

**Neighbors of Northwest Branch  
Minutes of Board Meeting  
February 7, 2023**

**1. Welcome**

Present on Zoom: Nora Swisher, Anne Ambler, Kem Morawski, Matt Boyer, Melissa Schweisguth, Ben Simasek, James Graham, Kristin Backert, Michael Evans, Julie Keenahan

**2. Treasurer's report**

The December treasurer's report from Larry Hush shows a balance of \$9,704.45 of NNWB money; \$100,000 of Springsong funds that we are to administer for a total balance is \$109,704.45. The board approved this.

The January treasurer's report shows a balance of \$9,474.42 of NNWB money; Springsong's balance is \$97,425 for a balance of \$106,899.42.

The .org domain was just renewed for \$155.80 for 5 years which is a big increase since last time. At that rate, we might consider dropping the .com domain. Anne is to look up when the .com domain expires and we can let that lapse as it is not really used. The January treasurer's report was approved on the condition that instead of the word "website," (in the line for Feb. 7) we replace that word with "domain name renewal (.org)."

**3. Springsong**

The IRS acted faster than any of us anticipated and updated Springsong's tax status with the correct designation for them to accept large donations thus, we will no longer be managing their funds. Nora is to ask Larry to issue a payment of \$97,425 to Springsong.

When we send payment we will acknowledge their notification of termination and state that we have fulfilled our fiscal obligations. If there are further costs above the \$75 Springsong will cover them.

Matt proposed to Rebecca that NNWB be able to use the facility when it opened for storage, meetings, restrooms for clean ups, etc. She was amenable.

#### **4. Events**

Anne is leading a hike on Sunday, Feb. 12 at 10 a.m. at the Kemp Mill trailhead. Kem will post this event on the Woodmoor listserv and Julie will post on Twitter and Nora will post on Instagram. Anne is meeting with the new council member, Natali Fani-Gonzales of District 6 tomorrow. She would like to invite her on the hike so she can see how many trees are down, how many invasive plants there are, and how bad the erosion is—WSSC has already had to fix exposed sewer pipes in this area, but erosion continues so more fixes may be required in the future.

Greenfest on April 22, Earth Day. Do we want to share a table with FOSC (Friends of Sligo Creek)? If so we need to fill out an application. Nora will follow up with Anne on this.

Anacostia Watershed Society Earth Day Clean up 4/22. Melissa and Ben are hosting sites in Prince George's County.

Anacostia Riverkeeper is adding a water quality testing site (or two) in Prince George's County this summer and Melissa and Ben will sign up to volunteer there. Kem and Anne will continue to volunteer for this program as well.

#### **5. Stormwater Partners letter**

In 2021, the State legislature passed a law requiring the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to update the state's stormwater regulation, and to review them every 5 years. Eliz Cava, Director of Conservation, Nature Forward, on behalf of the Montgomery County Stormwater Partners Network (composed of 33 organizations and many individuals) and Karen Metchis, on behalf of the Stormwater Partners Network and the Montgomery County Climate Action Plan Coalition, have written a letter to the Office of the Secretary and to the Maryland Department of the Environment. The letter comments on proposed changes/updates to the Maryland stormwater regulations.

Stormwater standards need to be updated based on NOAA's new assessment of how much water has to be captured given the increase due to climate change. There is a lot of data in the letter dealing with this issue. The board voted unanimously to sign onto the letter.

## **6. Trash bills**

Anne reports that there is a litter reduction bill that a sponsor is putting in front of the legislature to require deposits on bottles. The Sierra Club is backing the bill—it is one of their 5 priorities—so that will give it some clout.

Another bill deals with PFAS—the forever chemicals which are still be used in various products and is getting into the rivers and the water supply. One example is that foam from firefighting drills go into Sligo Creek, then NWB. The bill would include a regulation that publicly owned water treatment plants monitor and report PFAS levels.

## **8. MS4 permits**

The federal government regulates storm drains in Maryland which implements this regulation through a permit process called the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit Program (AKA the MS4 Permit Program).

Montgomery County (MC) has an MS4 Permit that requires the County to meet certain water quality standards. The Permit was reissued on November 5, 2021 and has a term of five (5) years. The MC Department of the Environment (DEP) has met with Stormwater Partners.

MC Parks has its own MS4 permits. Parks is cutting trees and adding a lot of trails in Wheaton Regional Park for equestrians/bikes/pedestrians. The worry is further erosion/impact on NWB. We should meet with Chuck Kines who is running this, or Bob Turnbull who is the onsite supervisor to review what is going on.

## **7. Miscellaneous**

Melissa volunteered to maintain our website and Ben says he can help when he has more time this summer.

Re NNWB Board elections in March—everyone is in the middle of their 2 year terms so it is not necessary to hold elections. Leadership positions will be voted on in April. The only change at this time is that Kem is resigning from the board so we will have to find a new secretary. She will take the minutes in March.