

**Neighbors of Northwest Branch
Minutes of Board Meeting
May 3, 2022**

1. Welcome

Present on Zoom: Anne Ambler, Kem Morawski, Rebecca Henson, Kristin Backert, James Graham, Matt Boyer, Nora Swisher, Melissa Schweisguth, Ben Simasek.

2. Treasurer's report

The treasurer's report from Larry Hush shows a balance of \$7,373.48.

3. Update on water quality monitoring with Anacostia Riverkeeper –Kem

Anacostia Riverkeeper (ARK) water monitoring is back for the summer, every other Wednesday. Training for new folks is May 5th and May 20th. For those who have done the monitoring before, there is a certification test to take and a waiver to sign. ARK has 6 sites this summer, 3 on Sligo Creek, 1 on Long Branch and 1 on Northwest Branch at Burnt Mills. Kem sent out the ARK flyer with the information to the listserv, including the links for training sign-ups, and the link for the certification test. She will send out a last minute reminder to the listserv for the trainings this week.

4. Latest on the Werrlein case in Prince George's county, development in the NWB floodplain--Ben and Melissa

This has been an ongoing issue for some time. An area of open space was rezoned for development at 6.7 units per acre but Werrlein wants to put 12 units per acre there. Houses are being built and sold on the upper lot, but it is the lower lot that is in the flood plain and the developer has illegally graded this area. Greg Smith of Hyattsville asked that testimony be submitted last week for a hearing before the County Council. The record is open until May 17. NNWB has already sent several letters opposing development in this area.¹

5. Forest Knolls Pool grant--Melissa

The Forest Knolls Grant is for "stormwater runoff reduction projects." Melissa and Elaine Lamirande attended the April 27 presentation by Jeff Popp (Chesapeake Bay Trust) and Ryan Zerbe (Montgomery County DEP). It was an informational session for grantees and any fiscal agents. The

presentation included an overview of the grant payment system, branding and marketing requirements, and basic rules of the grant. If all goes according to plan, we will be the fiscal agents for the grant awarded to the Forest Knolls Pool by CBT and MoCo DEP. Kate Cummings is the point person for the pool. Anne agreed to follow up with the grantee to request (again) that they send a draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) spelling out our respective roles.

6. Tee Shirts.

Anne offered to deliver Tee shirts to those that wanted them. Ben and Melissa said they would pick them up from her. Matt and James will get them from her after Mother's Day.

7. NNWB Board elections.

President--Nora Swisher was nominated and elected unanimously.
Vice President for Prince George's County—Melissa Schweisguth was nominated and elected unanimously.
Vice President for Montgomery County—Matt Boyer was nominated and elected unanimously.
Secretary—Kem Morawski was nominated and elected unanimously.
Treasurer—Larry Hush has agreed to stay on as Treasurer.

8. Brief remarks by outgoing President Anne Ambler.

Anne welcomed the new president and said she was honored and pleased to have served in various leadership roles for NNWB since 2008.

The board all agreed that Anne has done a wonderful job as President and has worked tirelessly on numerous aspects affecting the NWB and has kept our membership up-to-date and informed on many important issues. We thanked her for all her years of service. Anne will still be on the board and will still manage many administrative aspects and keep us informed of relevant issues.

9. Remarks by the new President Nora Swisher.

Nora lives in the Stonegate community near the NWB and this is her last year as a science teacher at Blake HS. She has a science background, including a PhD in physics. She is currently very interested in composting and soil science.

She is interested in building community, working on diversity and inclusiveness, and outreach activities. She would like to encourage low stakes engagements for people such as picnics and hikes.

Next month Nora would like to have a listening/envisioning session, and a discussion of our values. What do we want to start/stop/continue? Matt is to send Nora some information on this kind of discussion. Nora is to send the board a list of these items/questions for us to consider before our next meeting. She is also to send us an updated list of board members with their contact information.

We had a short discussion about social media. Apparently we have a dormant Twitter account that we can revive and connect to our Instagram account. Matt would like to see us use Google Drive to share documents and a calendar. We can discuss this at our next meeting.

We will meet next on June 7th. We will not meet in July.

ⁱ Details FYI: NNWB sent a letter for a hearing on the Preliminary Plan of Subdivision (PPS) for the lower parcel (Suffragette Point South). which is partially in the floodplain. The NNWB letter asked the planning board to deny the PPS, citing concerns about the harm to NWB from development in the flood plain, and pending litigation on the site. (The density issue is related to their use of gross acreage in the denominator, though a court or judge said they should use net acreage (minus flood plain, internal roads), which would require them to reduce the number of proposed units if they are to stay within the density for the zone. NNWB has sent prior letters opposing the development, which started with work on the upper/north parcel and has documented environmental violations.