

**THE PRAIRIE CLUB
BOARD of DIRECTORS' MEETING
May 17, 2017**

Call to Order

1st Vice President, John Manthey, called the board meeting to order at 6:32 pm at the VFW in Villa Park, IL. All members listed below were present unless designated by an asterisk (*). All members listed below with (p) participated via teleconference.

Officers: President – Doug Elrick (*) (2018)
1st Vice President – John Manthey (2018)
2nd Vice President – Patricia Craig (2018)
Hazelhurst Camp Chair/Vice President – Larry Bergman (2018)
Spring Grove Camp Chair/Vice President – Erin Kiehm (2018)
Treasurer – Bill Breach (2018)
Recording Secretary – MP McKenzie (2018)

Directors:

Beth Miller (*) (2017)	Jim “Mac” McCarthy (2018)	Hope Little (2019)
Bob Foote (p) (2017)	Patty Ciesla (2018)	Dan Gapen (2019)
Sue Krusack (2017)	Brian Reed (2018)	Charles Calkins (p) (2019)
Mike Halfpenny (p) (2017)	John Manthey (2018)	Jean Simmons (p) (2019)

Chairs: Buena Vista - Paula Flanagan (*) and Beverly McBrien (*)
Family Cottage - Carla Klausler (*)
Farmhouse - Deb McGrath (*) & Barb Wittersheim (*)
Membership - Barb Burton Halfpenny (p)
Nominating – Leo Krusack
Conservation – Leo Krusack and Bernie Dahl (*)
Activities - Hope Little
Spring Grove Lodge – Mickey Hanson (*) and Judy Illingworth (p)

Members: Patrick Maguire

Executive Director: Jacquie Dziak
A quorum was established.

Minutes Approval:

Erin Kiehm moved to approve the 3/15/17 board minutes; Hope Little seconded, all in favor, the motion passed.

Treasurer's Report:

The balance sheet shows we have a lot of cash on hand. That's distorted because we collect early and pay later. So camp assessments are arriving and will be used to pay bills over the course of the year.

Receivables are lower at this time this year than last, no problem with collections.

The pond and beach bathroom projects at Hazelhurst are underway and we've spent about \$45,000 so far.

Profit and loss budget versus actual report is the most concise and easily read. Rental income is up \$45,000 over last year at this time.

The club has received a \$20,000 bequest donation. There is a question about how the funds are to be directed and the finance committee is following up to make sure they are used as per the donor's wishes.

Expenses are normal, as expected.

A question arose about the farmhouse electricity usage being up - nearly 170% of budget but Bill explained that for the budget we divide the annual usage by 12 months rather than comparing each month singly. So electricity usage may appear higher during these months but will average out over time.

We've done some expected improvements to Family Cottage and Buena Vista and that's reflected in their maintenance budget numbers.

Patty Craig moved to accept the financials as presented, Erin Kiehm seconded, all in favor, the motion passed.

Standing Committees

Elections - Sue Krusack (no written report)

Finance - Rich Spurgin

Membership - Barb Burton (no written report)

Nominating - Leo Krusack (no written report)

Membership - Barb Burton

Five names were published in our most recent bulletin and no objections have been raised.

Erin Kiehm moved to accept Patricia Beckjord, Karen Cotterill, Mary Kay Downey, John Leane, and Peter Lesnik for active membership. Rich Spurgin seconded; all in favor, the motion passed.

Old Business

Annual Meeting – Hope Little

Preparations are shaping up for our annual meeting June 10th at Hazelhurst

New Member Meet and Greet - 10 am (Michigan time)

Registration - 11 am

Lunch – noon

Business meeting after lunch

Followed by a lecture, "How to Create a Butterfly Way Station in your yard"

House tours after the lecture

New Business

Reports from Camp & Activity Committees –

(Written reports for the following Committees have been submitted. Unless requested, no discussion required.)

Hazelhurst Camp – Larry Bergman

Spring Grove Camp – Erin Kiehm – No Report

Membership – Barb Burton – No Report

Nominating – Leo Krusack – No Report

Activities/Walkers – Hope Little – No Report

Annual Meeting – Hope Little

Buena Vista – Paula Flanagan and Beverly McBrien

Conservation – Leo Krusack and Bernie Dahl

Family Cottage – Carla Klausler

Farmhouse – Deb McGrath & Barb Wittersheim

Spring Grove Lodge – Mickey Hanson and Judy Illingsworth – No Report

Conservation Committee - Leo Krusack (see report)

When it comes to conservation the Prairie Club has a long history of impact and activism. While no longer driven by activism, we can still have an impact through giving money, by financially supporting conservation

efforts. In the past we have donated in small amounts which seems an ineffective strategy.

There are two main spheres in which the club operates: Chikaming County where Hazelhurst Camp is located, and McHenry County, where Spring Grove Camp is located. We have established relationships with Chikaming Openlands in Michigan, and the Nippersink Watershed Association in Illinois, two organizations that are doing wonderful work to maintain and restore local resources that impact our camps and our members.

