

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF FRIENDS OF THE ELEPHANT SEAL

March 20, 2013

PRESENT: Donovan Marley, Tim Postiff, Kathy Hurre, Sharkey Warrick, Betty Bardeen, Brandt Kehoe, Dave Bauer, Bill Goodger and Christel Chesney

Also present: Ellen Stoner, Lisa Remington, Marcella Boteilho and Megg McNamee

A motion was made and carried to approve the minutes of the February 20th Board meeting.

LISA REMINGTON reported that she had talked to the authorities with State Parks about the dog vs eSeal issue several weeks ago. She reiterated that FES (docents and Board) need to be aware that State Parks are in charge of public safety and they have legal jurisdiction on the bluff and will continue to make decisions that are deemed in the interest of public safety. Brandt commented that Parks are also responsible for the safety of the elephant seals. Marine Mammal Center uses boards in similar situations. Bill Goodger suggested that Lisa Anderson (Marine Mammal Center) would be willing to train rangers in alternate methods of restraint/containment. Lisa was also concerned that the docents on duty were less than helpful during event and did nothing to help with crowd control. It was agreed that docents should be notified about correct protocol regarding any future incidents and always cooperate with State Parks. Docents should always call Marine Mammal Center as well as State Parks in future cases. These last two points will be in the next docent letter.

Betty Bardeen inquired about the trail north of VP4. An email was sent to the office from Phil/Carol Adams regarding bluff visitors being told that there is a trail from VP4 to the Lighthouse. The visitors in question were told there was a trail and so wandered through the new vegetation looking for the trail and caused some damage. The trail has been moved to allow for vegetation rehabilitation. There is also no longer any beach access. FES needs clarification as to whether there is actually a trail or not and whether or not visitors can use it. Lisa will find out who owns the properties and get back to us.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: 1) At Tom Edick's request, Brandt purchased a new radio link to be used from BLM to the Castle which he said has been the webcam problem all along. The older one no longer works. Tom has been in the hospital well but took the time to email Brandt. In that email Tom assured Brandt that they had the staff to do the installation but clear weather was required. The weather forecast calls for clearing for the next several days so the installation should be forthcoming. Even though BLM and the castle needed the new radio, Brandt offered to purchase it and is hoping for reimbursement from FES once it is up and running. The cost is approximately \$660. Board unanimously agreed to grant the reimbursement.

2) Monterey National Marine Sanctuary Symposium is scheduled for April 27 and will be held at the Monterey Bay CSU. Brandt intends to drive up on the 27th and return on the 28th and invited others to join him.

3) There was a request from one of the docents to borrow the Educational Display equipment. The Education committee is reluctant to lend out the equipment (skull, pelt, etc.) to volunteers doing presentations in the community as they use it quite often with school groups, etc. It was suggested that FES might put an additional presentation kit together for others to use including the table committee. The skull costs approximately \$500. Motion was made and unanimously carried authorizing Marcella and/or Diana to start acquiring the necessary elements for an additional educational kit.

4) Brandt has been approached again about FES taking a public "position" on some issues, i.e. the acoustic testing problems for both the Navy and the power plant. Traditionally FES has not engaged in advocacy. Unlike most organizations, "we are our docents", and reluctant to speak on their behalf. Our tax exempt status limits our involvement in political issues as does our status as State Park volunteers, at least while on the bluff while wearing the

State Park badge. It was agreed that as individuals we can take “positions” but as an organization FES will continue to not engage in advocacy.

5) Speakers for the April 20th docent get-together will be the two new interns Melissa and Katie. Brandt is attempting to reach Richard Condit for the July 20th get-together but has not heard back from him. Susanna Blackwell is not available in July as she will be in the Arctic doing research and is more likely to be available in November.

TREASURER’S REPORT: Bill reported that the current money market account has a balance of \$64,308.00, the checking account has \$15,615.73. CDs remain the same. Bill asked Marcella about the amount of money (\$1,940) spent on “docent expenses”. The budgeted amount for the year is \$2,500. She clarified that the money spent was for the docent appreciation dinner in January. Marcella also noted that the \$10,000 expenditure agreed upon at the last Board meeting for the new school bus program was not listed in the 2013 budget and probably should be. Even though it is too late to add that figure to the budget, it was agreed that a new category should probably be made for the possible expenditures that will occur later in the year.

