

Toronto Bruce Trail Club Minutes

2021 Annual General Meeting

April 17th, 2021

Zoom Webinar

- 1. Call to order:** Robert Gillespie called the 2021 TBTC AGM to order at 1:00 p.m. Robert introduced Jackie Randle, Director Organizational Resources at BTC Head Office who reviewed Zoom Webinar procedures including voting, Q&A and speaker recognition.

Moved by Robert Gillespie, Seconded by Graham Allen,

That the agenda for the 2021 AGM be adopted as presented

Motion Carried

- 2. Opening Remarks**

Graham Allen welcomed the members to the 2021 TBTC AGM and thanked the Webinar organizers, Jackie Randle and Meghan Croll from BTC Head Office Organizational Resources.

- 3. Minutes of the 2020 AGM**

Moved by Robert Gillespie, Seconded by David Royle,

That the minutes of the 2020 AGM be accepted as presented.

Motion Carried

- 4. President's Report – Graham Allen**

Graham thanked the 2020/21 TBTC Directors and sent best wishes of the club to the directors who are stepping down this year: Peter Leeney, Robert Gillespie, Janet Le Lievre and Mario Rigby. Highlights of the past year include:

- Development of new web site led by David Rowney
- Introduction of new winter end-to-end hiking badge designed by Shawna Reeves. Youth hiking badge introduced an initiative lead by Alina Lin
- Initiation of the SAGE accounting system, moving the Toronto club banking to Meridian and the excellent financial condition of the club led by Margaret Corner
- Receiving the BTC Philip Gosling award for the construction of the new footbridge near the Campbellville side road
- Thanks to members, volunteers, and directors for handling the COVID restrictions so well. Crockett

- 5. Treasurer's Report – Margaret Corner**

Margaret reviewed the 2020 Financial Statements

- In 2020, revenues and expenses were below budget due to COVID restrictions
- The club sold a record number of badges (258 end-to-end badges, 32 youth badges)
- Trail Maintenance was curtailed due to shortages of lumber and Bruce Trail closure for 2 months due to COVID
- Major expenses included development of the new website.
- Lower expenses included the cancellation of the Landowner Appreciation Dinner due to COVID
- The club donated \$10,466 to the Bruce Trail Conservancy
- The proposed 2021 TBTC Budget was reviewed

Moved by Margaret Corner, seconded by Marlis Butcher,
That the December 31, 2020 Financial Statements be accepted as presented.

Motion Carried

6. Director's Reports and questions

Graham introduced the Club's Directors and noted that each director's annual report was posted on the club web site for review 30 days prior to the 2021 AGM. The club member's questions then were addressed in a session led by Special Events Coordinator, Juliet Williams:

Q1: When will the BT App be available?

Response (Marlis Butcher): The BT App is expected to be released in early summer.

Q2: Is it possible to identify the location of trail photos in e-mails?

Response (Alina Lin): Some photos we publish may be from our archives and the locations are unknown. We can certainly identify current photos and have passed this request to those who are involved in our social media, E-Notes and Bruce Trail Guidebook.

Q3. What are upcoming volunteer needs for the Club?

Response (Marlis Butcher): The TBTC has ongoing volunteer requirements for Trail Captains, Land Stewards, Biodiversity Team and Board members. Interested volunteers should contact volunteer@torontobrucetrailclub.org. COVID has sparked an increase in volunteer interest which has been tempered by Stay-at-Home Orders and other Public Health requirements. Expressions of interest are acknowledged but it can take up to six months to match volunteers with vacancies. The annual board of directors' process starts each January.

Q4: How is the Club adapting to the challenges of COVID?

Response (Graham Allen): COVID has paused TBTC's hiking program. During this time we have engaged members through E-Notes, a successful winter E2E badge contest, a new youth hiking badge, a virtual End To End photo-engagement series, an expanded social media presence, an improved website and by promoting the BTC's Member Webinar Series. This year, we look forward to member contributions and ideas as to how to increase our engagement. A couple of events in the works include a five-part video series on hiking the Toronto section and a new booklet on side trail hikes.

Q5. To help pay for the new (hiking) registration system would the Club consider charging urban and car hikers a small annual fee?

Response (David Royle): We appreciate the suggestion that our members help pay for the new registration system. This is currently being explored by the BTC in consultation with us.

