

Maine Equine Welfare Coalition

Meeting #2

April 21, 2010

6:30pm at the Farm Bureau Office, Augusta

28 in attendance at Office, approximately 8-10 attendees via conference call

Meeting Minutes:

- Temporary Chair, Don Marean, was unable to attend the meeting and asked Meris J. Bickford to chair the meeting in his place. Meris welcomed all the attendees, introductions were made of new attendees and conference callers and the ground rules were touched on briefly - be respectful of all here, focus on positive efforts, steer clear of polarizing issues to the extent that they take us away from our core mission of helping horses in need here in Maine.

- We discussed a potential Mission Statement. Changes were suggested by many people, with discussion and a vote on the use of the word equine vs. horse. The majority of voters favored the use of the word equine to be inclusive of donkeys, mules and other equids. There was also discussion on the use of the terms "horse people", "citizens", "horse advocates" and others, to describe our group. Janet Tuttle suggested a phrase, which the group agreed should act as a motto- "Welcome to Maine, where it shouldn't hurt to be an equine." After further modification of the proposed mission statement, the following was voted on and approved by a majority vote. *"The Maine Equine Welfare Coalition is a grassroots affiliation of horse owners, the equine industry and horse lovers committed to enriching and enhancing the lives of Maine's equines through direct assistance, foster care, emergency intervention and public education."*

- The minutes from the March 31st meeting were reviewed and accepted via majority vote.

- We then discussed the issue of coalition structure. Many ideas were put forward, centered around a Board of Directors with regional representation and representation from the six subcommittees that will be actively working on the issues. A goal size of around 13 members was suggested, with an odd number of seats being a key feature. A subcommittee was formed to review the options and come forward with a proposed structure for the next meeting. The full group will discuss and vote on the proposal at the May meeting. Michelle Melaragno is leading the subcommittee. Members are: Missy Libby, Carole-Terese Naser, Janelle Tirrell, Melanie Langmeyer and Louise Lester.

- The next issue for discussion was 501c3 non-profit status. Initially seen as a good idea, Meris Bickford filled us in on the many downfalls to seeking this status and suggested instead, the arrangement of a fiscal agent. Many new organizations will go for this arrangement until they have firm footing and funding and can then take on the requirements of full 501c3 status. The group agreed that a fiscal agent arrangement with the 501c3 section of the Maine Farm Bureau will be the initial arrangement for this coalition. This will allow us to fundraise and become a state tax exempt group, but money will go

through the Farm Bureau accounts, as they currently do with other entities affiliated with the Farm Bureau. This issue was voted on with all in attendance in favor of utilizing the Farm Bureau as the fiscal agent.

- The issue of membership and dues was then discussed. Many felt that a small membership fees was appropriate to help us get some initial funding. We agreed that a fee of \$10.00 was appropriate. This identified a pressing need for a Treasurer. The Board Structure Subcommittee was asked to put a Treasurer seat into their proposal. Much discussion then took place about what members would receive for their membership dues and how voting would play a role. The details have not all been worked out, however a vote was taken and the majority approved a membership fee of \$10.00 per year. Five attendees voted in opposition to this.

- Prior to wrapping up, the issue of remote attendance was discussed. Even with the spider phone, the callers had difficulty hearing the meeting attendees. It was decided that we will look into the possibility of video conferencing via Skype or Adobe Connect or Polycom. Donna Coffin will help us coordinate this and Peggi Loveless will look into whether the UMaine Augusta facility could accommodate the main meeting for next month.

- The next two meetings dates and times have been set: Wednesday, May 19th at 6:30pm and Wednesday, June 16th at 6:30pm. Locations will be determined based on video conferencing capabilities. Watch for an alert once the location for May has been set.

- The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:15pm.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted,

Katie Lisnik

- **Donna Coffin, with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension has created an interim webpage where we can post minutes, contact info etc. It is available at <http://extension.umaine.edu/livestock/equine/mhwc/>**

- **There is also a short online survey there. Please answer the few questions about subcommittees and how you prefer to be active in regards to meetings.**