

**ROTONDA WEST ASSOCIATION, INC**  
**646 Rotonda Circle, Rotonda West, FL 33947**  
**Wildlife Committee**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**May 5, 2021**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 12:00 PM

**Present:** Cari Hale, (Chair), Patti Cowin (BOD Liaison) Cindy Chatham, Jim Peterfeso, Belinda and Don Olsen Via Zoom: Kip and Ann Stadnicki, Joan Gotthardt, Lynda Chamowitz, Belinda Olsen, Don Olsen

**Guests:** Jerry Eldred, Jim McNeal, Sam Besase, Gwen Grace, Brenda Frankenbach

**Approval of Minutes:** Jim requested the minutes be updated to correct the name of the upcoming presentation to, "Native Plants for Birds". Patti motioned to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2021 minutes with that correction. 2<sup>nd</sup> Jim. Minutes were approved unanimously.

**New Business:**

Cindy related that the Bat Conservancy is available to provide a 1 to 1.5 hour presentation on a Friday evening in July. As they will be bringing live animals, Patti motioned to approve a stipend of \$200. 2<sup>nd</sup> Don. Motion passed unanimously.

Cari showed examples of 3 different bat houses available from Amazon, one that has a bark exterior that would be well camouflaged when placed on a pine tree. Cindy mentioned that the bat houses should be placed in the open and questioned whether we would be able to use the power poles being left by FPL. Cari reminded the committee that at the last meeting a resident, who borders the park, expressed concern about bat houses being erected on poles.

Cari spoke of a conversation she had with a resident regarding the Brazillian Peppers removed from the shoreline of some of the ponds and his concern that it would lead to erosion. Jim McNeal shared that he too was worried about erosion of the shoreline of the pond near his home, L11. He also indicated he would be willing to provide funds and labor to aid in this being accomplished. Patti motioned that the Wildlife Committee partner with Aquatics and RWA to replant the shorelines with native species. 2<sup>nd</sup> Jim. Motion passed unanimously.

Cari further indicated that Manager Hedges would be consulted and request that he provide training to the volunteers so they would be able to identify the invasive species and confine their activities to their removal. Jerry Eldred was concerned about volunteers using chemicals to mitigate the problem. Manager Hedges indicated that, under his license, he could supervise a number of trained individuals applying chemicals. Jim McNeal offered that Charlotte County uses trained volunteers to apply chemicals in the county parks.

Don discussed sponsoring a presentation on snakes. He inquired as to whether we wanted to do a daytime presentation, evening, or weekend. It was suggested that we do both a daytime presentation and another on either the weekend or evening so that working members would be able to attend.

Discussion then turned to the proposed budget for 2022. Since regardless of where the Wildlife Committee functions end up, if any of the proposed activities are to come to fruition funds needed to accomplish these tasks must be identified. To that end, Cari suggested the following:

Brochure reproduction - \$750, After hours staff - \$700, Stipend for Speakers - \$1200, Markers - \$600, Signs - \$700, and Trees & Plants (bat boxes) - \$1000 for a total of \$5000. Jim motioned to approve a \$5000 budget submission. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ann. Motion passed unanimously.

**Old Business:**

A Gopher Tortoise was run over by a mower and residents assumed it was by RWA mowers. Cari was able to educate the members about habits of tortoises and then determined that RWA had not been in the area and could not have hit the tortoise.

She also informed the committee about two members who contacted the office complaining about alligators. While not a formal policy, the office has been referring the calls to the Wildlife Committee so we may educate them about alligator behaviors so they could decide NOT to call FWC to have them removed. Two alligators were saved by just talking to the members and educating them on how to co-exist with them. Cindy suggested that educational information be provided to all residents. Patti informed her that the Wildlife Committee brochures are included in the new owner packets. Cindy indicated that she never received any welcome packet. Patti suggested that perhaps there was a lapse in distribution when the RWA was "between managers". Manager Hedges confirmed that, since he became manager, welcome packets were being sent to all new owners.

**Member Input:**

Sam Besase reiterated Manager Hedge's statement about new owners receiving welcome packets and that the action is triggered when the County sends the warranty deed transferring a property.

**Committee comments:**

Jim mentioned the need for volunteers to aid in the Aquatics Committee "Critter Collection". He also mentioned that he is putting together ID guides for the dip net studies. Cari suggested sharing the results of the last "Critter Collection" on West Ways. Jerry Eldred suggested that the ID guide be added to the new owner welcome package.

There was also discussion about the Lake-naming group and how that process would work. The group was planning to have each committee submit ideas for names to the group and the list of names would then be narrowed down with member input. Final approval would be by the Board.

**Meeting adjourned at 1:20 PM**

**Next meeting:** June 2, 2021

Respectfully submitted: Patti Cowin, Wildlife Committee Secretary