at the Cave Conservancy Roundtable and the Cave Conservancy coordinators meetings at the 2005 NSS Convention in Huntsville, AL. The nominee will provide a report to the NCC Board at its fall meeting.

2nd by Hay

Passed unanimously

31. Levinson moved to create a restricted fund for the purpose of improvements, and maintenance on the Clarksville Cave property.

2nd by Armstrong

Postpone to next board meeting

2nd by Levinson

Passed – rest, Opposed – Allison

Passed

32. Addis moved that the Officers will conduct an Executive Committee meeting on Sunday May 1, 2005 at 12:00 noon at Earth Day in Troy, NY.

2nd by Levinson

Passed unanimously

33. Addis moved that the next NCC Board meeting will be held on June 12, 2005 at 11:00am at Fox Creek Nature Center in Gallupville, NY. If Nature Center is not available then meeting will be held at Schoharie Cabin.

2nd by Levinson

Passed unanimously

34. Addis moved to thank Joe Armstrong and the Cave House Museum for hosting the meeting.

2nd by Levinson

Passed unanimously

35. Addis moved to adjourn.

2nd by Armstrong

Passed unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Attachment A
President's Report

HELP WANTED: I would like to appoint an ad hoc committee to investigate the issue of liability insurance that covers the actions of the Officers & Trustees, and I need a volunteer to head up the research. Today more and more corporations, including nonprofits like ourselves, have concerns that their organization and their leaders personally could be sued over perceived faulty actions. Critics say this atmosphere could cause potential leaders not to volunteer for fear of lawsuit.

So far, the Board has received mixed and often conflicting solutions. One camp says that individuals can get a \$1-2 million umbrella policy attached to their homeowner's or renter's insurance. Annual premiums have been quoted from \$60 to \$700. When asked, insurance agents might say yes, we will represent you should you be personally sued over your NCC business, while others say no, you are not covered. A second camp says that the Officers & Trustees liability insurance is a readily obtainable separate policy with annual premiums of \$1-2,000. As a freestanding policy, sometimes it's possible to join an association of corporations for a discount premium.

So there's where the NCC needs help. Someone or committee needs to research this with other nonprofit corporations and interview insurance companies and bring the Board a report. Neither the NCC nor individual volunteers want additional reoccurring expenses, but the liability question does not go away.

The NCC thanks you in advance for your assistance.

Bob Addis

Attachment B
Vice President's Report

3/20/05

Pompey's Cave update

Chuck Porter, Vince Kappler and Alan Traino walked the corners of the property on 12/14/04. Per Alan's email report:

Things went very well yesterday; Chuck, Vince and myself met at the cave around noon and GPS'd the area of the cave. The lay of the land is wider than we need, as we only want the streambed and all of the entrances from the insurgence down stream. We then went over to meet the owner Mr. Neff. I gave the point to Chuck to do the talking for us. He spoke about the NCC, and the conservation of the cave for the future. He described the area we were interested in to Mr. Neff. He was very jovial towards us. Chuck then made the offer of \$12,000.00. The owner said he would have to talk to his wife and his brother? He also said he would have to see about the deeding of the land. He said his brother has deeded all of his land across the street, but he has never done it to his land. As they have already sold 1 piece of there property he doesn't know about the town laws on division. He said he would have to look in to this. Vince told him that we could help him on these issues, Town meeting, Zoning laws etc etc.

So we left him with a good feeling about it. We thanked him for his time and they will be in contact with us. They will get back to Bill Folsom when they make their decision. I would say that we won't hear from them until some time after the new year. All in all it was a very good meeting.

On 2/18, I emailed the Neffs looking for an update prior to this meeting. I am not surprised to not have heard back from them as they are not email-focused. Perhaps it is time to give them a call also.

New website design

As stated in my previous report, increasing the professionalism of the NCC's image should be a priority going forward. That said, I solicited Seth Perlman with the task who has submitted a crisp new design that addresses how best to display information on our site to its various audiences. Seth comments:

Along with a look and feel overhaul the NCC site really needs an information architecture overhaul. There's no clear idea of what the navigation priorities are (for example, is it more important that people quickly get to information about joining the NCC or is it more important that people quickly get to the August 2004 Executive Committee minutes? Right now, the homepage really doesn't make a distinction.).

