

RHSC Board Meeting 06/15/10, 7:30 pm at Long Ridge Tavern in Stamford

Attendees: John Olshan, Bill Sherriff, John Swingler, Curtis Casey, Pat Siciliano, Anne Zaera, Susan Byelick, Zach Welburn, Stephanie Evers, Nanda Zimmerman, Anne Olshan, Judy Kostrzewski, Kyle Eberts

After minutes from last meeting were read, it was agreed that there would be a new section in the Skizette on new rules and regulations and any rule change will be passed by Tom Nolan to sign off as a lawyer.

Initiatives/Outstanding Projects

Bill Sherriff – Past-President

Committees: furnace replacement (Zach is a member), water intrusion in play area (Zach, John Arcuri and Bill Hughes), on-site storage (Lou Trovato and Robert Gottlieb) and lockers to be installed in back room; need to remove 5-6 sheets of sheet rock to make room for lockers; can be finished during work weekends; Zach is investigating water issue; investigate scope of water repair and whether can be completed at work weekend or by outside vender. Put estimated costs into budget line items first to see where we are with dues; played low key this year with budget; need to see which board members need funds.

Stephanie Evers – Past-Vice President

Recently updated handbook and posted on website. Suggest mailing handbook to members at beginning of every year and send website link to members with membership renewal (not printed). Need to add new board members and message from new president and new dates.

Long range planning: Themes include updating the lodge and different projects; do what have to do and nothing more; need to recruit new members.

Anne Zaera – Past-Activities

A lot of information digitally and on paper; a lot from Gabe, but stale; no initiatives planned now. Thoughts: used to have picnic separate from summer meeting and last year combined into one; recommend summer meeting earlier and picnic in September; picnic could take place on marina on Candlewood Lake; not successful with races this year, not enough interest in CSC race and RHSC race rained out; need race chair ASAP; CSC race is at Mt. Snow again this year; one of few fundraising events and need to make effort to participate; Snowball is biggest fundraising event. John O. noted that activities is one of the most important roles.

Judy Kostrzewski - Activities

Ideas: Conduct survey on what people want to do, e.g., snowball versus CSC race weekend. Bus trip and things at lodge such as snowman making contest. Day trip to Mohegan Sun. Perhaps list activity suggestions on renewal form for members to check.

Anne Zaera, others

Key item is to get members to participate as volunteers. Important to get information from renewals to indicate who is interested in doing what. Off season activities like bike or canoe trips would be great. Need to get people to tell what they will really do; not what was fun in the past.

Pick a few good ones and focus on them. Bus trip takes away stress of driving; can make family friendly, e.g., Stowe on Sat and Mt. Snow on Sunday. Club race: need to look at budget; Pico is very difficult to secure and expensive (double what they used to charge); Killington won't lock in until later and March is busy time for them; most important event for club; because most important club event, it's worth the money and can be spread between participants; put extra money in budget for race weekend; Judy will find race chair for all races.

Curtis Casey – Operations

Closed out season fine; Tracy will do clean up tasks over summer; mattresses need to be replaced and added to budget; not in budget yet; Bob Hener found cost discount from buying all 40 at once; vote was taken a couple of years ago and mattresses were approved at that time; however, survey results showed mattresses were not a high priority.

Storage will enter next phase; need more investigator work on underground oil tank and speak to insurance about policy; Sharon Lehr specializes in environmental insurance; getting plan together, but won't get soil samples because would be obligated to do something if find problem; oil tank is single wall and can be 30 years old; if leak, remediation costs significant.

Other thoughts: Getting membership renewals out sooner and determining dues early is important; pump repair worked out well; will continue on coordinator understanding and due diligence/taking job seriously; Judy has three manuals; board needs to stand behind Curtis when he needs to be tough; everyone needs to take coordination seriously; all vendors are happy and paid.

Shared responsibility to structure our dues correctly; may need separate meeting; need time to set budget before renewals.

Front door and locks; need new lock and less keys and better management of keys; control lock to books; consider card key or electronic lock; Curtis will come up with ideas to present to board; possibly a code published on website. Zach: lock needs to be changed but control needed; code can be activated per weekend, but may be too complicated; Curtis will investigate locks and work with Zach who knows a lot about locks.

Stephanie: Recommend garbage pick up twice per month this summer; want people to use lodge and we can't expect them to carry garbage home with them; operations expense versus usage expense.

Continue with making coordinator function better; everything to make the house great.

Zach Welburn – Maintenance

Last work weekend came up with large list; some little, some big and several safety things; fire alarm company charging a lot of money and CO detectors not good; fire extinguishers not up to date (Zach and Curtis need to purchase); big charge to repair alarms that went off continually; Zach says we can do better than \$50 per quarter; company has 3 tiers of service and bill generated somewhere else; convoluted; need to close gaps; Curtis scrutinized this past year; Zach will investigate; all agreed we would rather see larger bill and know that we're safe.

Heating system: need to look at other avenues and greener options; last year \$4,600 on oil and this year will be more; geothermal cost Zach \$30K for his home, but rebate was \$20K federal tax credit = 30% of entire job; don't know Vermont laws; Zach is on committee and will make recommendation to board. Heating split into 5 zones and unbalanced through house; new system

could use 2 zones with variable speed fan so house is not flooding with dry heat; continues to be top priority; next step to get committee together to look at all avenues; more help appreciated; oil not way to go; propane 98% efficient; get finance plan together; need to make change 5 years down the road; make recommendation now for best system and costs so prepared; decide how to fund and more forward; let Zach run whole thing until plan together, then pull in long-time members to get their input and buy-in such as Charles Mirabella.

