

ELDERS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – Approved at the 3/24/22 meeting

DATE: Thursday, February 24, 2022

LOCATION: Online (Zoom)

MEETING TIME: 7:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Diane Albino, Jain Elliott, Nancy Hafner, Heather Kent, Michael James Long, Robert “Mouseman” McCarthy, Eric Nicholson, Robert Jacobs, Ann Rogers-Bennett

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Kay Kintzley

OTHERS PRESENT: Roberta Austin, Maryann Barber, Sue Barnhart, Kirsten Bolton, Alan Cohn, Peggy Day-Fitzgerald, Mary Drew, Jefry Falkenstein, Kehn “mambo” Gibson, Vickie Grek, Carolyn Gsell (scribe), Paxton Hoag, David Hoffman, Chris Howe, Anthony “AJ” Jackson, Spirit Leatherwood, Roy Lisi, Mark Pankratz, Jon Pincus, Licia Shultz, Jerry Shultz, Jon Silvermoon, Karen Stingle, Jenny Wilson, Alex Zabala.

AGENDA:

- Announcements
- Approve January minutes
- New elder applications - Jenny & Roberta (15)
- Elder Eligibility Subcommittee report - Jerry & Carolyn
- Wristband Subcommittee report – Nancy
- Robert Jacobs
- Spring retreat planning
- Report

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ✳️ Jon Pincus announced that longtime volunteer of the WOW Hall, Kassiah Bishop, passed away. Kassiah was co-coordinator for the WOW Hall booth at the Fair and volunteered at the Wow Hal concessions. A [GoFundMe page](#) has been set up to help with memorial expenses.

JANUARY MINUTES

Nancy made motion to **approve the January minutes**. Ann seconded. **The motion passed 9-0.**

NEW ELDER APPLICATIONS – Roberta & Jenny

There are 17 vetted applications

5 applications that came in prior to the deadline

Jenny gave a big shout out to Roberta for taking on a major share of the workload. She also may be close to getting a printer.

➤ Jenny vetted these 6 applications:

- Doug Quirke (will turn 55 by Fair)
- Paul Magid (Dimitri Karamazov)
- Sue Dumond
 - There was a discussion about volunteering as a videographer officially vs. self-appointed videographer. Marlene has been an official videographer.

Comment from Michael James Long – There were 2 applications: Shirley Valentine and Craig Shackelforth. Apparently both applicants stated that if they were past the deadline, they would accept Elder status for the 2023 Fair. MJL is questioning why the Elder Applications Subcommittee is dealing with these applications now when they are past the deadline, the two applicants acknowledged the past due date, and they could wait to be vetted for next Fair? Roberta gave the story of why both applications were late. One of the applicants has worked 37 years for the Fair. MJL stated that if we make exceptions for everything, we'll never get finished. Robert Jacobs recalled that the Feb. 1 deadline was for the convenience of the Applications Subcommittee.

There was also a discussion about the wording on the Elders Website.

- Marlene Dresher (question about the 2020 Fair. The committee accepted the work for the 2020 Fair.)
- Lisa Geisinger (application was late due to family circumstances)

The committee decided that for this year only, we will accept the deadline of March 1st. Going forward, the deadline will be February 1st.

- Jennifer Church (another late applicant).

Jon P. reiterated that the 2020 and 2021 Fair was virtual, was advertised, and required a lot of work to put together, and that if someone volunteered to put on a virtual Fair, they should receive a year of volunteer credit towards Elder Eligibility.

➤ Roberta vetted these 11 applications

- Tom Piozet (Life's Best Intentions)
- Barbara Green
- James Richard Flanagan
- Jay Taubner
- Libby Bottrell
- Tanya Kiyak-Boughton
- Brian Nash
- Craig Shackelford
- Shirley Valentine
- Morris A. Zimmerberg
- Kevin Moore

17 applications were read. Robert Jacobs made a motion to approve all 17 elder applications. Ann seconded.

Nancy asked if there could be a discussion about the deadline for submitting Elder Applications.

Michael James long made a motion that for next year and the year following, we adhere to the Feb. 1 application deadline. Nancy seconded.

Spirit talked about giving people credit during non-Fair years for folks who have done committee work, for those people who have worked during the pandemic to keep the organization going.

Mouseman stated that he enjoys hearing about the new applicants. However, he felt that the information he received was a bit confusing, and therefore will abstain on voting to approve all 17 applications.

Mambo suggested that when there are a large # of applications, that perhaps this vetting process should happen in a stand-alone meeting when there is a smaller group so as not to waste people's time. Also, it will not necessarily be a straightforward process to vet volunteer work during non-Fair years.

The motion to approve 17 applications was restated: Robert Jacobs made a motion to **approve all 17 elder applications**. Ann seconded. **The passed 8-0 with 1 abstention (Mouseman)**.

The motion to confirm the February 1st application deadline was again presented. Michael James Long made a motion **that for next year and the year following, we adhere to the Feb. 1 application deadline**. Nancy seconded. **The motion was approved 9-0**.

Elder Eligibility Subcommittee Report – Carolyn & Jerry

The main position that subcommittee came up with is that the eligibility age for elders does not need to be changed.

Carolyn presented graphs. Jerry read out bullet points to support the position that we don't need to change the age requirement. See documents attached to the minutes.

Ann shared appreciation for the presentation, that folks are worrying about nothing – that elder population isn't a problem.

