

OREGON COUNTRY FAIR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES

Monday December 6, 2004, 7pm, EWEB Community Room

PRESENT: Diane Albino, Katie Cousins, Lara Howe, Brad Lerch, Jack Makarchek, Marlene Monette, Deane Morrow (alternate), Joseph Newton (alternate), Greg Rikhoff, Lawrence Taylor, Bear Wilner-Nugent (Bear joined the meeting in progress at 7:30).

NOT: Anna Scott

ANNOUNCEMENTS

norma invited everyone to attend the Solstice Gathering/Potluck this Sunday, Dec. 12th. See page two in this issue for details about the New Year's Eve event at the Crystal Ballroom. Steve G. (aka Grumpy) said that Arrow Anders (Co-coordinator of Traffic Crew) is in Hawaii and says Aloha to everyone.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Greg moved and Katie seconded that the minutes of the November 1st board meeting be approved. The motion passed: 10 in favor and 0 opposed.

MEMBER INPUT

Jim Sahr (Crafter) was concerned about the Fair's donation policy and what he sees as the lack of discipline exhibited regarding the Board's discretionary spending habits. He was in favor of leaving the policy as written but wants the Board to "exercise restraint, responsibility, and self-discipline" in following it.

Steve Wisnovsky (Site Manager) yielded his member input time to non-member Emilio from Faerieworlds Festival who wanted to introduce himself, saying he talked with Leslie about a possible collaborative effort with the Fair to host a Celtic Music and Arts Festival. Emilio left brochures for board members to look at before a proposal is presented at next month's meeting.

STAFF AND OFFICER REPORTS

General Manager: Leslie was unable to attend tonight's meeting because she was not feeling well, but the following is a summary lifted from her written report to the Board: "It's been a busy month with the Swanson's purchase, launching the Vision Quest process, budgeting, grant writing, the New Year's Eve event, and other projects and deadlines. The final report and the 2005 grant for Culture Jam were written and the property taxes were paid. The ad hoc Vision Quest Steering Committee has been busy and the co-chairs Beth and Dedee have been doing an outstanding job getting this enormous and exciting project moving forward. The 2005 budget process is going smoothly. Crews that want increases and crews that were significantly over budget in '04 were asked to meet with the Budget Committee. I've begun a process to see about controlling the cost of LTD service and am taking bids on portable toilets. Health insurance costs increased almost \$400/month so new options are being researched for 2005. I met in Salem with people from the Oregon State Fair and am optimistic that a collaboration will come together. There will be a project summary in the January Board packets, and OSF personnel are coming to meet with the Board to answer questions at the January Board meeting. We have a draft of a reciprocal license agreement between the Fair and the City of Veneta granting access to the Far Side to add to New Business this month. I also want to thank the dedicated volunteers on the Budget Committee, the Vision Quest Steering Committee, and the Personnel Committee for all their work over the past two months. I'm taking some vacation time starting December 13th, although I'll still be in town and doing some Fair stuff."

Administrative Assistant: norma thanked both the ad hoc Vision Quest Steering Committee and the Budget Committee for all their recent work and said that the office work lately has been "routine but busy." She said the office hours will be iffy during the last week in December, so get business done before then or call first. She has been cleaning out the basement and plans a trip to the dump on Monday, Dec. 27th so "if you have something in the basement that doesn't belong there, get it out before it ends up in the landfill."

Site Manager: Steve W. said the low river and creek levels at the end of November had him thinking for a while that maybe the Fair wouldn't flood this year, then added "Silly me!" The Fair site had received two inches of rain in the last day, it was raining that evening, and the forecast was for lots more. But they were ready for the flood and he thanked the VegManEcs and site staff for all their work. He is looking forward to having more storage room over at the new Swanson property because "there are still two trucks just sitting out in the rain." He also encouraged attendance at the Solstice Potluck and invited everyone to "come on out and tour the new property." He added "the place obviously needs a new Fair name, and the contest is open. There's a suggestion box there, folks can visit anytime and add their ideas to the mix."

Co-Treasurers: Hilary said they had a long meeting yesterday and are "well on the way to getting the crew budgets done." There will be a coordinator's potluck on Jan 22nd to introduce proposed budgets to coordinators. On Jan. 24th the committee presents the proposals for the operating budget and Jan. 31st is the deadline for crews to request capital projects. She thanked everyone for "a smooth process" and Grumpy said "ditto".