Lodge was built in pieces; to update to more efficient systems, insulation needs to be done as well; large rebates for insulation as well; non-expanding liquid foam that dries in wall from inside is an option; Zach can come up with all inclusive solution; Zach agrees to present options at next board meeting.

Alarm system: Bill is on call list; should be switched to Curtis.

Work weekend: Need to lay out projects ahead of time and make them more efficient; won't need to paint doors as often if take them off; if know projects in advance, can pick people with best skills; will get more takers if more meaty projects; need some people to do smaller jobs such as cleaning up; Zach can work with Anne O. on communications; Zach will need help with logistics to make sure everyone has right projects for job and stays busy; similar faces at each work weekend; need to build community.

All: Should we consider members funding work instead of attending? People contribute to club in different ways; volunteer club requires everyone to contribute, but may need to coerce people to contribute money or time. Nine attendees voted to create a mechanism for allowing members to not volunteer. Pat agreed to make proposal to board at next meeting. Members will need to volunteer for significant event or pay fine.

Zach belongs to another club with such policy and it works very well; if don't give 8 volunteer hours, you pay \$20 per hour; other members sign off on volunteer sheets; Pat will check with Zach and others for ideas.

Pat Siciliano – Membership

Passed out volunteer list; do not track volunteers; will need to if enforce policy. Ended year with 84 memberships (43 individuals and 41 families); don't expect to lose more members this year; still get emails from prospective new members who find our website; Wilton family has inquired about RHSC; need to enforce background checks on all new prospective members (it was agreed that checking all guests would not be financially or logistically feasible, but background checks on guests unknown to RHSC members, e.g., from the website, would require background checks before visiting the lodge); Zach has dealt with background check; \$35 for police to conduct with fingerprint; other companies use social security number and drivers license; may not solve everything, but will deter people; need to put new policy on website and in Skizette; will require from all new members moving forward; form will allow them to authorize and give us details to background check; Pat will have casting vote and keep information confidential if something negative is found; fingerprint service may be more thorough; need by-law to show we tried something in case incident happens.

Anne Olshan – Communications

Next Skizette in June: New board, Spring Fling, New rules, Apparel, summer picnic, new members; events in Vermont during summer, e.g., Killington stage race; all board members can contribute copy; Anne O. will send notice on deadline.

Other: Continue with blast emails, update calendar on website, sell RHSC apparel, and would like to revamp website this year.

Susan Byelick – Past-Programs

Not as many programs as would like last year; new venue at Long Ridge Tavern is great

Anne Zaera – Programs

Welcome ideas from everyone; Beth Cross chocolate tasting, blind auction; program with yoga teacher; snowshoe program was great; Jim Collard – chiropractor; perhaps have summer meeting at Long Ridge Tavern; need to pin down date ASAP.

John Swingler - Treasurer

Principles: Budget was taken with exact run rate of past year; used same rates and dues exactly; vouchers get split back into lodge usage; no real impact on activity expenses because any activity should break even or make money; need to charge accordingly; EXCEPT the race weekend; race income gets lost in lodge income because they are bundled together; event organizer should ensure events break even; Spring Fling raffle raised \$270; little soft touches can generate money; every meeting and event should have fund raising mechanism.

Last year came out with loss of \$2,000 because brought in \$4,000 from savings in beginning of year; failed pump required dip into savings; maintained spending and ended year fine, but current membership is low; past season lodge usage was average and no spending occurred except completion of men's bathroom.

John S. Perspective on Current Budget Situation: If no spending or increased dues this year, will end up \$6,000 positive at year end, but nothing new in budget; anything new will need to come out of \$6,000; anything more will need to raise money by increasing dues or lodge rates; need to bridge gap between variable and fixed costs; fixed are those occurred in any event - \$25,000 spend just to keep lodge maintained; plus \$5,000 for administrative expenses so \$30,000 for basics; with current membership, bring in \$18,000 in dues; \$12,000 we need to get from lodge stays and need to overinflate lodge rates to make up difference; if don't use lodge, still need to maintain lodge; \$30,000 needs to be paid by all; less and less people who use lodge, if lodge rates increase too much, we will compete with hotels; if \$30,000 is paid by all members, we can generate extra money to keep up the lodge; ladies and men's bathroom came from previous surplus when lodge made money; fundamental question is whether members want to improve club; any tinkering with rates and dues will be emotional thing, but should be done; John S. believes way forward is to adjust dues so fixed costs are covered and lodge rates are used as surplus to put away for rainy day; lodge rates could come down from \$50 to \$30 per night; can generate more money on lodge usage if reduce rate. Question: Do we raise dues now or do it in two steps?

Anne Zaera Response: Committee is considering membership class for low usage members to keep people involved in club; Anne Z. agrees with John S.'s strategy, but not his number; concerned about losing memberships, which is why committee is coming up with alternatives;

John S. Response: New class of members will reduce income stream; if want to move club forward, need hard business approach to "get money."

Anne Zaera Response: Survey showed a strong preference for assessments versus increased dues.

Final comment by John S: In years gone by, \$30K was made from dues because there were more members; club has not replenished membership and there's no incentive to do so because old members don't visit the lodge; dues should be based on number of members; if reduced members, each member needs to pay more.

John S. distributed budget for next year and requested comments and ideas for increasing funds to fill \$12,000 gap; could be done in stages; "two shots with explanation of how it works" so members are encouraged to recruit new members to keep costs down and prevent second financial hit.

Board member noted that we may not need vouchers if we increase dues; capture money now.

Next meeting dates:

July 20 - Board Meeting

August 3 - Summer Meeting

Meeting ended at 10:30 pm.