Q6. Could the website recognize Indigenous Peoples on whose traditional territories we hike? How are we engaging Indigenous Peoples?

Response: (David Rowney). Thanks to our work with the Great Escarpment Project and Plenty Canada Indigenous landmarks and language have been included in the most recent Bruce Trail Guide. These references will also be included on the new BT App. The BTC is developing a land acknowledgement statement and usage guidelines document to share with the Clubs that is relevant to the entire trail. BTC continues to work with Plenty Canada and other indigenous partners to further our work in this area.

Q7: Could we advertise all vacant board positions to all members and could bios of board members be provided to all prior to AGMs?

Response (Graham Allen): Vacant Board positions are advertised in E Notes and TBTC and BTC websites. The annual TBTC Board nominating process begins in January and concludes at the AGM. Members who are interested in becoming board members are invited to submit their interest at any time to volunteer@torontobrucetrailclub.org Providing board member bios is a welcome suggestion and will be implemented for the next AGM.

Q8: Could we reduce term limits for board members to 8 years to promote inclusion & renewal, & reduce turnover in new board members?

Response (David Royle): The TBTC Board has worked to align its governance with the BTC. Our current board term limits are five years in any portfolio to a maximum of 15 years.

Q9. How have the savings from not publishing Footnotes in paper format been reinvested into Club activities?

Response: In 2019 Footnotes operated at a net loss of \$2,432. In 2020 Footnotes was discontinued and the Club moved to E-notes to communicate to its members at a cost of \$1,270. The net savings of moving to a solely electronic format was \$1,162 which was used towards the funding of the Club's new website.

Q10. What other programming can the Club offer in the absence of a hiking program e.g., Zoom seminars, other membership engagement?

Response: COVID has paused TBTC's hiking program. During this time, we have engaged members through E-Notes, a successful winter E2E badge contest, a new youth hiking badge, a virtual End to End photo-engagement series, an expanded social media presence, an improved website and by promoting the BTC's Member Webinar Series. This year, we look forward to member contributions and ideas as to how to increase our engagement. A couple of events in the works include a five-part video series on hiking the Toronto section and The Halton Hills Chapter is preparing a new booklet on side trail hikes.

Q11. Where are the position descriptions for TBTC Board members to be found on the TBTC website?

Response: Previously, board member position descriptions were posted on the board member section of the members-only site. Since the new website is entirely public facing, it was decided not to post the descriptions. If a member is interested in receiving any of the board descriptions, please email volunteer@torontobrucetrailclub.org

Q12. On p.36 of the AGM 2021 Annual Report, the Land Stewardship director position is not listed along with other TBTC Board positions. Is Land Stewardship not a bona fide Director position or is this an oversight in preparing the Report? If not a board position, why not? For years a director in the Land Stewardship role has been listed as a board member (and presumably a voting board member)? Is this a constitutional issue to add the board position that needs to be resolved?

Response: The current Director Land Stewardship is long time member and volunteer Rose-Mary Mitter. The Director Land Stewardship is part of the Land Management Committee (LMC) and the LMC is represented on the board by one member. This year's LMC board representative is Peter Pritchard, Director Landowner Relations and TBTC Land Acquisition representative to the BTC.

Q13. Re: the proposed Constitutional change on "Annual and Special Meetings," the proposal is to change the number of members to sign a petition calling for a special meeting from 50 signatures on the petition to 100. The rationale given is that the change "recognizes increased interest in governance among members numbers." Please provide the evidence/stats that there is increased interest in governance and over what years to the point that the required number of petitioners is now doubled? The suggestion of doubling the petitioners suggests less ability for calling a special meeting.

Response: Our revised Constitution stays true to the guiding principles set out by the Bruce Trail Conservancy of working together to protect our treasure, the Niagara Escarpment, while spending time together along the Bruce Trail. Our mission also speaks to inclusiveness. From this perspective an amendment to the proposed Constitution of reverting to the 2004 Constitution of having a petition signed by 50 members to hold a Special General Meeting of the members is welcomed. The TBTC appreciates input from members as we strive to nurture diversity, inclusion, and equity in all aspects of our work.

