

Nova Scotia Environmental Network (NSEN)
Annual General Meeting – June 27, 2018

1. CALL TO ORDER

Co-chairs Megan MacLeod and Chris White called the meeting to order at 6:34pm, opening with an acknowledgement of the unseeded and un-surrendered Mi'kmaq territory on which the meeting was taking place.

Quorum achieved with over 5 voting members present. As per the NSEN by-laws, only NS member organizations are permitted to vote on motions.

Thank you to sponsors: Propellor Brewery for supplying some drinks, to Just Us! For coffee donations, Mumford and Queen St. Sobeys, Joseph Howe & Quinpool Superstores, Genuine Nova Scotia Oatcakes, Bennetts Podiatric, and Emily Dodge and family for contributions toward our snack spread tonight. A shout out to St. Columba United church for lending us their coffee urn and to Kenny Macleod and Brenna MacDonald for donating printing supplies. A special thanks goes to the tireless board members of NSEN for all their hard work organizing, planning, and preparing for tonight. Thanks as well to our volunteers tonight who helped make this event go smoothly as possible.

There were door prizes donated from Noble Grape, C+Sea, Local Source Market, Dimitris Pizza, Gaudet Optical, Synergy Physiotherapy & Pilates, Quinpool Wellness Center, Elizabeth Hefflefinger Acupuncture, and The Hive Hair Salon

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Moved by Kelly Schnare, seconded by Tony Burn.

That the agenda be approved as presented.

Motion put and passed.

3. APPROVAL OF 2017 MINUTES

Moved by Joanne Light, seconded by Sheila Richardson.

That the minutes of the 2017 AGM be approved as distributed.

Motion put and passed.

4. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Outgoing Director Joanne Light spoke about environmental issues across the province, and the efforts of people in the room to be the front line.

- NSEN is a network to demonstrate a united front for environmental issues in NS
- Struggles over past few years. Joanne & Sheila Cole stayed on to help rebuild. Joanne resigning from Board this year.

- NSEN could liaise with Department of Environment, unite activist efforts and citizens, educate through conferences, and connect groups
- NB Network receives funds from government grants; in NS, no reliance on Gov.
- Board is growing, would like 10 people on board to allow for effective committees and caucuses to be born.
- In 2016/17
 - o Representatives from 10 groups met with the Minister of Environment
 - o Worked with Dal. School of Sustainability Students
 - o Hosted a talking circle series at the Halifax Central Library that drew 30-50 people to each and received much positive feedback
 - o Kelly Schnare and Amy Buckland-Nicks co-organized province-wide gathering in Truro in fall 2017
 - o Membership drive brought in 7 new board members, new organization members, and \$2000 in revenues.
 - o Point person appointed at Dept. of Environment
 - o Completed a province-wide survey to inform the future of NSEN
 - o Updated by-laws

Sheila Cole also spoke about the history of NSEN and some hopes for the future.

- Active with Canadian Environmental Network (CEN) and NSEN
 - o Both formed when environmental issues were becoming a priority and recognition of need to consult citizens
 - o At the time, CEN was viewed as one of the most successful environmental networks in the world; CEN provided core funding to regional networks until 2011
 - o Many regional networks folded when funding ended; NS stayed standing
 - o Robust system of consultation has been lost
- Sheila stressed the importance of networks
- Identified fundraising as a priority to help pay for an Executive Director
- Vision of NSEN where the board is administrative and members are the activists
- New wave of interest sweeping in, thrilled to see such energy in the room
- Board is working hard to get the attention of government
- NSEN has had guaranteed seat on the EGSPA Round Table, but the format is changing next month. More details to come.

5. NSEN FEEDBACK SURVEY

Megan MacLeod reported on results of broad survey to members and non-members across the province. Thank you to volunteer Samantha Burns for compiling and analyzing the survey data. To view the full results, visit: <https://nsenvironmentalnetwork.com/2018/07/23/nsen-2018-survey-analysis/>

The survey garnered lots of good information to review in moving NSEN forward, including suggested changes for eco-connects newsletter. Suggestions to improve eco-connects newsletter included: feature member organizations, short articles, events categorized, environmental activism opportunities as a focus, funding opportunities shared, and some formatting changes. Most people who responded were

from Halifax, identifying a need to engage more people in other areas. Overall people who responded believe environmental collective work is important.

6. CAUCUS UPDATES

Kelly Schnare presented updates on NSEN caucus groups. Caucuses are intended to help members narrow in on environmental topics of interest.

Water Caucus: Last met at gathering in Truro. Have had prior meetings with the Minister of Environment. Call out for people to help lead and rebuild this caucus going forward.

- Amy Buckland-Nicks: amy.buckland-nicks@merseytobeatic.ca

Environment and Sustainability Education Caucus: Active caucus with monthly meetings and listserv to enable conversation between meetings. Revolving chair for each meeting. Working to organize a professional development day.

