



**The Wild Center Board of Trustees Meeting
Friday, July 9, 2021
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Zoom Meeting**

Board of Trustees Attendance

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| ✓ Karen Thomas, Chair | ✓ Charles Frenette | ✓ Juan Rodriguez |
| ✓ Lynn Fox, Vice Chair | ✓ Richard Godin | ✓ John Sammon |
| ✓ Jack Ryder, Vice Chair | Meadow Hackett | ✓ James Schoff |
| ✓ Joseph Beck, Treasurer | ✓ Sally Hart | ✓ Nancy Simpkins |
| ✓ Linda Rosenstock, Secretary | ✓ Nancy Howard | ✓ Charles Svenson |
| ✓ Paul Alioto | Michael Hunsinger | ✓ Joel Treisman |
| ✓ Michael Bettmann | ✓ Peter Kindler | ✓ Virginia Valkenburgh |
| ✓ Terry Birdsong | ✓ Elizabeth Lowe | |
| ✓ George Cigale | ✓ Paul Maroun | <u>Emeritus Trustees</u> |
| ✓ Larry Clifford | ✓ Pamela Matt | G. Thomas Aydelotte |
| ✓ Kathleen Colson | ✓ Brooks Reynolds | ✓ Lynn Birdsong |

Advisory Board Attendance

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Martha Bullock, Advisory Chair | Robert Gillis |
| Lee Bailey | Ben Ireland |
| Ed Forbes | John Sargent |
| Emily Hunt-Forbes | |

Wild Center Staff Attendance

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Stephanie Ratcliffe | Nick Gunn |
| Hillarie Logan-Dechene | Robin Ellis |
| Robert Kronenberger | Phil Wagschal |
| Jen Kretser | Shannon Surdyk |

I. Administration

Karen Thomas called the meeting to order at 9:06 AM

a. Welcome

K. Thomas welcomed everyone and gave a brief recap of the Barney Bellinger opening event the evening prior. She thanked everyone for attending and showed photos for those who could not be there. She also thanked Tupper Arts and their board as well as Stan Rumbough for helping to transport some of the sculptures.

K. Thomas



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A. Approval of April 19, 2021 Minutes

- **Paul Alioto and Joe Beck motioned to approve the minutes**
- **Nancy Howard seconded the motion**
- **April 19, 2021 Minutes were unanimously approved**

B. Chair & Executive Director Reports

a. Announcement

K. Thomas

K. Thomas announced the incredible news that R. Kronenberger secured the Shuttered Venues Covid Relief Grant. She noted that Bob attended every webinar, made every deadline, and choreographed our application to maximize every benefit. Including the \$570K shuttered venue grant, we have now received over 1.2 million dollars of total relief for this year alone. She noted that it was not delivered to our front door, and that we had to go out and get it and Bob did just that.

K. Thomas noted that H. Logan-Dechene was our other COVID hero for her hard work on the COVID reopening plan including the many revisions and changes. The amount of logistics and planning was staggering.

K. Thomas announced a Save the Date on August 19th for a belated but much deserved celebration of former Chair N. Simpkins.

b. Executive Director Remarks

S. Ratcliffe

S. Ratcliffe gave an overview of the Community Composter project, noting that although it was funded through a separate grant, it is a part of the Solutions Project. It is housed in a shipping container so we can move it any time. There are three main partners contributing to the composter: The Wild Center, the Tupper Lake School District, and Raquette River Brewing.

The shipping container is personified as a compost creature to help connect with kids and families and help them understand the composting process. One of our fellows wanted to showcase what you can do with compost, so he built planter boxes to show how finished compost can grow new food. The project is 80% complete and we will add more interpretation and eventually tours. We plan to reorganize how we sort our waste inside and are currently prototyping different ideas for the cafe, i.e. feeding the creature.



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Why is composting important? 50% of solid waste is organic or biodegradable. In a landfill in the absence of oxygen it creates methane which is 10X more damaging than CO2. We need to divert solid waste from landfills, and our composter shows this at a community scale. All of the food in the Adirondacks is trucked in and all of our waste is trucked out. So we are paying to have food waste trucked out instead of letting it compost in the park. North Country School is our content leader and pioneered composters in the region.

S. Ratcliffe also noted that there is a new “I Love NY” commercial featuring TWC, which will reach millions. People in PA, NY, and CT are seeing the commercials. The Adirondacks and specifically Wild Walk was also featured in *The Week* which is terrific as their circulation is a half a million.

c. Climate Announcement

J. Kretser

J. Kretser, announced that the Youth Climate Program will hit 100 summits this fall that they have mentored and coached around the world over the past 14 years in 50 communities. Strategic partnerships and network to grow work. TED has invited Jen and Elodie Linck, our current Climate Communications Fellow, to attend their first countdown summit, ahead of UN meetings in Glasgow, Scotland in November. Four days invitation only event. Had to go through a vetting and nomination process.

