

Neighbors of Northwest Branch
Minutes of Board Meeting January 5, 2021

In attendance on Zoom: Anne Ambler, Kem Morawski, Kristen Backert, Michael Evans, Ed Murtagh, James Graham.

Treasurer's report (from Larry Hush).

We took in or were reimbursed \$1,565.00.

We paid out \$1,347.57.

Our balance is \$4,734.91.

Saying good-bye to E-Tapestry; settling for non-personal email?

E-Tapestry cost \$509.47 in 2020 and claims a 3% escalation clause each year. It is a full service operation but we don't need all that, plus some mail was going to spam. Anne is investigating other platforms.

Mailer Lite -- has a 14 day free trial for premium features. Basic system would be free for our size.

Vertical Response -- no trial period. Start free. (\$11 a month, free for nonprofits)

Constant Contact--60-day trial (\$20 a month, 30% off for nonprofits if paid annually) Reviewers say awkward to use.

All have tutorials, Constant Contact and Vertical have support.

We will lose ability to address person by name in the salutation, and these other platforms don't keep track of donations.

Anne told Larry not to pay E-Tapestry yet since Anne is looking into alternatives.

Thoughts on presentation by Paula Wang December 1st.

Everyone thought it went well and we had a good turn-out on Zoom. The recorded video has been viewed by quite a few people.

Feb. 2 Program on water quality monitoring and maybe stream restoration by Rachel Gauza with Montgomery County Parks, possibly also on stream restoration.

Another MoCo person has been invited to talk about stream restoration, but haven't heard back from her yet.

There are 2 stream water quality monitoring stations that MoCo Parks Dept. has on NW Branch, but they are near the beltway. Would be nice to have another upstream from that.

Lots of trees down across the NWB near Kemp Mill from super charged stormwater runoff.

Lots of new homes going up in Springbrook Forest and a lot of trees are coming down.

Excessive stormwater runoff leads to erosion and trees come down. MoCo stream restoration projects have been a mixed success.

Kem to talk to person in the Woodmoor neighborhood who knows about MoCo program to plant trees with the idea to publicize the program more and encourage more participation.

March program? Board meeting to map out cleanups for April?

April 6 program on wild flowers in the NWB, return engagement by Paula Wang.

Video postings by Ed Murtagh now on our website.

Latest: trash at Burnt Mills. Cleanup planned for Wednesday morning, 10:00 a.m. for Anne Ambler, Kem Morawski, Ed Murtagh and Scott Zillmer Not an official Parks cleanup. Ed can make short 2-3 minute videos. We can give him ideas of topics.

Is a monthly newsletter possible? Quarterly?

Michael is willing to look at doing a quarterly e-newsletter similar to FOSC's newsletter.

Thoughts on dates for general meeting, board election, election of officer, and date when the newly elected crew takes office. General meeting and board election historically were in December, then slid to March and beyond, with officer election also sliding.

Discussion ensued about the best time for elections. Fall was proposed but then it was decided to try for May. Since we don't meet during the summer, expectations for the summer would have to be spelled out. Summer should be used for planning, roll out of programs, establishment of goals, etc.

The meeting concluded with a poll about how often members got out along the NWB and their views on why people frequent the NWB Park. Exercise and fresh air won the most votes.

[After the meeting, the question of whether we're doing an MLK cleanup was raised. MoCo Parks has just hired a new volunteer coordinator, so Anne will check whether an official cleanup can be arranged or whether we should just advocate that folks get out on their own. Also we need to consider WHERE we would do this cleanup.]

Respectfully submitted,

Kem Morawski, Secretary