INTERNSHIP REPORT: Bill reported that both interns are preparing their programs to be presented at the next docent meeting on April 20th. He also reported that Judy and Tim will fill in for him at the upcoming Center for Marine Sciences at Cal Poly Open House. The event will be at the pier in Avila and will attract approximately 1,000 people. FES will have a table there, next to the marine mammal center table. Judy will bring all of the educational materials.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Donovan reported that there are 54 acquisitions and 69 renewals so far this year; he was pleased that the acquisitions were doing so well and disappointed that the renewals were not doing as well as he had expected. We are at approximately 20% of the expected budget amount for the year and feels we are ok as there will be approximately \$7,000 in year end campaign. The income from acquisitions reflects 46% of total and renewals are 54%. He also pointed out that we are “lagging behind” with the renewals and a single acquisition for \$1500 throws that number (46%) out of whack. 33% would be more realistic for this time period. That same \$1500 also skews the calculation for acquisitions “average” of \$81.27.

TRAINING COMMITTEE: Bette reported that there are 8 trainees plus the 2 interns for Spring Training. They sound like a terrific group of people that include two Spanish speakers and several others with good biology degrees and education backgrounds. Phil Adams will do his presentation, the role of the docent, scheduling, etc. will be covered and followed by the mentoring sessions. Dave has sent out a memo to the mentors. When trainees are finished, Bette would like to hand out the jackets at the April 20th docent get together. The training committee has been made aware that docents who started with the Spring training were much better able to absorb the materials presented in the Fall training. The committee would like to break the training into two parts; Spring training would become the *1st session of FES Basics Training* which will be followed by another *FES Basics Training* in early September followed by mentoring. *FES University* will continue to be 3 Saturdays in October (not necessarily in a row). The Board agreed that it was a good plan.

Kathy mentioned that “if we keep recruiting like this, we might want to re-look at whether docents do 4 sessions each month.” Brandt mentioned that FES might want to include patrolling the area north of VP4; there are not many people there but there are lots of seals and that our role is not only to educate but protect. According to Ellen, scheduling can be challenging which is why some shifts have too many docents and others not enough. She also reminded us that the summer C shift is about to start, which will utilize additional docents.

Research effort: Bette said Bill has done the most and Tim has done some. There is no leadership since Michele is no longer on the Board. When Bette met with Mike from Ano Nuevo he had indicated an interest in the research project. He suggested that perhaps their docents might want to participate. He asked if their docents could have access to the research section and our manual on our website. Brandt suggested we could set up a site accessible to both sets of docents that contained both manuals and research materials. They would make articles available to us. There was no objection from Board members giving them (Ano Nuevo) complete access to our materials in the ‘for docents’ section of

the site. Tim volunteered to head up the research group and asked for volunteers (Bette, Brandt, Kathy, Donovan, Bill and Dave volunteered) who will review articles with the rest of the research committee.

OLD BUSINESS: Bette suggested that the word Soupabration should no longer be linked to FES and that any soliciting of funds for any other group or organization that uses that name not be connected to FES. She also asked if we are going to do something for fundraising in the future. She suggested selling raffle tickets for the castle swim which does not require a fund raising event. Some of our docents enjoy working on fund raising and we should utilize them. Dave mentioned Savor the Central Coast and said that Marsha Daniels had some great ideas. Dave will get together with her and will report back to the Board.

ITEMS FOR DOCENT LETTER: Ellen reported that she has talked to most of the docents about what the docents want and has managed to accomplish most of those including a grab bar in the restroom. She is using Mail Chimp for the newsletter which provides feedback on how many recipients opened it; 69 opened the last one which is 75%. The industry standard (charities) is only 23%. Mail Chimp also archives; if Board wants to, links to the docent newsletters can be made available in the 'for docents only' section of our website. She also reported that 21 people clicked on links provided in the docent newsletter.

Ellen asked if anyone had any new "fun facts" that could be included in the next newsletter. Donovan offered information about weight loss relative to the catastrophic molt and the mating season on the beach. He will provide that information to Ellen.

Ellen will also include the 1) new access information regarding the trail from VP4 north towards the light house, 2) the new C shift, 3) responsibility of docents to find their own substitutes if they can't make a shift, 4) the redesign of the hours log in the office, 5) information on the upcoming symposium (Brandt will supply), 6) information for the April 20th docent get together, 7) information about docents role and responsibility when State Parks, State Police or Marine Mammal Center gets involved in any situation at the bluff (Bill will supply that paragraph) and 8) notes from the February journals. Bill also suggested including further information regarding the sick sea lions found at local areas.

CLOSED SESSION: It was agreed that in the process of pursuing the endowment Bette and Sharkey meet with Steve Hall to discuss current and future contract obligations and responsibilities that pertain to endowment funds and potential donation qualifications.

Respectfully submitted by Megg McNamee, Secretary

NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON APRIL 17, 2013 AT 1:00 PM