Q14. What is the editorial policy for E-Notes/TBTC website for promoting books/activities/information about non-TBTC sponsored events/info? An example is the recent promotion, free of charge, for the book "Park Bagger" authored by a TBTC board member. Can any TBTC member submit information about their non-TBTC activities/merchandise for possible promotion and what criteria would be used to determine if the information will go into E-Notes or the website?

Response: The TBTC supports the BTC's mission of "Preserving a ribbon of wilderness for everyone forever" and by extension, environmental conservation. A member is free to submit information about activities that align with the BTC mission and it will be considered using that lens. It is important to celebrate members' achievements that add value to the club and are of interest to other members. That is what a club is about - supporting each other towards a common cause. The 'free of charge' promotion referred to in the question was submitted by an appreciative reader of the 'Park Bagger' unbeknownst to the author.

Q15. What is the total cost (realized or estimated) for the website redesign, across all fiscal years so far? What will be the estimated yearly maintenance costs for the website? How does the website redesign compare to costs for Footnotes?

Response: The cost of the website redesign including HST was \$11,187. Of this, \$9,458 was occurred in 2020 and the remaining \$1,729 in 2021. Our new maintenance contract is \$595 per year which includes software upgrades, page backups, security tools and malware removal. These maintenance costs are 30% lower than those of the old website. Our ability to post and change news items and pages on our own at no cost to the Club is estimated to save the Club about \$700 per year.

The website upgrade was a one-time cost and Footnotes was a quarterly cost, so it is difficult to compare. We expect that we will not have to update this website for several years. In 2019, the cost of our quarterly printed version of Footnotes, net of advertising revenue was \$2,432. We now have our monthly newsletter E-Notes which provides much better value in terms of more frequent distribution of news, and its costs are lower. The greatest value to members is that our digital newsletter and new website provide the ability to get news to you more frequently. It is easier to keep the website up to date and the website is now much more mobile friendly.

Q16. What features are built into the website, with integration into the BTC information, for the ability to sign onto events that require payment via credit card/PayPal etc.? Specifically what protections are being built in for security of information, privacy, and ability to prevent hacking or compromise of the data? By integrating information with the BTC, is the TBTC handing information to a third party or is the BTC considered a legal entity under which the TBTC is covered? Essentially, if there are any issues including breach of information, which organization is responsible or liable — the TBTC or the BTC?

Response: Security and privacy of member data is important to the BTC and our club. Membership data for all nine Clubs has been provided and safeguarded by the BTC since its inception. For many years, the BTC has successfully provided an eCommerce platform to handle membership transactions, donations, and the sale of products. The BTC has the experience and systems to provide the necessary safeguards. It has a solid track record and expert IT sources in place and they are best positioned to work with us on payment systems and event/hike registrations going forward. Additionally, the BTC has cyber insurance, under which the Toronto Bruce Trail Club is covered.

Q17. Has the TBTC Board considered creating an inventory of the volunteers and their volunteer activities that they have been involved with over the years? This information would be helpful as background for nominations to the Nina Carlisle and Todd Bardes volunteer recognition awards.

Response: The BTC maintains a database of volunteers and their positions, both current and previous, which is updated regularly by contacting the clubs' Volunteer Coordinator. The TBTC maintains a record of Trail Captains, Land Stewards, Hike Leaders, Trail Maintenance volunteers and annual E2E organizers. The list is as accurate as possible given turnover.

Q18. Is there quorum for the AGM?

Response: Yes, there is quorum.

Q19. Was there a Land Acknowledgement at the start of the meeting?

Response: There was not a Land Acknowledgement at the start of the meeting.

Q20. No slide for the 2021 budget?

Response: There is no slide for the 2021 budget and noted for next year's AGM.

Q21. Membership Numbers?

Response: TBTC Membership was 3,177 as of March 31, 2021 compared to 3,000 the same time last year. Total BTC membership is 12,392 an increase of 19% over last year.

Q22. Has the TBTC considered continuing AGMs on Zoom indefinitely even after COVID is over? This is not only easier for members to attend as Kortright is not easily accessible to those using public transit but it would also save the club money.

Response: The AGM is both a business meeting and an opportunity for members to get together annually to celebrate the club's achievements and to recognize volunteers. Combined with the AGM are two hikes. Bus transportation is provided to the AGM location at a nominal cost for those who participate in the hike. We are committed to Kortright Centre for the 2022 AGM as we were unable to have our deposit returned. We will investigate the ability to 'live stream' the AGM for those that are interested.

