

Hampton Roads Bird Club
Executive Committee Meeting Notes (2021-22)

The Executive Committee (EXCOM) met on Zoom on August 26, 2021.

Meeting called to order at 6:04 p.m.

EXCOM Members and Committee Chairpersons Present:

President - Dr. Shawn T. Dash
Secretary - Bill Boeh
Treasurer - John Adair
Board Member (7/21-6/24) - Katrina Dash
Board Member (7/20-6/23) - Walter Harris
Website Editors - Ellis and Wendy Maxey
Field Trip Coordinator - James Abbott
Hospitality - Dianne Snyder
Publicity - Michael Meyer
Membership - Gwen Harris
Compiler, Christmas and Spring Bird Counts - Bill Boeh

EXCOM Members and Committee Chairpersons Absent:

Vice President - vacant
Board Member (7/19-6/22) - Barbara Abraham
Newsletter Editor - Tom Charlock
Field Trip Coordinator - Marc Nichols
Hospitality - Jane Frigo
Leader, Sunday Newport News Walks - Jane Frigo

Non-Committee Members in Attendance: None

1. Issues for discussion. The issues below were presented by the President; there were no member reports except for the Treasurer and Field Trip Coordinator.

a. Issue: In-person meetings. The President requested EXCOM input/consensus on whether to conduct upcoming member meetings in person or via Zoom.

i. Discussion: Multiple members advised they were wearing masks indoors, and would not attend an in-person meeting due to a vulnerable family member, or until they themselves had received a booster shot. Other members advised they would attend; one member recommended that full vaccination be a prerequisite for attendance. The President recommended that wearing of masks should be mandatory for all attendees, regardless of vaccination status, and agreed that full vaccination be a requirement for attendance. One member advised that local Virginia Master Naturalist chapters were moving back to Zoom due to the emergence of the COVID delta variant. The President pointed out that Zoom meetings does render more speakers available. A member recommended that we meet via Zoom for several months, then reconsider the issue in light of the situation at that time.

ii. Action/resolution: EXCOM consensus was to defer in-person meetings until at least 2022; the will EXCOM will reconsider the issue in December or January.

b. Issue: approval of the 2021-2022 budget.

i. Discussion: The Treasurer presented proposed budget; expected income limited to dues due to uncertainty with in-person meetings. Dues were discussed; consensus was to keep them the same, as the club's financial situation is sound. Various line items were discussed; consensus was they were acceptable. Katrina Dash suggested procuring cloth face masks with the club's logo that could be given to club members, guest speakers and members of the public that attend club outreach events. Katrina advised masks were about \$5 to \$10 each; the President requested a proposal be developed for consideration. Michael Meyer volunteered to assist developing the proposal. One member advised that as a non-profit, the club should not be giving the masks to members; another member recommended that club members be afforded the opportunity to buy the masks. The EXCOM agreed that club members should not be given masks, but could purchase them if desired. The EXCOM further agreed that the rest of the proposed budget was acceptable.

ii. Action/resolution: EXCOM consensus was for Katrina Dash and Michael Meyer to develop the face mask proposal and provide that to the Treasurer for inclusion into the proposed budget. The Treasurer will provide the EXCOM with the revised budget for approval.

c. Issue: Potential for use of Zoom to record in-person meetings for later viewing by those not attending.

i. Discussion: The President advised he not sure if Zoom would provide adequate audio quality. There was no further discussion, as in-person meetings had been delayed for several months.

ii. Action/resolution: None

d. Issue: Activities to engage club members. The President requested EXCOM input on multiple club activities to keep members engaged with the club.

i. Field trips. The President asked the EXCOM if we should continue field trips this fall. Consensus was to continue, with appropriate precautions. The President will research what the precautions should be and advise. One of the Field Trip co-chairs was present (James Abbot); he recommended Hog Island for September and the Eastern Shore for October. The new state park in Gloucester (Machicomoco State Park) and Grandview were recommended as good options for late fall/winter; Back Bay was also suggested good for winter, but James was not sure if the tram will be operating. For spring, James recommended Craney Island, but was not sure if it will be available. Dave Youker advised that they are considering reopening to bird clubs, but there's still construction going on that may need to be completed first.

ii. Fall Big Day. The President asked if the EXCOM supported the conduct of a fall Big Day; the consensus was to proceed with the Big Day on 9 October to align with the Cornell Lab's Big Day.

iii. Hampton City walks requested by the Hampton City Library.

1. Discussion. The President advised that there's been 3-4 people attending the Ft. Monroe walks, and suggested we add more sites around Hampton, such as Sandy Bottom. Dave Youker asked if sites were limited to Hampton; if not, suggested we expand to other locales.

2. Action/resolution: ExComm supports continuing with these walks. The President will check with the Hampton Library representative regarding conducting walks outside the city of Hampton.

iv. Issue: Use of this year's educational fund.

1. Discussion: The President sought EXCOM input as to how the current year's \$500 education fund should be allocated, e.g., to support a student, or school group, or organization that

supports bird conservation. Dave Youker suggested creation of a local young birder's club, citing his experience with the Blue Ridge Young Birder's club. Member the interest in the club has remained high; the kids run their own meetings. Dave advised the HRBC would need to find some teenagers to comprise the membership of the club, but wasn't sure where to find a core group to get the club going. The club could meet at Sandy Bottom or perhaps someone's residence. Shawn advised a local science-oriented magnet school could be a source of members. The President expressed desire to "give back" to the community in some way; Dave Youker suggested special family-oriented educational bird walks. The club could buy some basic field guides and/or binoculars, etc., that could be used as a "kit" that could be used during such walks. James Abbott advised that the Department of Wildlife Resources is installing signage and QR codes that support birding at Fort Monroe. The Treasurer lauded these ideas for future development, but noted that club outreach projects have not been well supported in the past, and as treasurer he needed to expend this year's funds on behalf of an individual student or organization that promotes education within the next 3 days. He offered to query the CVWO and VSO for projects that might need funding; Michael Meyer advised there is a CNU student doing a project in Northern Virginia and can put together a proposal to use the educational fund to support it.

2. Action/resolution: The EXCOM was asked to provide any recommendations for use of the educational fund to the Treasurer. The Treasurer will contact CVWO and VSO and Michael Meyer will develop a proposal for supporting the CNU student and forward it to the Treasurer. The Treasurer will compile all proposals and present them to the EXCOM via email.

e. Issue: Attendance at club weekend activities. The President inquired as to whether the Sunday walks and field trips were well attended. The EXCOM advised that Sunday walk attendance was recovering and there seemed to be a good deal of socialization during the walks.

2. New business.

a. Bill Boeh advised he'd received an email from Melanie Paul regarding the establishment of feral cat colonies in Hampton (Ms. Paul is not a club member but has participated in the Christmas and spring bird counts). Her email advised that at the March meeting of the Hampton Animal Control Advisory Committee several attendees were advocating that local citizens trap, neuter, and establish feral cat colonies. Ms. Paul requested that club members be advised about this advocacy and consider attending the next Advisory Committee meeting (September 15th, 5:30 p.m., at Hampton City Hall). Bill suggested he draft an email for the President's approval which could be sent to the club membership advising them of the issue and the upcoming meeting. Dave Youker recommended that the email include advisory that anyone attending is attending on their own behalf and are not representing the HRBC.

i. Action/resolution: Bill Boeh will draft an email for the President's approval. Once approved, Bill will send the email to the membership.

3. The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.