President: Jack said the new year will be upon us soon and in January the "whole process begins again." He plans to repeat his "usual mantra" about what a wonderful event this is and invite people to come share the magic. He also said he'll be encouraging people to participate in the visioning process, adding "we need to be clear about the power this organization has and clear about how we want to impact the larger community. Don't be timid or pussyfoot around. Think about how you want to effect change in the world."

COMMI TTEE REPORTS

VISION QUEST AD HOC STEERING COMMITTEE

Beth Grafe (Construction) said the committee set a tentative date of April 3rd or 10th for a "Vision Summit." The "core values we are trying to instill in this process are inclusiveness and openness" and they want and need to hear from the whole family. They set benchmarks for participation and added they are willing to adjust the process as they go along if they feel they are not hearing from enough people. They will need to request money for outreach tools, a venue for the summit, and possibly a paid facilitator for that day. She had a detailed written report but due to technical difficulties it was not ready for tonight's meeting but will be ready soon.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Brad said they presented results to the Board about employee evaluations at an executive session held prior to tonight's meeting. Only nineteen people filled out evaluations and he hopes more people will participate in this process in the future.

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON BIODEGRADABLE DURABLES

Lara said their meetings are planned as they go and that if people want to know about meeting dates to please call her at 541-747-2068.

PEACH PAGES COMMITTEE

Aleta Miller and Robin Lindsey announced that the deadline for inclusion in the 2005 Peach Pages is January 31st and said they will be presenting a proposal to expand the Peach Pages at the January board meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

RENEW MEMBERSHIP IN WOW HALL

Lawrence moved and Marlene seconded that the Board renew the Fair's membership in the Community Center for the Performing Arts (aka WOW Hall) at \$600.

Peach Gallery: Bob Fennessy from WOW Hall thanked the Board for its past support, especially last year's donation above the traditional \$500. He hopes to see the amount continue to gradually grow.

Board: Lawrence said organizations like WOW Hall, Saturday Market, White Bird, and Growers Market are part of our community that share the Fair's goals of "expanding consciousness, transforming culture, and sustaining the environment" and said it feels great to support them. Greg dittoed that.

The motion passed: 10 in favor and 0 opposed.

DONATION TO SAVE MADISON MEADOW

Joseph moved and Lara seconded that the Board donate \$500 to the Madison Meadow project.

Background: Laurie Goodman and Robert Noel from "Save Madison Meadow" spoke about their neighborhood group's plan to purchase a two-acre meadow at 22nd and Madison in Eugene and "preserve it as open space in perpetuity." (For more information or to make a donation, see www.madisonmeadow.org.)

Peach Gallery: Grumpy asked about their corporate structure and they said they are set up as a 501(c)3 organization.

Board: Brad said he's confused because he drove by the property and there is a large sign detailing a project to build eight houses and preserve the interior as meadow. Laurie and Robert explained that is what the developer would like to do, but their organization wants to preserve the entire 2-acre plot and make it available to the public whereas in the developer's vision the small remaining meadow would only be available to the eight houses. They have been working for a year and have until Dec. 31st to raise \$220,000. They are "almost there" and then have three more years to raise another \$200,000. They already have many pledges of support that will come in after the first payment is made and the property is definitely in their hands. Discussion continued and centered on the pros of discouraging urban sprawl by encouraging internal growth versus the need to preserve open space in the interior of a city. Laurie said a key point in their brochure is "The key to wise development is knowing when not to build." She added "we don't want endless urban sprawl but if we use up every piece of green it will really change the quality of our neighborhoods, so it's a balance." Bear said he supports the group's goals but doesn't think the Fair should support it financially because it is "too local and parochial." Joseph said he might agree with Bear if the issue was just this plot of land, but he was very impressed with "the fact that a group of citizens got together and took the initiative for this project and it's important for us to support this kind of citizen involvement." Jack said he'd support it if it could really become a wildlife habitat as they would like, but he wondered how they would be able to avoid the city's mowing ordinances. They answered if the land is 2 acres or larger the county only requires a fire barrier around the edge of the property. Jack said he'd support the motion anyway but still thinks they'll have trouble with the mowing ordinance because he has come up against this problem with his land. Lara said the property is "a magical little spot of land in the middle of suburbia" and that it's not only nice but also important to have those. She supports the donation because even if the group doesn't succeed in meeting their deadline the money they raised goes to local non-profits. She said it's "part of walking the talk. We talk about conservation and wetlands. Let's put our money where our voices are." Deane supports the group's efforts and said "it's hard to say no when it sounds like a good thing" but also felt the Fair should be prudent in its spending. He wondered if a small token amount would help them to raise money because they could say the Fair supports their efforts. Lawrence said a lot of places are "paved over and built up" and that pavement "is forever and we need to make a stand where we can." Katie was impressed with the organization's energy and goals but doesn't support the motion because "it doesn't fit the stated scope or purpose of the Fair." She encouraged Fair family to support the project individually. Brad said he was hearing concerns about this proposal and wondered if the motion should be changed to \$250 instead of \$500. Joseph agreed but Lara asked Grumpy how much was left in the donation budget (\$2200) and she wanted to leave the amount at \$500. Diane supports the motion and said there's not enough open space in cities.