The Conservation Committee recommends that beginning in 2017, the Prairie Club contribute 2% of its annual membership fees, in equal amounts, and not to exceed \$1,000 per organization, to Chikaming Open Lands located in Berrien County, MI, and to the Nippersink Watershed Association located in McHenry County, IL, unless otherwise directed by the Board. These contributions will be made annually at the end of November.

Last year, the Prairie Club and its members were instrumental in helping Chikaming Openlands acquire the 23 acre parcel now known as the "Jens Jensen Preserve". The local community now looks at the Prairie Club differently. We are now an important contributing member of the community.

It was pointed out that this motion does not bind us to these two organizations permanently. But also acknowledged that each has helped us and it behooves us to help them as well.

Each gift will be approximately \$930 this year. To a large non profit like the Sierra Club, that's not a significant amount. But to these two organizations, they are significant gifts and show our full support for their efforts and accomplishments.

We should think globally and act locally. This action fits in to our history and bylaws.

Sue Krusack moved to accept the Conservation Committee's recommendation as stated, Patty Craig seconded, all in favor, the motion passed.

Leo Krusack thanked the board, saying that Chikaming Openlands is an organization that has become very important to him personally.

He recommends that we publicize this to our full membership and encourage members to support these organizations as well. Last year members gave significantly more than the club to help create the Jens Jensen Preserve. Many of our members continue to give to the organization and are listed in its annual report. Chikaming Openlands has openly acknowledged that without the full financial support of the club and its members, they would not have been able to purchase the land and create the preserve.

Hazelhurst Camp Report - Larry Bergman

The rentals are up. Buena Vista is up from 43% to 57% and the Farmhouse and Family Cottage are looking good as well. They're on track to bring in over \$100,000 this year. If you ask him, the linens and wi-fi have made a real difference; members approve and show it with increased usage.

Sue Krusack did a lot of surveys last year and will bring the results to a future meeting. She'll work with Jean Simmons to crunch the data and report back to the board.

We still have capacity this summer for Family Cottage, but Buena Vista is quite booked.

The entire interior of Buena Vista was repainted over the winter and it looks great. What a difference it made; much brighter and more cheerful.

Regarding the Beach Bathroom: Construction slowed down because the contractor in charge of directional drilling fell by the wayside. Disappeared, stopped returning phone calls. So we hired a new contractor with the stipulation that we really want it to be done by Memorial Day, as that's a heavy usage weekend. He thinks he'll be able to finish by then.

There was a delay in the new decking, but it finally arrived and has been put down.

Regarding the Pond: There's a little cleanup still to do but by fall, the spoils should be set and we'll be ready to start planting.

There was a beach fire which destroyed several Hazelhurst member's boats, plus the neighbor's boat and stairs. The cause of the fire is unknown but they think it was started by a lit cigarette. The insurance company has been notified, and the police department. There was no damage to Prairie Club property but it's always best to have an information report on file.

Spring Grove Camp Report - Erin Kiehm

Spring Grove has started their season fully leased at 25 sites. They've replaced the water spigots for each site and have also replaced the pond aerator.

There is an ad hoc committee at Spring Grove for replacing the current caretaker, John, who has been there for many years and is ready to retire. They are completely reworking the Caretaker Property Manager agreement and have based it on the Hazelhurst caretaker agreement with Vern. The Spring Grove position is unpaid but does include a 2 bedroom caretaker apartment.

The big news is that in the midst of this preparation, John gave 90 day notice of his intention to retire at the end of July. He's ready to step down and plans on taking an apartment in Richmond, so will be nearby and able to help if needed. Everyone at Spring Grove is grateful for all his efforts over the years.

So now they're looking for another caretaker, preferably a couple. It's an attractive offer for the right person or couple. They will publish an ad in the next bulletin in order to put it out to membership first. They hope to find someone by word of mouth. They'll do a background check and drug screen.

The next bulletin will come out mid-July, Jacquie said to submit their ad by the first week of July if possible.

Comments from Board Members:

None.

Comments from General Membership

Leo Krusack mentioned recent controversy with some negative criticism directed at the board regarding the bylaws changes and vote. He wished people could have come to our meeting tonight to see how well this board works, and how professionally.

Erin Kiehm said he's been on the board a long time, seen a lot, and thanked Leo for his emails explaining some of

the background for the changes in greater detail. Erin said he had learned something from that and was grateful for it.

Jacque Dziak was asked whether the office was receiving negative feedback from members; she reported that there was only one objection so far.

Mike Halfpenny said he also has been on the board a long time and feels this board has made it very open to people and given information out freely. He doesn't think we need further discussion.

John Manthey noted that a total of three people felt strongly enough to share their thoughts about the bylaw changes. Under the previous and current Prairie Club presidents, the board has made great strides in opening the discussion and taking the time needed to work through important and challenging questions. This change in how the board operates needs to be communicated more widely, so everyone is are aware of this change. There are also opportunities to communicate information to everyone more effectively and to make everyone aware of how they can stay informed become actively engaged.

Adjournment

Patricia Craig moved to adjourn, Erin Kiehm seconded, all in favor, the motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 7:29 pm.

Next meeting: July 19th at the VFW in Villa Park, IL at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
MP McKenzie