

The American Chestnut Foundation, Connecticut Chapter
Board of Directors Business Meeting
DRAFT MINUTES
January 19, 2013

John Anderson, acting president, called the meeting to Order at 10:10 AM

Present: Kendra Gurney (TACF Regional Coordinator), John Anderson (vice-president/acting president & acting secretary), Phil Arnold, Jane Harris, Woods Sinclair, David Bingham, Jack Ostroff, John Baker, Garrett Smith, and Sue Kelsey.

Kendra Gurney mentioned the passing of board member Bob Gregg in December. Phil Arnold gave a touching eulogy and the board had a moment of silence to honor Bob. There was an obituary in the Woodbridge Journal, January 2013 issue.

There were no minutes to approve from the last meeting.

Kendra also announced that Gale Kida and Bill Moorhead had both stepped down from the board. Letters of appreciation will be sent to them. There was a consensus to produce plaques of appreciation for Gale and also Bill Adamsen, who will be stepping down as president this spring, for their long and good service to the chapter.

The treasurer's report was distributed and discussed, which included an income statement for FY 2012 and a balance sheet as of December 31, 2012. A MOTION by John Baker, and seconded, to accept the treasurer's report was agreed by unanimous vote.

Orchard Reports. Kendra Gurney gave a summary of Bill Adamsen's report, which included tables for Woodbridge, Salem, Swann Farm, and Guilford Orchards, and also the updated "Trees Database Dashboard, consolidated view as of 9/12/2012." Written reports were distributed and given for Great Mountain Forest, Wigwam Brook, Swan Farm, and Middletown Orchards. Verbal reports were given for Woodbridge, Salem, and Guilford. There was discussion about issues on many of these until 11:10 AM.

Operation GROW. Beginning at 11:20 AM, TACF Executive Director Bryan Burhans gave an overview of the pilot program "Operation GROW" via Skype and, when the connection became too poor to understand Bryan, by speaker phone. A 2-page document was distributed entitled "Operation GROW: Building capacity for priority chapters in 2013." The upshot of the program was to offer the national home office's help in developing the chapter's board and capacity building through fundraising by working with its vice-president for development. This would require an agreement, signed by each board member, committing to scope of work to be determined, as present by Bryan and outlined in the "Operation GROW" document distributed. A lengthy discussion followed. In general, the board members present did not want to change the board or meeting structures, nor did they want to spend time doing big fundraising activities, something the national home office could do better. Bryan suggested a start could be to get two or three board members to approach potential new members who would add new skill sets, especially fundraising. Board members said that the chapter's local work is done at a very low cost. They had an interest in the science, the big mission, and local objectives. The chapter could still help the national home office raise money. It was suggested that money was needed for the Trees Database. Locally, we need better ways to tell our story. Bryan said that the national home office is revamping the education program. He suggested that Operation GROW will help leverage staff, dollars and partners to achieve our common mission. No action was taken.

There was a break for lunch. Garrett Smith was thanked for providing lunch for this meeting.

Chapter Development. Kendra Gurney gave a report on membership, which is currently holding at 216 members. There was discussion about possible outreach events such as at the Hartford Flower Show, the

Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station's Plant Science Day and with the Connecticut Master Gardeners' Program. There was discussion about where interns and grant funds might be directed, such as the further development of potential chestnut sites (analysis and map already begun and can be found on a University of Connecticut website). There was some discussion about developing a strategy to establish restoration trees. Finally, the chapter's website will continue to be maintained by Bill Adamsen even after he steps down as president. Stories are needed for the site. Phil Arnold will write something on Bob Gregg. There was a request for a summary of one or more orchard reports to be posted.

Planning Next 3 – 6 Months. The Annual Meeting was planned: Jane Harris will arrange for meeting place; Garrett Smith will be in charge of food; Woods Sinclair, John Anderson and Kendra Gurney will find speakers; April 13th was suggested as a date; announcements will be made via the website and the members' email list; Kendra Gurney and John Anderson will coordinate. The Nominating Committee was appointed: Woods Sinclair, Chair; Jane Harris, and; Bill Adamsen. Board members present were polled and all agreed to continue to serve on the board. A potential slate of officers was discussed. Appreciation plaques for Gale Kida and Bill Adamsen will be handled by Woods Sinclair and John Anderson. Newsletter: Kendra Gurney will work on a spring newsletter. Jane Harris will write an article about the Garden Club of America. An orchard report will be written by Phil Arnold. The Annual Meeting announcement will be included. Pictures and recipes were requested from members. 300 – 500 copies will be printed.

Planning Next 6 – 12 Months. Demonstration Plantings: a volunteer coordinator is needed. David Bingham will follow up on the possibility of donating one or more chestnut trees for the Newtown Elementary School memorial. The possibilities for demonstration sites discussed included nature centers, schools and colleges (concerns over nut allergies might present a problem), and farm markets, like Freund's Farm in East Canaan. Kendra Gurney said the blight inoculation decisions can be put off until 2014. Progeny Test Plantations: Kendra explained that these plantations would be about one acre, fenced, holding about 300 trees. A recent forest clear-cut, or secondarily an open field, would be best. Greenwich Land Trust is interested in such a plantation. The chapter's role in coordinating and logistics was discussed. Kendra Gurney, Phil Arnold and John Anderson would visit this potential site in the spring. Kendra will follow up on other possibilities. There was a suggestion to add to the website a list or map the towns in Connecticut that have orchards and demonstration sites. This would show the chapter's activities and growth across the state. A suggestion for study and an article for the newsletter and website was on what native trees would be replaced by the chestnut restoration and what other species would be affected (positive or negative).

Planning Next 1 – 5 Years. There was discussion about the need for volunteers and possibly staff for orchard inoculation and pollination. There was discussion about developing seed orchards and who should host these. The chapter's cross-breeding could be finished in 2013, with 16 lines established. No new planting is required, though the Middletown orchard could use more trees. We need a new volunteer science coordinator to work with Kendra Gurney. Orchards that need help with fencing and maintenance are Middletown and Guilford.

Strategic Planning. Jack Ostroff began the discussion on long-term planning. He has reviewed the old TACF restoration plan and other manuals and will work with David Bingham to further develop the chapter's long-term plan. It was suggested that we need consider with which organizations we need to be working for the future of the seed orchards. Board governance and succession planning was also considered a critical need.

Jane Harris was thanked for hosting this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

John Anderson, acting secretary