The motion failed: 5 in favor and 5 opposed (Katie, Brad, Bear, Marlene, and Deane).

Lawrence then moved and Marlene seconded to change the donation amount from \$500 to \$250.

Peach Gallery: Grumpy said it's the Oregon Country Fair, not just the Eugene Fair and he feels it's a good cause but too parochial. He didn't think we'd support the issue if the open space was in Salem. Jen-lin Hodgden (Feedback Coordinator) said she grew up in a place where there was no more open space and feels it is important to act while we still can. She also encouraged "our vast Family" to contribute to this project. Ken Ward (Security) said part of what we do is "plant a seed" and if the seed grows into a bigger movement outside of our area the money is well spent. He added that "having parks, grasses, wild birds in our cities is absolutely as fundamental as the Fair having wild spaces out there." Norma responded to the "too local" argument by countering with "think globally, act locally." Jim Sahr said he was impressed with the Board's "spirit of

respectful debate” and added he used to live in Manhattan where for many years people have resisted developing Central Park.

Board: Jack said he is not proud that Measure 37 passed and to save our open spaces “any fight back is a good fight...even if they have to mow it.” Bear said “we need a consistent philosophy” and still felt it was “too local” for the Fair to support it. Jack moved to call the question but then voted against his own motion because he didn’t see a hand up when he called the question. The motion to call the question failed: 2 in favor and 8 opposed (Jack, Deane, Bear, Brad, Lara, Lawrence, Marlene, and Greg). Greg shares everyone’s ambivalence and asked himself if he would support this if it wasn’t in Eugene, adding “quite frankly, I think I would.” He added “here are some folks who have done some hard creative work to solve a problem and I for one would like to see that stimulated in other communities.” Deane asked “If we support this could we get a report back from the group on how their efforts went?” (yes) Brad said “Would I support this if it was in Veneta or Elmira? You bet, and in twenty years we may have to. So anyone in Salem, go for it, bring it on.”

The amended motion passed: 8 in favor and 2 opposed (Katie and Bear).

DONATION TO NEARBY NATURE

Joseph moved and Bear seconded that the Board donate \$500 to Nearby Nature for their water testing and education program.

Background: Andy Pears from Nearby Nature spoke and said it’s coincidental that they are on the agenda the same night as Save Madison Meadow. He said twelve years ago Nearby Nature was one of the groups working to save Alton Baker Park as a natural area instead of having it become a golf course. They work on conservation and restoration projects, and the current water quality testing project resulted from questions about how fish in the park and water downstream are impacted by landfill and the recent addition of a dog park. (For more information or to make a donation, see www.nearbynature.org.)

Peach Gallery: Grumpy asked about their corporate structure and also wanted to know where else the group had gone to seek money. Andy answered they are a 501(c)3 and this is their initial request. Hilary suggested we have certificates made that say “I survived the Oregon Country Fair donation request process.” Grumpy thinks this is the kind of project that should be supported by local governments. Jen-lin said governments are cutting back on everything and she envisions future partnerships between the Fair and Nearby Nature. She also supports “educating our kids to appreciate science and nature.”

Board: Katie supports this because “it is ongoing education, and education is part of our stated purpose.” Brad appreciates the clarity in the group’s written proposal to the Board and he supports the motion, adding “we all know that at dog parks, dog shit happens.” Marlene said “anything that helps us educate our kids, I’m in favor of.” Bear supports this because of the “explicitness of the educational component, because it is concerned with water quality, and also because it is a manageably sized project where our money will have a bigger impact.” Lawrence said the project is consistent with our mission and also said governments should be funding these projects but they are not, and “until they wake up we have to pick up the slack.” Joseph said we can’t wait for government, that we “need to act on our own at a citizens grassroots level.” Diane said she supports this, “especially because we’re eating fish downstream from there.” Jack is “rooting for the fish that get away.”

