

Balcones Canyonlands Chapter TXMN

Chapter Meeting Agenda

6/8/2021

Webex online

Attendees: Shayla Fleshman, Colette Pearce, Beverly Penn, Brenda Foss, Deborah Holle, Larry Root, Gene Janulis, Jane Neu, Alicia Miranda, Amy Robertson, Julian Waits, Audrey Gray, Beverly Cusmano, Claire Rice, Erin Hollis, Jordyn Dwyer, Karen Yates, Kelly Kaye, Mary Ann Robalino, Olivia, Ruth Ann Panopinto, Samantha Banken, Sandra Williams, Sam Voltaggio, Suzi Meriwether, Sheila Endres, Sandra Williams, Tania Homayoun, Tim Phillips

Board and Committee members gave the following reports.

Julian Yates: He is lining potential speakers up for 2022. Paula Levin Coon will host the December Holiday Party/Chapter Meeting/ Board Elections at her house on December 18.

Shayla Fleshman: Survey results for format for future chapter meetings indicate, out of 23 responses, that 61 percent of participants favor the hybrid classroom from Concordia and 35 percent preferred a combination of online and in person meetings. Sixty one percent was flexible, depending on speaker needs while 33 percent liked the majority of meetings to be online. When asked about what they would like to see in chapter meetings, 96 percent responded that they would like to learn something new, learn about volunteers opportunities and about he work the chapter is doing while only about sixty percent wanted to hear board reports. All responded yes to being interested in attending social events.

Gene Janulis/Treasurers report. Gene reported the chapter has about \$8,843 in the available funds. The chapter received \$1,000 in donations for scholarships for the next class.

The board is looking at dropping membership dues to be in line with other chapters and to help with new members.

Brenda Foss (membership). Happy to report that Sheila Endres has 500 volunteer hours. At the time of the meeting, new class members John Baker, Beverly Cusmano, Caroline Oakley, and Friedereike Schuster have completed their volunteer hours and are certified master naturalists.

There was clarification that anyone that pays dues is part of the chapter, regardless of whether they are a certified master naturalist.

Sheila Endres (VMS). Sheila reports there are 38 people already signed up for the next class before any promotion or outreach. It is already larger than last fall. She hopes to keep the class to a size of 50-60 people and will cap it at 80. Priority into the class is given on the first to pay class

fees (other than those applying for scholarship.) Sam Dula will take over Gabriel's role in this next class. Classes will continue online but there will be more opportunities for field trips.

Class graduation/potluck is on June 13 from 3-7 pm at Amy Roberson's house, with this year's and last year's class being recognized. So far, 57 people have signed up for the event.

Suzu Meriweather (Communications). They held their first in-person meeting on Monday. The focus is to use communications to build community. They are working to make the website a single source to find an updated calendar, the newsletter, volunteer opportunities, and blogs created by members.

Julian Yates (Program Committee/formerly called field trip committee). Numerous field trips are in the works including: Friesenhahn Cave, Lake Buchanan bird trip, San Antonio Zoo, Bracken Cave Preserve, San Antonio Botanical Garden, and Bamberger Ranch Preserve.

The Committee is also looking into self-guided field trips on the third Sunday of each month that may include: Common Fords Ranch Metropolitan Park, Doeskin Ranch National Preserve, and Mammoth National Monument.

Stephanie Putnam (DEI) : The Committee has a plan to visit a north Austin ISD outdoor classroom (Wooldridge or Burrington Elementary) on Saturday, June 27. Breakfast will be by Crack of Dawn food truck. Those interested can email stephanie.putnam@gmail.com

Gene Janulis (Scholarship Committee). The Committee currently has \$1,000 in scholarship money and is looking at reviewing and setting up a process and criteria on how to award these funds. They have looked at other chapters and our handbook and will possibly modify our handbook to make the process more effective. The committee will be meeting to hammer out the details to bring a proposal to the board for approval. A member who received a scholarship in the past spoke to how important it is that those who receive a scholarship not to be treated any differently.

Alexander Austin (swag) Alexander has been researching the costs and options of various items for new members and for existing members to purchase that include the possibility of t-shirts, caps, bandanas and bags. Gene is going to look at what the swag budget for new members has been in the past.

Larry Root (president). Larry brought up the idea of moving the chapter to a communications platform called Slack and away from Google Groups. Members and board have expressed frustration with Google Groups. The Board is currently testing Slack and will receive training on it to see if it is a better option for members. One member expressed concern on whether she would be able to download Slack onto her computer. (Slack can be used via its website or the app can be downloaded on either phone, table or computer.)

A member asked for information on the recent board retreat. Advisor Johanna Arednt, who helped facilitate the meeting, and Shayla Fleshman, gave a summary of outcomes. (The full minutes of the retreat were emailed out to all chapter members on May 26.)

At the board retreat, changes to chapter meetings that were discussed include:

- Chapter meetings to be more interactive and focus on key projects, opportunities, and other items of interest to members, and will still feature presentations from outside speakers.
- Starting in July, board meetings to be held one week before chapter meetings. Board meeting minutes will be sent to all members prior to the chapter meeting, along with a draft chapter meeting agenda.
- Instead of reporting board meeting minutes at the chapter meeting, they will be covered in the board meeting minutes sent by email. Any major updates will still be shared at the chapter meeting, and board members will be available to discuss any questions or concerns. Members continue to be welcome to attend board meetings, and the board will make sure everyone receives invitations to join digitally (or in person when that happens).

A member shared concerns about whether the board is operating under the chapter bylaws and handbook. It was discussed that during the board retreat that a sizeable portion of time was devoted to reviewing and discussing both documents. This member also expressed discomfort that an advisor developed a proposal for board consideration, (which is the pollinator garden project.) The response was that the chair of this new committee has since moved to a chapter member, Shayla Fleshman. She said there's been lots of momentum on the committee and she will give a full update at the next chapter meeting when there is more time.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.