

TPE Board Meeting  
Tuesday, April 19, 2016  
7:05 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order by President Jack Kusssmaul at 7:05 p.m.

Directors: Jack Kusssmaul, Scott Fulton, Nick Faessler, Evanne Hunt, Jim Rogala, Rich Henderson, Alice Mirk, David Hamel, Caroljean Coventree, George Howe, Paul Rode

Excused: Linda Lynch, Richard Oberle, and Deanna Pomije.

Staff: Chris Kirkpatrick, Joe Rising

**2. Membership Program Update – 15 minutes**

Chris Kirkpatrick gave a report of the Membership Program progress since the February Board meeting, following up on concerns and interests. We are at about 100 new members per year. The membership program is being refined and cleaned up over the last couple years. There are 1606 members now and that includes lapsed members. We have a 73% renewal rate, 80% is really good. We intend to be over 80% yet this year. We have suspended 655 members since using the new database. A lot of work has gone into this. There are 132 contributors and 351 contacts. We will suspend the lapsed members more intentionally from here on, giving them two years to renew or be suspended. The present lapsed group (2015 -2010) will be suspended after a couple more solicitations to renew. Chris explained the membership program and renewal process, the annual calendar, content calendar, and member types, all lead up to the annual appeal. There are 264 lapsed members prior to 2014. Chris noted the new renewal letter format with photos and more white space. We have streamlined our process through our new printer, Dairyland Power. This includes a bulk mailing rate. We personally signed the 930 recently sent letters. Chris said we are looking at stories of change and the success and impact of the work that is going on throughout the organization. The content will depend on what we know about, what work is going on. That helps cover the organization's mission and gives positive results. With 28 hours a week we are very intentional with the Communications Coordinator's time. Evanne asked about overlap between Diane Hills and Joe Risings work. We do not want people doing the same thing. We want to understand what will be helpful to Chapters beyond and outside the Central communications plan. We are looking to a job description for the Outreach Coordinator that will assist the chapters and compliment Joe's time. We will need communications content shared with us. The Board thought Chris gave a great presentation.

3. Website Tour – 30 minutes

Jim Rogala gave a tour of TPE's new website. The site has been under careful review and construction for a long time coming. The last redesign was in 2000. This is new and up-to-date with industry standards. Jim reviewed the *home page* and its contents and buttons, and the subpages, with links to other pages like *chapter pages*, and the need to keep these relevant and up to date, with what's new. *Site Pages* can have information like a species list, history, or what is meaningful to describe the site. Various site pages were reviewed. E-news items will be linked into these pages. Chapter Facebook pages should be noted and linked in the chapter page. Thanks to all who have contributed to this project! Once we go live, we want to invite members to update their profiles with skills and interests. Spouses can have their own profiles. Jim will keep adding to the website as he receives information.

#### 4. **Communication Plan Proposal** – 30 minutes

Chris Kirkpatrick gave a report on how the plan was developed through a consultant using a scientific basis and the reasoning behind it. This type of plan has helped other land trusts. This plan will be very intentional and integrated with other communication channels. Chris encouraged chapters to have a Facebook page and share work parties and what is going on. Central can then share this chapter news organization wide. Content will come from many sources and should be easy to get and share. Chris focused on highlighting what Chapters are doing. We want to highlight stories of change in a short conversational tone, that helps readers envision being there, with a pitch that connects donors to the meaning and why of the organization as it relates to them personally. Chris noted the audience that we want to reach and what type of communications they are looking for; relevant, personalized, consistent, meaningful and using money wisely. Chris then gave examples of other land trusts and how they are using this communication process successfully with good financial success. We can do this too. This is a big step forward. Take picture and send them in. This is exciting stuff! We can continue to use the gotomeeting.com meeting format. Some Directors prefer hard copies for review.

#### 5. **Outreach Coordinator Discussion** – 45 minutes

Empire Sauk Chapter Volunteer Coordinator Accomplishments

Scott Fulton reviewed the purpose of this presentation and gave a summary of what Diana Hills, the Volunteer Coordinator, has done with the Empire-Sauk Chapter over the last 3 years. He then showed a PowerPoint presentation with slides and graphs displaying event and program results. This position arose after a chapter retreat in 2009. A Coordinator was hired part-time and then full time. This was all funded by private donations. Scott reviewed the Outreach engagement projects and resulting new contacts (460), greater numbers of people showing up at work parties, including college students from the UWM landscape architecture department, environmental studies, and conservation oriented subjects. Badger Volunteers from UWM have given 2-300 hours of volunteer time so far. The benefits are experience by the students too. A staff position is important for making connections and keeping continuity, reaching out to local organization, and building site communities and their leadership. For instance with Master Gardeners and other conservation professionals. Publicity through local papers has been very fruitful. This is really a science of how to get people involved and have fun. It takes organization and leadership to have this kind of success story. The ESC new members are on an upward trend along with getting members involved. The question is: “How can Central help build our Chapter community?” Scott will be going out to the chapters with this question and looking for clarification through discussions. He has learned that every chapter is unique. Let him know if you have ideas.

#### 6. Adjournment

**There was a motion by Paul Rode to adjourn. Evanne Hunt seconded it. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.**

#### 2016 Board Meetings:

Tuesday May 17, 2016, 7:05 pm via conference call

Sunday July 17, 2016, 10:00 am ESC, Shelter #2, Brigham County Park, Blue Mounds, WI.

Saturday September 17, 2016 10:00 am TPE office, Viroqua, WI

Tuesday November 15, 2016 7:05 pm via conference call

Tuesday December 20, 2016 7:05 pm via conference call