

Manitoba Association of Cottage Owners

Garden City Inn

2100 McPhillips Street, Winnipeg

June 16, 2015

MINUTES

Present: Dave Crabb, Pat Dunlop, Cathie Zarfes, Tom Thorsteinson, Jim Neufeld, Mo Tipples
Jim Nicholson, Larry Baker, Ray Poole (Skype)

Regrets: Norma Kerr, Marian Jones, Ken Corbett

Chair: Dave Crabb

Recording Secretary: Shelley Morris

1. Call to Order – The meeting was called to order at 6:50 p.m.

2. Adoption of Agenda

Dave asked to add email from AIS to the agenda.

It was moved by Pat and seconded by Tom that the agenda be approved as amended.

CARRIED

3. Adoption of Minutes of May, 2015

It was moved by Pat and seconded by Cathie that the minutes of the May 2015 meeting be approved. CARRIED

4. Financial Report – May, 2015

Approval of Financial Report

Balance just over \$7200 at beginning of month, credits of \$1979, debits \$139, so end of May balance just over \$9000. May financial report has been emailed.

It was moved by Jim and seconded by Mo that the financial report to end of May be approved. CARRIED

*Receipts from members for purchases – flowers for Marian (Mo), purchase of table (\$36)

It was moved by Pat and seconded by Cathie to reimburse Mo \$35 for table. CARRIED

***Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium** - \$200.00. Question as to whether to rescind a motion to donate to Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium. Mo reported that the strategic plan has gone through, but hasn't taken off yet. It is up to Board as to whether they wish to continue to contribute. It was confirmed that the donations do go to Education.

It was moved by Pat and seconded by Jim that a donation of \$200 be issues to the Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium as per previous Board decision. CARRIED

***Update on Grant** – has been concluded. They want some recognition on our website, this will be confirmed with them and Pat will take care of it.

5. Standing Items

***Membership** - Pat reported that all has been updated on website. Memberships have been coming in, 9 were given to Jim tonight and Mo has processed about 12 others. Dave asked if the process was OK – Jim and Mo are handling their parts, but Marian's position - updating the spreadsheet – is open, however the spreadsheet is relatively up to date. Mo drafted letter in January, Pat provided some suggestions, and it was sent out to members with receipts, outlining what MACO is doing and asking for volunteers.

***Cottager Magazine**

Norma will be returning the end of June

--Information on length of time advertisements are in for costs advertised. To be carried forward for Norma's return. **(Action: Norma)**

***Facebook** – Dave noted there were some postings during Cottage Show

***Website** - regarding the rebuilding of the website, a quote was received from Bill Campbell for \$1500 Aug 1/14. He has indicated he may be able to do for less. He has already begun work on it and it is very impressive.

It was moved by Mo and seconded by Pat that Board approve proceeding with the rebuild of the website, based on the quote provided by Bill Campbell to a maximum amount of \$1500. CARRIED

Pat spoke to the idea of blogging, noting that it would require someone dedicated to the job. It would be ideal for subjects like education taxes and could provoke general discussion and offer another way of getting our messages out. Pat will circulate link to information re: blogging so that Board can consider if it makes sense for MACO

Dave noted another way to drive people to the website, elicit feedback and get people involved would be to have a place for “products that work” on the website – e.g. cleaning products.

Pat had asked about statistics page that could be logged into that would give all the up to date info – that way we would not have to ask for statistics each time we needed them. There could be a monthly report. Proposed Facebook updates and RSS Feed – it would notify members if there were updates, like an auto-alert.

Membership Roster – when people pay, Bill is notified and he adds new members or adds the current year information. It was asked if we could have links to members’ websites. There could simply be a page listing Members, their websites and events. There are 48 association members. We need to start thinking about what else we would like to see on the website. Jim suggested a Search function. Tom asked about the option of being able to update the membership information ourselves – having better access to do our own updating. Reference was made to the repository that Jim had developed (MEGA).

Ray asked what members receive – bi-annual newsletter, annual meeting materials, but there are not regular emails. Ideas are needed on content and people that could generate content.

***Education Tax Issue:** *STOP Project* - Mo commented we should keep a list of people that signed the petition. Pat made a photocopy of it before sending. She hasn’t heard anything back. It was approved by the Clerk. Petitions have to be done in a certain format for government. Cathie asked about the Let’s Play Fair group – Lorne Weiss – spoke at annual meeting, but there has not been progress in connecting on the Stop Project. Re: Keystone, they have made progress with the rebates that are available upon application for 80% of education tax.

Cathie asked about articles for Cottager magazine and noted the schedule - July 10 (comes out August 10), then Sept 10 (comes out in October). Ideas should be sent to Cathie.

