

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES
THE WILD CENTER
July 9, 2012 – The Wild Center, Tupper Lake
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Board Present:

Tom Aydelotte, Joe Beck, Michael Bettmann, Lynn Birdsong, Obie Clifford, John Colston, Connie Ferguson, Charlie Frenette, Rick Godin, Nancy Howard, Mike Hunsinger, Bill Hutchens, Dave Johnson, Thomas Jorling, Kevin Keane, Peter Kindler, Betsy Lowe, Chris McFadden, Nancy Simpkins, Dan Sullivan, Charles Svenson, and Karen Thomas.

Board Absent:

Paul Alioto, Jim Carr, Amy Elrod, Robert Friedman, Claire Leonardi, Paul Maroun, Steve Potter, and Sandra Strader.

Advisory Board Present:

Lynn Fox, Barbara Grose, Sally Hart, Gary Hartwick, Peter Paul Miller, Jack Ryder, and Ross Whaley.

Others:

Matt Cobb (Wings Designee)

Staff/Consultants Present: Marci Bencze, Hillarie Logan-Dechene, Jamie Dyer, Robin Ellis, Howard Fish, Jen Kretser, Bob Kronenberger, and Stephanie Ratcliffe.

I. Welcome

Discussion: Lynn Birdsong welcomed all in attendance and thanked the Board for their commitment to attend meetings. He reported that the temporary liquor license had been received. Lynn then took a few minutes to introduce Matt Cobb, the Wings Board Designee, who was in attendance as well as Victoria Duley who attended the board retreat prior to the meeting.

Action: N/A

II. Approval of Minutes

Discussion: Minutes of the April 2, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved. *Kevin Keane motion, Tom Jorling second.*

Action: N/A

III. Report from the President

Discussion: Lynn Birdsong took a minute to thank Board Member Rick Godin for all he does to make The Wild Center a success stating that he is an "allstar". He

stated that thanks to Rick's efforts, the recent Planet Cast as well as the Barn Cast were terrific.

He also gave board members a brief update on the Klueck property. He stated that Ella Klueck had expressed her desire for The Wild Center (TWC) to purchase the property. He said that Obie Clifford has recently been in conversation with her and that she would be in the Adirondacks in August and may sit down with Obie to discuss further the possibility of TWC purchasing the property. Lynn stated that there is a possibility that the Executive Committee may need to be convened to make a decision should something happen in between board meetings. He said that board members were all in agreement to pursue purchase of the property. There was then discussion regarding possibilities for the property as well as fundraising opportunities should the museum decide to purchase it.

Tom Jorling asked for a revision of the bylaws that would make the museum eligible for tax benefits from the Seller should the museum purchase the property. Stephanie asked board members to contact her if they would like to tour the property. Lynn Birdsong stated that board members should keep the property discussion confidential.

Action: A motion to authorize the Executive Committee to negotiate in good faith with Mrs. Ella Klueck to pursue the property and execute at a price agreeable to the board was unanimously approved.

Thomas Jorling motion, Kevin Keane second.

Lynn Birdsong referred to a motion made at the last board meeting and stated that there was a new proposal regarding how committees are operated. He stated that there would be a combination of standing committees as well as ad hoc committees which would allow the organization to move forward using best practices. He stated that there were currently nine standing committees and it was proposed to change that to six standing committees and then create ad hoc committees as needed.

Action: A motion to change the number of standing committees from nine to six and create ad hoc committees as needed was unanimously approved.

Kevin Keane motion, Nancy Simpkins second.

It was also unanimously approved to change the name of the Personnel Committee to the Human Relations Committee.

IV. Report from the Executive Director

Discussion: Stephanie Ratcliffe began her report by showing board members some slides with photos of the July Board reception which was held at the New York Historical Society in New York City.

Stephanie then spoke about the importance of regional networking. She stated that in order for The Wild Center to be an important regional organization it was necessary for it to branch out. She then talked about the following museum staff members who play a big part in regional networking:

- Kendra Ormerod – selected to participate in a two week museum focused workshop on distance learning.
- Jen Kretser – the Alliance for Climate Education.
- Hillarie Logan-Dechene – elected to Museumwise; Museum Association of New York Board and appointed by Governor Cuomo to be a commissioner for the New York State Commission on National and Community Service in March 2012.
- Stephanie Ratcliffe – Path Through History Working Group, Governor’s working group on tourism development and Cleaner, Greener NY, Energy Working Group.

Stephanie Ratcliffe then spoke briefly about the group of nine summer Naturalist interns and stated how great they were in terms of increasing programming, etc. for the summer. She then showed a slide with pictures of the interns so that board members could see who they are:

- Kyle Hagenbuch
- Julie Henry
- Maggie Strucker
- Micah Harp
- Pat Dunn
- Mason Ritter
- Erin Noonan
- Tony Provost
- Katie O’Reilly Morgan

Stephanie also reported on the Planet Cast that was done with Rob Carr and Curt Stager and how successful it was. She asked board members to watch the first five or ten minutes of it and stated that she would send them a link to the Planet Cast. She mentioned that The Wild Center planned to do more of them in the future as a way to help reach a larger group of people.

She reported on the recent Planet Adirondack previews that were done before the official opening of the exhibit. She shared the following information with the board:

- Over 100 LP Quinn students in 5 morning previews.

- Over 200 people from the community – including: professors from St. Lawrence University and Paul Smith’s College. High School teachers from Tupper Lake and Saranac Lake. Community groups including the Tupper Lake Rotary and Tupper Lake Chamber of Commerce. Representatives from local schools. Representatives from local hotels and other tourist destinations as well as members of the press.
- Those 300+ people were in: 26 different preview groups ranging in size from 1 to 50 people.