The motion passed: 10 in favor and 0 opposed.

PLANNED GIVING POLICY

Bear moved and Greg seconded that it be the OCF’s policy to encourage, solicit, and accept planned gifts from Fair members and other potential Fair supporters; and that the Board direct the Financial Planning Committee to develop a strategy for putting this policy into effect by the end of 2005.

Peach Gallery: Hilary supports this and explained that “planned giving” refers to people remembering OCF in their wills, or using life estates or trusts or other giving methods as part of their estate planning. She said “we need to start thinking of ourselves in a different way” and realize that people give to non-profits because they want that institution to thrive. She said we can “impact the Fair in perpetuity” if we set up a method where people “can endow stages or fund wetlands projects, etc.” Steve W. hopes this is limited to financial gifts because he’d rather not see us “inundated with old trucks and VW buses.” Bear said that level of detail would be handled by the Financial Planning Committee. Beth Grafe said it’s time to “bring more richness and variety to where our money comes from.”

Board: Lawrence said he is a graduate of an institution with “an obscenely large endowment” and added “this stuff works.” Joseph supports this and said it shouldn’t just be about helping our Family but “should come with a commitment about how we can be a force in the world.” Greg said “think of Marshall.” Marlene said “this is a way to support the whole mission of what the Country Fair stands for.” **Lawrence suggested a friendly amendment that was accepted by Bear and Greg to call this the “Marshall Landman Planned Giving Program.”** Jack asked if you have to be deceased to contribute in this way and Bear answered no, that the contribution can be set up in many ways. Jack hopes it’s wildly successful and that future boards will “have the courage to stand up for that wild success.”

The amended motion passed: 10 in favor and 0 opposed.

APPOINT INTERNET COMMITTEE MEMBER

Deane moved and Brad seconded that the Board appoint Jeffrey Falkenstein to the Internet Committee.

Peach Gallery: Grumpy asked if Jeff will be a positive member and work toward the committee’s common focus.

Board: Brad said that Jeffrey’s name was supposed to be included with the original formation of the committee and he took responsibility for a mistake in paperwork that omitted Jeff’s name. He and Joseph both felt that Jeff would be a good addition to the committee and Brad said that Jeffrey has even attended committee meetings online from Thailand.

The motion passed: 10 in favor and 0 opposed.

EMPLOYEE BONUSES

Bear moved and Lara seconded that the Board give “end of the year” bonuses to the Fair’s employees in the amount of \$500 for the General Manager, \$400 for the Site Manager, \$300 each for the Caretaker and the Administrative Assistant, and \$100 for the part-time Office Assistant.

Peach Gallery: norma asked if this amount was “after taxes”. Grumpy said yes.

Board: Lara thanked all the employees for an “outstanding job.” Joseph said he was a little troubled with the gradation but supports the motion.

The motion passed: 10 in favor and 0 opposed.

OFFERING REQUESTED GUIDANCE TO PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REGARDING STAFFING NEEDS

Katie moved and Greg seconded that the Board direct the Personnel Committee to survey our permanent paid staff to obtain a comprehensive assessment of existing job descriptions and staffing needs.

Peach Gallery: Hilary agreed with Katie that it’s important to determine what the staff members are interested in doing, but added it is also important to determine what jobs the organization needs done. Beth Grafe said the committee asked the board for direction and feels what they want to know is “what the Board is willing to do about our staffing needs.” She said “we are two years into this process” and they “put a lot of work into developing a new job description and the Board didn’t pass it.” She wants to know “what can we do that will really address these needs.” Jen-lin supported Hilary’s comment and said this is “like a puzzle piece. There’s what the Fair needs, there’s where we’re heading in the next 5-10 years, and there’s the amount of work the current staff is asked to do now which is beyond human.”

