

## Harwich Ponds Coalition

[www.harwichwaters.org](http://www.harwichwaters.org)

December 6, 2024

### Minutes from the Steering Committee Meeting

#### Steering Committee Meeting Attendees:

Susan Cyr - President

Ann Frechette - Vice President

Erik Skramstad - Treasurer (via zoom)

Hallie Vitolo - Secretary

John Kechum - Webmaster

Scott Norum

Diana Preston (via zoom)

Rich Walker

Donna Connolly (via zoom)

#### 1. Financial Overview (presented by Erik Skramstad)

- Erik confirmed that each of the 10 Steering Committee members had paid a \$50 initial donation to help cover the organizational start-up costs and that the initial fees paid by Scott Norum had been paid back. In addition, a deposit had been paid for the room in the Harwich Community Center for the June 14, 2025 annual meeting
- A bank account for HPC has been set up at Cape Cod 5 by Erik and Susan
- Once the IRS not-for-profit status is received, a PayPal account can be set up so that the organization can start accepting electronic donations

#### 2. HPC Initiatives Going Forward

- **Project 1:** An initial meeting was held on November 14, 2025 with Amy Usowski and Lily Gooding of the Conservation Commission and Don Yannuzzi of the Natural Resources Department. The discussion focused on existing testing ongoing in the ponds and waterways, responsibility for testing and reporting of pond quality concerns. The group is looking into the potential for push alerts for both water quality problems as well as “clear to swim” status. Amy indicated that the Town was looking for a water quality study of West Reservoir in coming years. Available sampling data and the goal of data sharing was discussed. It was noted that there is a town-wide volunteer fair on January 23rd and that the Town would also be conducting Earth Day/Earth Week events that HPC might want to become involved with.
  - Scott indicated that he expected to be able to get test results from 2024 prior to the beginning of the summer.

- Susan and Ann will plan to attend the Volunteer Fair on January 23rd. Ann will work on a draft postcard with HPC information that can be handed out at that time, perhaps with the Pond Pledge. The goal will be to get the community to volunteer to assist with pond sampling.
  - The data indicates that five ponds have been sampled continuously: Aunt Edie's, Bucks, Hinckleys, John Joseph and Skinequit. Ponds that should be included in future sampling include: Flax, Grass, Hawksnest, Robbins, Sand, Walkers and West Reservoir. The question is whether the Town has available funding for testing if HPC can find volunteers to conduct the sampling.
  - Susan will follow-up with Amy regarding the push alert system and money available for additional pond sampling
- **Project 2:** Hallie provided a draft Pond Pledge for HPC based on existing pledges in place in both Brewster and Orleans. It was decided that the fertilizer/pesticide discussion should be included with the Cape-friendly lawn discussion. Hallie will revise the draft Pond Pledge and disburse for comment. It was suggested that in the future we should consider working with local landscapers to develop pond-friendly practices and see what suggestions they could offer.
  - **Project 3:** Hallie shared her progress with the Logo Contest. She had made a contact at Monomoy High School and will also make a contact at the Tech High School. A prize of \$25 was discussed. The goal will be to have this contest run in January.
  - **Project 4:** The Pond Project is under development on the HPC website. The goal is to include a paragraph for each pond summarizing size, depth, types of fish and other wildlife, history, plants, sampling data and a pond association link (where applicable). Ann has started working on this and will continue to work with John to develop these pages. The goal will be to have the primary ponds updated by April 15, 2025.
  - **Project 5:** Identification of properties and land owners that border Harwich ponds. Rich has developed a list of all abutting property owners. This will be used in the spring when we are ready to announce the annual meeting and membership drive.

### 3. Next Steps and Wrap Up

- Susan will follow-up with Amy and Don on the development of a system for push alerts
- Ann will draft a postcard that can be used for the volunteer fair
- Scott will reach out to see if pond testing data from 2024 is available
- Ann and Susan will attend the Volunteer Fair on January 23rd
- Hallie will update the POND Pledge and circulate for comment
- Hallie will follow-up with the school to start the logo contest in January
- The next meeting was set for 10:00 am on January 31st and will be held at John Ketchum's house at 2 Lake Hurst Drive in Harwich
- Meeting adjourned