She also spoke about a few other exciting events and programs that have taken place or were yet to take place over the summer. For example:

- Buzzfest – Stephanie reminded board members that it would be a great day to bring guests to the museum.
- Lake Placid Horse Shows – The Wild Center sponsored a horse jump. The museum worked with Board Member Nancy Simpkins to help make the connection and would continue to work with her to help get the word out to horse show attendees that The Wild Center is here.
- Canoes – Stephanie reminded board members that canoes were available and stated that they had been a huge hit with visitors to date.
- Adirondack Daily Enterprise award for “Best Local Attraction”.

Stephanie also reported on a new Library Discovery Pass program. Stating the following:

- Goal – accessibility for all
- It is a partnership with three county library systems (Clinton, Essex and Franklin)
- 73 people have used the pass since the program was launched

She also stated that the goal was to expand the program and that the museum is actively searching for grant funding. There was then discussion among board members about different ways that people could help sponsor the program. Jen Kretser stated that the program was a great way to help broaden The Wild Center’s connections to the community.

Stephanie also shared some interesting facts about the Maple Program:

- The program was a big hit
- Currently working to expand the program
- She showed all of the different maple products that had been made
- She talked about the community maple sugaring program
- The museum purchased some syrup in bulk and is marketing it as our own
- Advisory Board member Gary Hartwick provided 6 gallons of his own syrup for the museums Community Pancake Breakfast.

Stephanie then talked about Trillium, the museums skunk, stating that it had passed away before it was introduced to the public. She stressed the importance of a crisis management plan in a case like this. She also reported that the museum had acquired two new skunks and that their names would be Night and Day.

Action: Stephanie to send Planet Cast link to Board members.

V. **Financial Report**

Discussion: Bob Kronenberger went over the highlights of the dashboard that was included in the board packet. He reported that:

- Total revenue through May is 6% below budget and 18% higher than one year ago.
- Admissions revenue is 5% over 2011 through May and 1% over budget.
- June attendance was 9.7% below last year but in dollars it was only 1.3% ahead of last year.
- Attendance was down 8% for the first 8 days of July.
- The store is doing well, revenue was up 9% over last year.
- Café is holding its own and up slightly from last year.
- Membership is down 5% through May. He mentioned that changes were currently being made to the program.
- Annual Fund contributions are over budget through May.
- Salary and benefits are 4% below budget through May.
- IT was \$23,000 over budget due to issues in that area.
- Member attendance up in first week of July.
- Received temporary liquor license and working on securing permanent license.
- Twelve weddings booked this summer to date.
- Applied for Absolute Charter, have submitted a list of items to them.

Action: N/A

VI. **Approval of Collections Management Policy**

Discussion: A motion to adopt the newly written Collections Management Policy was unanimously approved.

Charles Svenson motion, Kevin Keane second

There was brief discussion about the wording of the policy and Tom Jorling asked for a revised copy of the policy should any changes be made.

Action: N/A

VII. Development/Campaign Report

Discussion: Hillarie Logan-Dechene then gave her development report. She spoke about the Consolidated Funding Application process. She stated that applications were currently being submitted for three of the museums projects, the Wild Walk, Youth Climate Summit/Climate and Community Maple project.

She then spoke about the fact that membership had seen a downward trend and that an ad hoc committee headed up by Membership and Appeals Officer Tim Holmes had been formed to examine ways to help increase membership.

Some key points from her presentation were:

- Annual Fund is ahead of projections to date.
- If Development can secure dollars similar to last year they should meet budget.
- \$241,000 ahead of April.
- Development activities are a great opportunity to introduce new people to The Wild Center
- 77% of Annual Fund dollars came from 5% of donors.

There was then discussion about the campaign. Lynn Birdsong said that it was important to settle on the size of the campaign soon. Jamie Dyer thanked all board members for coming and asked for their help in soliciting gifts. Hillarie Logan-Dechene mentioned the roll out of the Linda Vaughan Society (LVS). Board member Kevin Keane mentioned a letter of thanks that was sent to board members as a thank you for their commitment to LVS and asked them to scan through the brochure that was included. He asked board members to acknowledge their commitment to LVS by wearing the pin that they had received as a thank you so that it would help encourage others to be a part of it.

Board member Tom Jorling asked if the new Planet Adirondack exhibit could be used as a naming opportunity. Board member Nancy Simpkins asked if there was a dedication list that was being maintained and asked if board members could get a current copy of the list. Jamie Dyer stated that she would email a copy of the list to the board.

Action: Jamie Dyer to update dedication list and get it out to board members.

VIII. Wings Update

Discussion: Lynn Birdsong introduced Wings Board designee Matt Cobb. Matt thanked board members for the invitation to the board meeting and gave a little background on the Wings group. He stated that they were a group of “youngish” Adirondack lovers who were putting together events to help raise money to support the mission of The Wild Center. He stated that they were focused on helping to build momentum around The Wild Center brand. Matt invited board members to help get the word out to their children and grandchildren about

Wings. He also thanked Dan Sullivan as well as Jim and Amy Elrod for all of their help with Wings.

Action: N/A

IX. October Retreat Goals

Stephanie Ratcliffe stated that she needed to formulate plans for the structure of the October Board retreat and meeting. She said that the retreat would take place from 9:00 until 12:00 pm that day. She then asked board members to review the first 13 pages of the Strategic Plan and make redline changes to it so they will have a guide from which to make changes. She mentioned that an ad hoc group would be needed to help with the process. Stephanie stated that this retreat will be related to strategic priorities.

Action: N/A

X. Executive Session

XI. Upcoming 2012 Meeting Dates

- October 4, 2012 – The Wild Center