Board: Katie said she doesn’t want to dictate to the Personnel Committee how to survey the paid staff but she feels that process will help to retain good employees because “people grow and change over time.” She is interested in knowing things like what each of our paid staff really values about their jobs, what they want to do more of, what they are passionate about. She said it “seemed premature to assume here is a solution to a problem that hasn’t been as yet clarified.” Greg said maybe the vision quest will offer some solutions and ideas. Marlene said it is “abundantly clear that our staff is overworked” and as a PC member she “really wants to hear that the Board is willing to accept another part-time or full-time position.” Bear said something needs to be done but this proposal feels to him like a “step in the process” rather than a solution. We need to “look at the big picture around staffing issues” and come up with a solution soon. Brad wants a time frame and a commitment from the Board. Deane wondered if we might need a separate board meeting or workshop just to discuss this issue. Lara said the Fair has grown and she is ready to approve another position. She feels much of the Family “doesn’t know the amount of work that is needed onsite to put the Fair to bed.” Jack thanked the employees for

going through the evaluation process and suggested that the Board add Hilary's advice about what the organization needs. He added, "What does the organization need in another employee right now, that's the direction I'd like the Board to give the Personnel Committee." Diane said there was a work session on this a couple years ago and added "we need to do something different because we've done this already." Lawrence said "our land base has grown, our tasks and jobs have grown, and if we don't do something soon our employees will groan as well." (groans all around) Marlene wants the Board "to direct the PC to make a job description that meets the needs of the organization." Greg suggested using the Vision Quest process and suggested tabling this motion. Bear said "our current structure of jobs is inadequate for what we're asking people to do" He would ideally like to see PC "rewrite new job descriptions for all the employees the Fair wishes to employ." **Katie incorporated Hilary's and Jack's concerns and with Greg's consent they approved a friendly amendment adding the words "of the organization" at the end of the original motion.** Brad suggested that thinking about tonight's comments for a month wouldn't hurt because with the holidays coming the committee wouldn't be interviewing the employees this month anyway. Joseph hopes the Vision Quest will produce information we can use in a year or two, but that for now "we need a structure that will give us stable staffing needs right now." Lara moved and Lawrence seconded to table this motion. Grumpy said "time is running out and you need to show leadership. If you table, set a time limit. Do something even if it's not a perfect solution yet." Marlene opposed tabling and Brad said "if we move to table, it needs to come off the table next month." The motion to table failed with 3 yes votes and 6 no votes (Katie, Marlene, Bear, Deane, Jack, and Brad) and 1 abstention (Diane).

The amended motion passed: 10 in favor and 0 opposed.

RESOLUTION APPROVING PURCHASE OF LAND AND AUTHORIZING PRESIDENT TO EXECUTE DOCUMENTS

Deane moved and Lawrence seconded that the Board of Directors of the Oregon Country Fair hereby approve the purchase of property located at 24492 Chickadee Lane, Veneta, Oregon for the sum of \$211,500.00, together with any closing costs, and authorizes Jack Makarchek, President, to execute all necessary documents to complete this transaction. *(Secretary's note: during agenda review it was unanimously approved to move this proposal from new business to old business because of the upcoming meeting to close the deal. Deane's original motion was worded more simply but Brad offered a friendly amendment accepted by Deane and Lawrence to use the above legal language because, as Brad said, "we paid for legal advice, let's damn well use it.")*

Peach Gallery: Thumbs up.

Board: Lawrence said he used to say "if we get Swanson's" but he changed his wording to "when we get Swanson's. Well, when we get Swanson's is now!"

The motion passed: 10 in favor and 0 opposed.

Before adjourning Brad asked the Board to review the step table revisions that will be discussed in January and to contact him with questions. Marlene referred to a flyer that was passed around at the meeting and encouraged people to learn about voting fraud. More information can be found at www.truthinvoiting.org.

The meeting adjourned around 9:40 pm. The next Board meeting will be held on Monday, January 3rd 2005 at 7pm at the EWEB Community Room. The agenda, subject to change, will include the following tabled items: Coordination of Donation Requests (Greg); Appoint Board Committee Liaisons (Lara); Step Table Revisions (Brad); Conservation Policy; and the following new business: Budget Issues; Consider Membership in Musicians and Fine Artists for World Peace; Appoint Teen Crew Co-coordinator; Consider Donation to Marcola Elementary and Junior High Parent Teacher Organization; Guidelines Changes; License Agreement with City of Veneta; Partnership with Oregon State Fair; Peach Pages Expansion Proposal; Tenant Policy; Request for Report on Camping Changes; Faerieworlds Request; Café Mam Conflict of Interest (Brad); Revision of Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual; Appoint Personnel Committee to Report to Board after Surveying Employees (Marlene). The Temporal Lodge Proposal was dropped from the agenda for lack of a sponsor.

Minutes by Barbara Edmonds who thanks Richard Dawkins for the following quote: "Christmas is our only national holiday that is also a religious holiday. On Dec. 25th Christians can go to church and everybody else can stay home and reflect upon the true meaning of the separation of church and state."