Mambo feels that the elder issue is a solution looking for a problem. Jon P. reminded us that according to the 2020 U.S. Census, the average life expectancy for a male in the U.S. was 75.5 years. For a female was 80.5 Those stats match up with the graphic. Jon believes the population of Elders will eventually reduce. Further, if the age eligibility is increased, then people will stay in volunteer positions longer. This will hamper efforts to diversify the Fair, because fewer positions will become available for new people to fill those roles.

Jon P. reminded us that elders also initiated the intergenerational work group a few years ago. That group encouraged young people to step up and take more responsibility. Elders initiated and hosted a candidates' forum.

Spirit shared that she was impressed with the work the Elder Eligibility SC has done, and how quickly they got it done. There's a plan to meet in the next several weeks with the board budget and elder committee liaisons. Spirit shared appreciation for Elders' financial contributions and volunteerism. She spoke of other goals for elder eligibility that could include special accommodations like "companion passes", for people with disabilities or unusual circumstances that may be preventing them from completing required number of years of service.

The impact for people who are on the cusp of becoming elders with an age eligibility increase is huge – "chasing the goal post" so to speak.

Paxton – very good presentation. Not sure how persuasive it will be to the board. He suggested the subcommittee refine it. He observed that the current age distribution for elders is a perfect bell curve, and that this same bell curve for age will continue.

Paxton expressed concern over what is shown on the graph showing # of overall elder applicants broken down by age at time of application. He believes that the influx of younger elders is from people who started coming to the Fair in the 1990s. These are the people who will be replacing us.

Jefry suggested committee goes a bit farther. As a booth rep coming out of craft committee, he felt that when the Fair increased the number of years to qualify as a booth rep went from 2 – 5 years, he felt that was an effort to make booth reps go away. Caution is that management is going to be looking for ways to push us out (like we need any help LOL).

Peggy - #1 problem with Elders is we are not dying off fast enough. Peggy says we need to party harder to make it easier for us to kick off. Peggy reiterated that the deadline for the Elders applications has always been Feb. 1.

Heather wondered how many Elders get wristbands from other crews. She has been advocating for Fair family who are eligible for Elder status to apply, so that if they end up in a situation where they can't work their regular Fair job for whatever reason, they automatically have the option to obtain their wristband through elders. She feels this is important data to have.

It turns out that up to now we haven't been able to collect that data, because folks who don't need an Elders wristband simply don't return the PRF.

Per Nancy, this question will be on the PRF for 2022 Fair.

Carolyn said per Katie, in 2019 there was a total of 1,332 Elders. The Elder wristband count was 873 sold, and 645 companion passes sold.

WRISTBAND SC REPORT – Nancy

Out of undeliverable emails and snail mails that came up when sending the LOI, there are only about 12-20 Elders Nancy can't reach via phone or email.

Nancy said about 625 have responded to the LOI out of 1,462 (the count at the time the LOI went out, prior to approval of applicants in January). It appears most people are responding positively, there are some day-pass requests as well. She estimates approximately 45% have responded to the LOI.

Spirit –(circling back to Elder Eligibility) When Hilary brought the Elder Eligibility issue up, it was an equitable process across the board, applying the effort in reducing wristbands for various crews, not just Elders. Spirit mentioned the survey that went out to crew coordinators. Nancy said she will send Elder stats over to Mark.

Paxton – The overall Fair population for 2022 will be 35,000 on site. We (Fair family) are 20,000 on site. We are targeting the gate to move down to 15,000 per day. Elders is only 5% of our Fair population. The bottom line is how many people we have on the land.

Mouseman – Mentioned he is on the Elder Eligibility Subcommittee. Stated what a pleasure it was working with a small group and having the ability to get things done. The subcommittee will continue to come up with more numbers. He has concerns with how the board will handle this. Spirit reassured that there will be no blind-siding, that this is a collaborative effort, that Elders will continue to be involved with the process.

Jon P. doesn't think there's a statistical basis to support increasing the eligibility age. He has been keeping track of increases of new passes over the decades, and the next big batch of Elders is a decade away. The largest segment of the Fair population started with the Fair the first 10 years. He thinks that incoming elders are going to drop down dramatically in the next 5 years, and that the board may want to visit Elder Eligibility 10 years from now.

ROBERT JACOBS – Thanked the EE subcommittee and thanked Spirit for mentioning virtual Fair contributions, as well as her willingness to work with Elders on the age eligibility question. He said that race is an endemic and integral part of our culture. BLM indicates that Black lives haven't mattered in the past. The Fair is part of American history and culture hence issues of racism exist within the Fair. He feels that letter writing about current DC and board issues don't belong on the OCF Elder Listserv. He has seen things written on social media that aren't true. He agrees with Diane's earlier comments. He welcomes anyone to call him and discuss.

AJ – Expressed how he was saddened by the way the meeting started. He met us a year and a half ago before he was on the board. AJ has had hard conversations with a few of us. He'd like for us to stop shaming each other for making mistakes, and to get back to sitting down at the table to talk about these things. We can't have conversations by starting out calling other people racists. We have room to work. AJ hopes we can maintain civility in conversation and move the ball forward.

SUMMARY OF MOTIONS PASSED:

- January meeting minutes approved 9-0
- Seventeen vetted Elder applications approved 8-0, 1 abstention
- Agreement to make Feb. 1 a hard deadline for Elder applications received and vetted for the 2023 and 2024 Fair was approved 9-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Carolyn Gsell