

DRAFT
American Birding Association
General Membership Meeting
Sunday, September 23, 2012
DuPont Environmental Education Center
1400 Delmarva Lane, Wilmington, Delaware

The annual meeting of the American Birding Association (ABA) was held on Sunday, September 23, 2012, at the DuPont Environmental Education Center, 1400 Delmarva Lane, Wilmington, Delaware. Approximately 60 people were in attendance, both members and non-members, including two members of the Board of Directors, President Jeffrey A. Gordon and other ABA staff members.

In attendance from the Board of Directors – Lou Morrell (Chair), and D. H. Michael Bowen.

Board Chair Morrell called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m.

Chair Morrell said that proxies had been mailed to all ABA members in good standing on August 24, 2012. Morrell also said that the proxy and the ABA area non-binding referendum ballot had also been posted on the Association's website. He said that ballots for the election of directors and for the referendum were also available at the meeting.

Board member Michael Bowen, as attorney and agent for the members represented by proxy, reported that 1,635 valid proxies had been received at ABA headquarters. By a show of hands, it was determined that among those present at this meeting there were 27 ABA members who had not sent in their proxies for the Director election nor had returned the non-binding referendum on the ABA area question. Therefore, 1,662 members were present either in person or by proxy. The Chair declared that annual meeting was valid for conducting business, since far more than the required 100 members were present or represented at the meeting. The Chair also reported that approximately 140 proxies had been received at the ABA's headquarters too late to be counted for this meeting.

1. Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting held in Colorado Springs, CO on July 23, 2011.

The Chair stated that the draft minutes of the Association's Annual Meeting held in Colorado Springs, Co on July 23, 2011, had been posted on the Association's website in late August 2012. He said that copies of those minutes were available at this meeting. There being no comment on the minutes a motion to accept the minutes of this meeting without change from the version distributed was made (M. Bowen), seconded (A. Rydgren) and approved unanimously.

2. President Gordon addressed the meeting briefly, expressing pleasure at being able to serve ABA as President and saying that ABA had been an important part of his life as a birder as long as he could remember. He lauded the efforts of new staff member Bill Stewart (present at the meeting) and others who had made the Young Birders Conference, held the previous day, a great success, and said that this conference provided an excellent blueprint for the future. He also introduced other members of the ABA staff who were also present at the meeting: George Armistead (Events), Betty Peterson (Birder's Exchange), and Liz Deluna Gordon (multiple functions).

3. Financial Report

Board Chair Morrell stated that the audited financial statements and auditor's management letter for the year ended December 31, 2011, and the Form 990 for 2011 had been posted on the ABA's website. The Chair made brief remarks on the ABA's financial situation, which he said was much improved, even though operational losses were realized in both 2010 and 2011. He said that 2011 showed substantial improvement over 2010, especially in the area of expense control. He said improvement in revenue generation was still lagging. He reported on the establishment of a new Audit Committee and on work being done to create an accounting and procedures manual for the Association. Morrell said that he was happy to announce that after an almost 2 year review of the Association's not-for-profit status and the financial and legal analysis of the allocation of membership dues, that a member's dues payment to ABA, less \$25 allocated to "Birding", can now be considered tax deductible. While this might not be of great financial significance to the average ABA member, Morrell said that it was nevertheless very important with respect to the credibility and not-for-profit mission of the Association with potential donors, including foundations.

4. Election of Directors

The Chair then announced that in accordance with the ABA's bylaws, the Governance Committee through its subcommittee, the Nominating Committee, had presented a slate of individuals to be nominated to be directors of the ABA. Robin Leong (Vallejo, CA) and John Robinson (Fairfield, CA) who had both served a single 3-year term on the Board of Directors were being nominated for a second term as Directors. Matthew Fraker (Bloomington, IL) and Susan Jones (Winston-Salem, NC) were both being nominated as Directors for the first time.

A motion was made (J. Bouton) and seconded (M. Watson) to accept the slate of directors presented to the members. 1428 votes were cast in favor of the motion, 18 voted yes with exceptions and 216 voted NO or abstained.

Members then voted, by hand for those present at the meeting and by proxy, for each of the nominees. Michael Bowen, as attorney and agent for members voting by proxy, announced the following results:

Robin Leong, B Vallejo, CA - 1,436 for; 226 against or abstain

John Robinson, Fairfield, CA - 1,442 for; 220 against or abstain

Matthew Fraker, Bloomington, IL - 1,441 for; 221 against or abstain

Susan Jones, Winston-Salem, NC - 1,441 for; 221 against or abstain

The Chair said as a result of the vote that all four candidates had been elected to the Board of Directors.

5. ABA Area "Non-Binding" Referendum

President Jeffrey Gordon reviewed the reasons for the non-binding referendum/survey on possible changes to the ABA area. He referred to his letter and the materials included with the

proxy and ballots that had been sent to all members. Gordon commented that the present ABA Area is specifically defined in our by-laws, and that some members have indicated an interest in expanding the ABA area to include Hawaii, Mexico, Greenland and/or other states/countries not presently included. Gordon said that the results so far, based on the returns received at ABA headquarters, indicate the inclusion of Hawaii is favored by about 55% of the respondents and opposed by about 35%. The addition of Greenland, Bermuda, and the Bahamas was favored in each case by about 25-35% and opposed by about 45-50% of respondents. Gordon said that a complete report of the referendum's results would be distributed to all members. The Chair reminded members that any change in the ABA area would require a change in the Associations' by-laws and would require the approval of the membership. He further stated if, after review and consideration, a change in the ABA area was recommended, the earliest it would be presented to membership for approval would be at the 2013 annual meeting.

6. Presentation of the ABA Robert Ridgway Award

President Jeffrey Gordon introduced Richard Crossley of Cape May, NJ, and presented him with the 2012 ABA Robert Ridgway Award for Publications in Field Ornithology. After accepting the award, Crossley made some remarks to the meeting that reflected his great passion to make birding attractive to new generations of birders.

7. Remarks of the Secretary for Environment and Energy, State of Delaware

Collin O'Mara, a cabinet member in the administration of Delaware Governor Jack Markell, began by playing a videotaped message from the Governor welcoming the ABA to Delaware and inviting all birders to visit and enjoy the First State. O'Mara then enthusiastically shared a description of the plans he and his colleagues intend to achieve, under the rubric of the "Bayshore Initiative," to make the shoreline along the Delaware Bay a must-see place for birders and other naturalists from all around the world. He stated that Delaware has some of the most important bird staging areas on the East Coast of the U.S. The slide show he presented demonstrated clearly that the State of Delaware is well along its way to protecting from development the bulk of land along the Delaware River shore between Delaware City, South of Wilmington, to Lewes, which is located just North of the intensely developed beach areas in the extreme South of the State.

There being no further comments or business the meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m.