Upon emailing the new design to the Board, Bob sent the following comments regarding layout:

A first time visitor should get to the Preserves, access policies, group use policy & contacts' minor's waiver. Stick the Mission Statement up near the top. Calendar of Events. Archive the newsletters. Then down in importance would be Board Manual, followed by past business archives (minutes of meetings, etc).

Attachment C
Treasurers Report
For
The Northeastern Cave Conservancy, Inc.
20-Mar-05
Attachment C

As of Mar-05 we had \$ 21,314.31 in our bank accounts. In addition, at the last accounting, we had assets of \$15,432 being held by the National Speleological Foundation. I have filed with the towns of Knox and New Scotland to get Ella Armstrong and Clarksville removed from the tax rolls. In addition, I filed our yearly paperwork with Knox to keep the Knox property off the tax rolls. In the next few months, I will be preparing our annual tax return to the IRS, and filing our annual paperwork with Vermont.

Respectively submitted,

Joe E. Levinson

Attachment D
Joe Armstrong

Baugh Cave Cleanup

With the help of other Rockeater Crew cleaned-up the sink hole at Wolfert's removing a '50's vintage Ford station wagon, and enough junk to fill 4 CSP dump trucks. Cleaned-up and gone!! The clean-up has begun, we've already moved the bulk of the trash present in the lower section of the cave and staged it in a done for removal (during a larger clean-up).

I've now talked to the V.P of CSP and have his "ok" to get access to the heavy equipment (Virsahandler, crane, etc.) in which to remove the "top of the junk heap" from the sink hole. After the junk is removed, the trash staged in the lower sections of the cave can then be removed. The next thing, what to then do with all of the trash? I've thought of a company (who is around that area a lot) Fred's Sanitation. They are local, have large "roll off" type dumpsters. When talking to V.P, he said "when we remove the load on the top, we'd just drop it into a sump truck, yeah, that has its appeal, but where does it go from there? During the clean-up at Wolfert's, I made a point to leave the 3 piles next to the road (creating a scene needing to be taken care of). The county later moved the piles; 1- trash (slowly put into the dumpster on the quarry property, so they weren't charged more than normal) 2- scrap steel pile (no problem or cost) and 3 - pile of tires, they put into their pile of tires (again, no problem or costs).

My hope--To encourage the owner of Fred's Sanitation to help, either no cost, or lower cost, (if he doesn't play ball with us -- we'll--I'll-- try some one else!).

The two things I'll offer are the thanks of the community that he lives in. I also expect to have at least one paper (likely two- The Schenectady paper, and the local paper here in Cobleskill) article besides the local caver publication, in which to thank the people and companies that help out.

The cave is a great vertical playground, truly worthy of our efforts. If there are costs, like I told the VP of CSP, for the equipment. I'll try to find a way to cover them.

Wolfert's looks so much better since our efforts there. Cost...only time.

Attachment E
Clarksville Report 3/05

Problems: (No significant problems so far.)

-Snowmobiles have been using the trails over the winter.

-A large quantity of Times Union inserts were burned IN the cave sometime in January/February, and was discovered by an authorized cave for pay group. They helped clean up the mess, with the unburnt remnants filling up a trash bag.

Progress:

-The final version of the Clarksville handout has been completed. The primary change since v2.0 is the addition of a map of the cave on the bottom of the handout.

-Lexan has been bought for the Kiosk display and a color poster has been put up on one of the panels in early December. The second panel remains unused at the moment.

-Bill Zinzow has offered to make directional trail markers to clearly mark the path from the new parking lot to the kiosk. Once spring arrives, progress to make the new parking lot usable will continue.

-Arrangements for the steward training are underway...

Plans:

-The current trail towards the Wards entrance by the gravel pit leaves our property. It is the intention of the managers to redirect this trail onto our property in the near future, but exact location yet to be determined.

-A changing structure is to be built near the parking lot in the spring. The basic design of this structure has been discussed, containing separate changing areas (men and womens, etc), each roughly 5'x6', with benches on the sides of them. A more detailed design is being developed.

-Fencing should be installed to distinguish the edge of our parking lot from the road leading to the quarry and to help steer visitors onto the trail that runs by the kiosk.

-Gravel needs to be brought in to even out the new parking lot and prevent it from becoming a mud-trap once spring arrives.