***Lake Manitoba** - level down to 813, a foot below flood level. There has not been an OK to remove sandbags until levels are lower (to 812.8). If you remove own, there are liability issues.

***Advertising** - Dave asked if there were any new ideas for advertising

6. Business and Action Items Arising From Minutes

*Tax Rally – (Larry) – hope to have rally by end of Sept. Email sent to Ralph Eichler – would like to hold when legislature is sitting and this needs to be confirmed.

*MACO on Escalating fees in Provincial Parks – Policy Paper (Dave) – referred to the letter that was sent with Whiteshell wanting support. Mo thinks that MACO and cottages in parks should combine with Whiteshell to band together to make one large group to have more impact. Dave said that MACO has expressed support for them to move ahead, but it is a Parks issue. The question is whether we wish to put something in writing, or what action will we take to support the cottagers. Instead of paying education taxes, other taxes have been added to bring up to the stage of cottagers outside of parks. Whether in or out of the park, the fees/taxes are unreasonable.

Cathie said that fees/taxes between the 2 are not equitable. Their fees have been \$700 and stable for 30 years. With fees phased in over 10 years, the cost will increase to \$2500 or \$3000 which is about half of \$6000 paid by typical cottagers. The concern is with paying for services that are not used a good part of the year.

Dave said for this agenda item, what action do we wish to take on the MOU circulated.

Jim Neufeld said government at one time set cost at 4% of value of land, and then they arbitrarily raised value of all land x 5 without assessment or evaluation. It is the Park's lot and is being leased. 4% is a business rate – should be a recreational rate. Jim and Mo support MOU. Government has a patchwork approach which needs to be unified. Whiteshell wishes to challenge government to show in budgets what is being spent and divide it between the cottagers and decide what the fee should be. Larry said property taxes should be based on services rendered. Reference was made to the Land Transfer Tax inequity – it should not be based on value of property – the same work is involved regardless of value of property. Dave suggested going back to basic problem – Minister of Conservation said that Manitobans are subsidizing people are in the parks – the part that was left out was that the fees being paid are going into general revenues rather than to fund the parks.

It was moved by Mo and seconded by Pat that MACO support signing the Whiteshell MOU. CARRIED with one opposed. Dave will sign on behalf of the Board of Directors.

Whiteshell is asking for unified approach and has asked if we are prepared to sign it. Tom is concerned that it doesn't address the school taxes issue and Whiteshell is focusing on property taxes. Pat noted the problem is that education taxes have been downloaded to the municipalities when it should be a provincial issue. Dave noted that the press and a lot of people think we are only pursuing taxes being removed from cottages. The Whiteshell leadership has changed and is more open to working with MACO. Larry asked if we could invite them to join the MACO Board. Cathie thought the idea of coming up with separate taxation for a recreational property may be another approach than simply removing the education tax. The portioning could be reduced for recreational properties.

Tom – if we were to sign it, could we publicize the increased cooperation and capitalize on the opportunity. Jim thinks we have more in common – governments have made cottage ownership unaffordable.

Whiteshell should be asked for their support and ideas on how to enhance cooperation between the two organizations, perhaps with an appointed liaison.

*Road Restriction on Water Delivery – (Dave) – no discussion

7. New Business

8. Correspondence Received/Responded to:

Email re membership – MACO received email from Mike Mason from Victoria beach – they currently don't collect fees from individuals and are inquiring about membership. There is an option of associate membership - \$20 – which is lower than smallest cottage association. There are 1000 cottagers in Victoria Beach (5000 people), and there are about a dozen that call themselves an association with an annual meeting that 35 attend. Issue of erosion and effect on cottagers on beach vs off beach is a hot topic. They will be offered option of individual or associate membership as per schedule.

Letter from Conservation – sent MACO letter due to our participation in hearing – “What we Heard” re: Nopiming and Manigotogan provincial parks. Could post link on MACO website. It demonstrates issues that we are participating in.

Letter from Lake Winnipeg Foundation – Watershed Observer newsletter received – they have a website that people could go to – MACO could provide the link.

Email from AIS – Foca newsletter – forwarded to Candace Parks from Invasive Species so she could see what was being done in ON. AIS bill has reached 2nd reading. MACO was asked if they would consider contacting the Minister of Conservation recommending increased resources for AIS. Mo volunteered to draft the letter

It was moved by Larry and seconded by Jim that MACO write the Minister of Conservation in support of increased resources for AIS. CARRIED

Pat read note from Shannon Martin

9. Next Meeting Dates are Tuesdays:

Next meeting dates are: July 21, August 18, September 15, 2015.

10. Adjournment – 9:00 p.m.