- Karen McKendry karenmckendry@eastlink.ca

7. FINANCIAL UPDATE

Chris White, interim treasurer, presented the April 2017 to March 2018 financial statements. The statements have not yet been formally audited. Thank you to outgoing bookkeeper Sally Raab for preparing the financial statements. You can find the statement here:

<https://nsenvironmentalnetwork.com/resources/annual-report-2018/>

- NSEN has a current surplus of \$4,205. This is the available money not earmarked for other purposes.
- 2017/18 revenue sources: mostly a one-time government grant for gathering in Truro, and sales from tickets to gathering. Also members fees and NS Health Board grant, some donations.
- 2017/18 Expenses: Costs associated with gathering in Truro, contracted employment, accounting, honorariums, other operational costs.
- Potential Opportunities: accessing government environmental trust fund, fundraising events
- Need for more people to do the work, along with money

Moved by Victoria Byrne, seconded by Sheila Richardson.

That the financial statements for April 2017 to March 2018 are approved as submitted, with formal audit pending.

Motion put and passed.

Andy Buchan was identified as a potential financial auditor for the past year's financial statements.

Moved by Joanne Light, seconded by Victoria Byrne.

That Andy Buchan be approved as auditor of the April 2017 to March 2018 NSEN financial statements.

Motion put and passed.

8. BOARD NOMINATIONS

Megan MacLeod called for nominations for board positions.

Member Organizations

Brittany McGuire – ACORN environmental project coordinator, interested in joining as representative of ACORN.

Emily Dodge – interested in joining as representative of Sierra Club.

The co-chair called three times for any further nominations. There were no further nominations. No vote needed for member organization representatives to be added to board. Brittany and Emily were declared a member of the 2017/2018 NSEN board.

Moved by Joanne Light, seconded by Tina Northrup.

That nominations for member organization board representatives be closed.

Motion put and passed.

Individual Members

Adelaide Canning – interested in joining as youth rep and helping bring NSEN to a younger audience.

Samantha Burns – recently volunteered with NSEN to help compile survey data. Has a background in international development, communications, and interested in connecting NSEN with university demographic.

Chris White – interim treasurer for NSEN, and keen to get more involved. Will be completing his PhD in mechanical engineering with a focus in renewable energy.

Thomas Gregory – involved with Green Marine organization, but interested in joining as an individual.

Moved by Tina Northrup, seconded by Joanne Light.

That all nominated individual board members be approved to join the 2017/2018 NSEN board.

Motion put and passed.

9. RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS

Outgoing board members Joanne Light, David Henry, and Linda Davis were all recognized for their work on the board, especially during NSEN's most challenging years.

10. UPDATES TO BY-LAWS

David Henry presented proposed by-law changes intended to improve clarity and inclusivity of organization by-laws. You can find the full set of by-laws and as well as a list of the specific updates here (at bottom of page): <https://nsenvironmentalnetwork.com/about/>

Discussion around the proposed changes brought forth the following suggestions for consideration for next AGM:

- Change #8 to better accommodate Aboriginal representation and acknowledge that political provincial boundaries are not traditional territory boundaries. This change was supported by other attendees, but deferred to the next AGM so that wording could be better defined.
- Review how many years someone can continue on as a board member, length of board terms.
- Clarify language that members can be reappointed.

Moved by Sheila Cole, seconded by Tina Northrup.

That the proposed by-law changes be grouped together for subsequent voting.

Motion put and passed.

Moved by Rebecca Parker, seconded by Tina Northrup.

That all proposed by-law changes be approved as presented.

Motion put and passed.

11. RECOGNITIONS

NSEN recognized Suzanne McConnell for providing workshops to support mental health of environmental activists, and Cory McConnell for choosing to include environmental ethics in his studies.

12. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:21pm.

Other notes:

This discussion happened after the official meeting adjourned where attendees were invited to stay to talk about ideas that interested them and contribute comments and notes for future discussion. Some ideas and questions that emerged included the following:

- Need to diversify funding sources, have fundraising events
- Be clear about fundraising - what are the goals, what is NSEN working toward?
- Need a strategy session for the board incorporating survey and Eco-Connects feedback
- Suggestion to have petition circulated among members for Environmental Trust Fund to be distributed, show that it's not NSEN asking for themselves
- Amy spoke about Ecoconnects Gathering learnings, specifically that having Mi'kmaw voices involved from the start is important for any future conferences/events and building trust is essential for NSEN now.
- Suggestion to have training for new board reps re Mi'kmaq relationship-building

Community-Building

- Remember we're coming from Euro-centric colonist culture
- Recruit more volunteers
- Open communication: clear access to the board, clear about value of NSEN
- Ensure transparency of financials and governance processes
- Don't focus so much on money and remember that the coming together of groups is valuable in itself
- Have fun getting together - it's not all work
- Meet members where they are and GIVE

Future Vision

- Diverse membership with Mi'maq organizations, ENOs, teachers, high school and university students, new residents, annual gathering/fundraiser that is fun with lots of time for networking. A hub for petitions and province-wide organizing
- Increase member groups to a present a strong, united front from civil society to the government and private sector
- Executive director (even part-time) / board needs to put thought into leadership structure - does an ED make the most sense?
- What committees might be useful for individual members - how can they get involved?