Q23. If I already had the BT app will I have to pay again for the new one?

Response: There has been no decision.

Q24. Are land stewards and trail captains being instructed to pause/delay their spring work until at least the extended provincial Stay-at-Home order is over into late May or if longer until the provincial government gives the "all clear"? The BTC email from last night recommended that folks not travel distances to get to the Trail but walk/hike closer to home."

Response: The TBTC follows all Public Health and Government regulations re COVID. Trail and land steward work is paused until provincial restrictions are lifted.

Q25. What is the policy for Toronto Club members going to the Trail?

Response: The policy is to stay home and not travel outside your area.

Q26. The list of board members seemed to be missing three names? Did we lose any prominent members?

Response: There are five members leaving the board (Matt D'Oliveria, Robert Gillespie, Peter Leeney, Janet Le Lievre, Mario Rigby) and three new members joining (Louise Kent, Rhea Rasquinha, Laurent Thibault).

Q27. A 15 year term for a board member seems long. Could we make that shorter to promote renewal and fresh ideas?

Response: The Board will be reviewing the appointment and duties of officers at our forthcoming Board meeting. A proposal will be brought forward to align our Constitution with the BTC By-Laws to limit the term for Directors to a lifetime maximum of nine years with a one-year extension in extenuating circumstances for a maximum of 10 years.

7. Nominating Committee Report – David Royle

David Royle presented the Nominating Committee slate of fourteen members for the Toronto Bruce Trail Club Board for 2021-22:

Returning Board Member Nominees:

Name	Position as of May 2021
Graham Allen	President and TBTC. Director to BTC (nominee)
David Royle	Vice President and Hiking Director
Margaret Corner	Treasurer
David Rowney	Communications Director and Halton Hills Chapter
Alina Lin	Public Relations and Education Director
Juliet Williams	Special Events Coordinator
Marlis Butcher	Volunteer Coordinator
Orest Nahacziwec	IT Coordinator
Janet McColeman	Bookkeeper

First time nominations to the Board for 2021-22 (and the position they are interested in):

Louise Kent	Membership Director
Rhea Rasquinha	Secretary
Laurent Thibault	Trail Maintenance Director
Peter Pritchard	Landowner Relations Director and TBTC Member of BTC Land Acquisition Committee

Special thanks to those who served during the past year but are not returning:

Matt D'Oliveira	Land Stewardship Director
Robert Gillespie	Secretary
Peter Leeney	Landowner Relations Director and TBTC Member of BTC Land Acquisition Committee
Janet Le Lievre	Chairperson Halton Hills Chapter
Mario Rigby	Director-at-Large

Moved by David Royle, Seconded by Alina Lin,

That the slate of thirteen members be elected to the Board of Directors for the year 2021-2022.

Motion Carried.

8. Amendments to Constitution:

David Royle indicated that the proposed amendments to the constitution have been available on e-notes and the website since March 17/21. The amendments to the constitution promote diversity and inclusion.

Moved by David Royle, Seconded by Rowney,

That the amendments to the Toronto Bruce Trail Club Constitution be approved.

Motion Carried.

9. Nina Carlisle Award, Todd Bardes Award, and other volunteer service awards

Peter Leeney explained that the Nina Carlisle Award is given annually to a long-standing volunteer who is active in the activities of the Club. This year the recipient of the Nina Carlisle volunteer appreciation award is Alina Lin for her work as Public Relations and Education Director.

The Todd Bardes Award is given annually to a short term (last two years) volunteer who is active in the activities of the Club. This year the recipient of the Todd Bardes Award is Jackie Van Dyke.

A Special Award was presented to Steve Kamnitzer for more than 30 years of volunteer work for the TBTC including over 20 years supporting the club web site.

In addition, past president John Grandy made a special presentation thanking Peter Leeney for 20 years of exceptional service on the Board of Directors. Peter is retiring from the Board at this AGM.

Marlis Butcher awarded the Trail Captain years-of-service (longevity) awards, and awarded the Trail Maintenance Volunteer-of-the-Year award to Neil Stein

10. Other Business: None

The meeting adjourned at 2:10pm. Minutes by Robert Gillespie.