

**Committee of the Islands**  
**Minutes of the Annual Meeting**  
**March 22, 2017-Sanibel Community House**

President Mike Miller opened the meeting at 9:30 am. He welcomed members and guests. He then introduced and recognized the current members of the Board of Directors. He followed with a report of COTI activity during the immediate past year and summarized some of the items to be considered on a going forward basis.

As the next item of the general meeting agenda, Larry Schopp, a member of the Board of Directors, announced that Barbara Cooley was the COTI Citizen of the year. He then described her many accomplishments. President Mike Miller awarded her with a Luc Century vase commemorating the award.

Stuart Langton introduced Eric Draper, the Executive Director of the Audubon Society of Florida. Mr. Draper discussed “big sugar” needs and perceived needs regarding use of the Lake Okeechobee water, particularly in dry season. He stated that the strategy to combat the problems created include reducing the ground water by pumping and reducing drainage to canals by putting more water back in the eco system. He also addressed land use issues and the need to attract birds through reinvigorating the wetlands.

Mr. Draper stated that the declining bird population is an early indicator of evidence for climate change.

Mr. Draper recognized that Sanibel led the state in getting fertilizer ordinances. He stated that three million tons of fertilizers are used commercially particularly in sugar industry. He concluded his remarks with a discussion of increased development and population growth, the unplanned uses of water which Florida does not have, the need to put the “green back in a red country,” and the wave of government to reduce environmental regulations. Mr. Draper followed his remarks by answering questions from the members.

At approximately 10:45am Mike Miller concluded the General Meeting Session of the Meeting.

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At 11 am Mike Miller, called the Business Meeting Session to order .

Linda Robison, secretary of the COTI Board advised the members that there were 173 proxies delivered and that a quorum was present at the meeting. She then noted that the minutes were available for review and asked for changes, questions, and comments regarding the Minutes of the March 30, 2016 annual meeting of the COTI

Membership. There being no changes or corrections, the minutes were ratified and approved.

Carolyn Swiney, treasurer of the COTI Board presented the treasurer's report and noted that the accounts had been reviewed and found to be in satisfactory condition. Carolyn answered questions from the members regarding the use of COTI funds in the coming year.

Mike Gillespie, vice president of the COTI Board and chair of the Community Outreach Committee discussed the numerous articles in the newspapers and the *Santiva Chronicle*, and various mailings and member communications.

David Bath, membership chair and immediate past president advised the membership that as of the date of the annual meeting there are 660 members and membership continues to grow. He thanked the members for their input regarding COTI information and study of the CIVIC CENTER CORE PROJECT. A question was asked regarding reaching out to new members and involving people in the COTI work. With regard to this question, Stuart Langton, chair of the Best Practices Committee advised that this committee had studied 28 areas of COTI practices and reviewed the Bylaws. He noted that one of COTI goals is to increase member involvement. Increased involvement requires communication, contact and engagement.

Mike Gillespie, as chair of the Nominating Committee, presented the following slate to serve as either new members of the COTI Board or current members whose term is up for reelection:

Nominees, for first term: Jan Holly and Alison Ward

Nominees, for second term: Mike Gillespie, Erhard Joeres, Mike Miller, Joe Salatino and Larry Schopp

Upon motion duly made and seconded, each of the above nominees was elected for the terms specified above.

Member comments were requested and given.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am.

Linda Robison, Secretary