II. Committee on Trustees

T. Birdsong

A. DEAI Update

K. Thomas

DEAI is relevant to board service for 3 reasons. First, it is a core value to make sure all feel welcome when they come to TWC. Second, we need to honor staff work on DEAI, 7 years into this process. Third, funders look to see that staff and board are engaged in this work. There are no best practices, K. Thomas is learning and is grateful for skilled resources on the board. The plan is to create our own process that is long-term, educational, inclusive, meeting everyone where they are with a variety of engagements. Flexibility is required, and we may make mistakes along the way.



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B. Committee Charters

T. Birdsong

Two charters were prepared in April and the committee worked this spring to round up five more charters for a total of seven, which are being presented to the board for approval. K. Colson has been invaluable in getting the charters approved, as she provided the structure and templates and edited the final charters. The seven charters are Audit, COT, Executive, Buildings and Grounds, Finance and Investment, Development, and Tech Task Force.

What happened to the External Strategy Committee? Ex Strat was formerly comprised of marketing and development. The staff at TWC have done an extraordinary job of handling marketing and are successfully using individual board members as advisors when appropriate, whereas the trustees and advisory board members are a very important core component of the development work of TWC. Development committee replaces Ex Strat.

C. Approval of Charters

- **Joe Beck motioned to accept the charters**
- **Michael Bettman seconded the motion**
- **7 charters were unanimously accepted**

T. Birdsong noted that now it will be easy to see what each committee's responsibilities and workloads are and she is hoping to take a look at membership this fall so people are in the right place

N. Simpkins asked if charters will be on the website. S. Ratcliffe responded that currently there is no public governance on the website. J. Beck stated that he didn't think Governance Documents should be live on the web. R. Godin noted in the chat that there is a private Board Web page that can be reactivated for such things if desirable.

T. Birdsong announced that a skills assessment questionnaire will be coming out in August. COT wants to see where we lack skills and where we have an abundance of skills on our board for a well-rounded board.

T. Birdsong also noted that if anyone has candidates that they feel are appropriate and bring skills, diversity, and an interest in the Adirondack, especially skills in education, nature, environment, or climate, please send her a resume and an explanation on why they would be a good fit for advisory board or board.



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D. DEAI Subcommittee Approval

K. Thomas

K. Thomas asks for approval to establish a DEAI subcommittee of the COT operating independently. K. Colson and J. Rodriguez will be co-chairs.

- **Nancy Simpkins motioned to accept the DEAI sub-committee**
- **Charles Svenson seconded the motion**

Question: What is the purpose of the sub-committee?

Response: It is for education of the board, to bring in outside speakers to inform the board, and to ensure that committee work aligns with our values.

Comment: Concern presented about the work being political

Response: The work will not be political, we are non-advocacy, and that this work is intended to be a learning process.

- **DEAI sub-committee is unanimously approved**

E. DEAI Sub Committee Update

K. Colson

K. Colson provided an update on how the DEAI subcommittee was formed and what it will focus on. A small group was assembled and now that the subcommittee is approved it will focus on board engagement. The first meeting led by K. Thomas focused on moving toward an education process first. The subcommittee wants educational materials to be accessible and not burdensome, such as short podcasts, videos, or readings. They will provide a list of outstanding books for those who want to dig deeper. The goal is a brainstorming and learning process that leads to a generative discussion during the October board meeting. The committee wants to make the work relevant to board service and our mission and TWC has an opportunity to lead. Looking at this work through multiple perspectives, not just gender and race, but also income and equality. Showed a short video from a committee member, Meadow Hackett, of her unique insight of approaching the work from impact and influence as well as inclusion and access to TWC.



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III. Finance Committee

J. Beck

A. Financial Reports

J. Beck started by giving kudos to Bob Kronenberger for his work in securing federal funding, stating we would be receiving \$1.9 million in total federal funding related to COVID relief, which is outstanding.

We reached almost 11 million dollars in investment reserves and we may now benefit from some form of active management. Finance committee believes it would be appropriate to explore moving to an ESG (Environmental Social Governance) format for our investments and would like the board to think about this moving forward. The Finance and Investment Committee will be developing an RFP to send to financial firms for their ideas.

Questions and Conversation

Comment that this could take two courses: Either develop a strategy, policy, or set of principles to guide our investments or have someone actively manage the fund relative to the policy. Does J. Beck think the corpus is large enough that we need professional, dynamic ongoing management or if the structure and framework just needs to be modified?

Response: This is one of the questions that will be addressed by the committee. Our current investment policy will be submitted to investment managers. Want to be sensitive to not paying too much in fees. Need a policy recommendation and approach recommendation. We will educate the board of what we learn and options that minimize fees while maximizing flexibility and performance.

M. Bettman commented that there are ESG exchange traded funds widely available and at very low costs, so following that principle does not translate to substantial fees.

J. Beck responded that it is a package approach. He thinks everyone would agree to ESG investing. Should we also stress good governance, diversity, inclusion, and employment practices that would go into broader ESG principles? We could easily put together a low cost package. The committee wants to find out a range of options and come back to the board after receiving professional input. Need to learn more, educate the finance committee, and then educate the board to make the best decision.

J. Sargent asked if we are unique in not having professional management at our size.



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J. Beck responds that we are not but maybe becoming so with our growing endowment. In a sense we have had professional management through Lynn and Charlie.

L. Birdsong comments that in the 10 years since we've had our endowment we have been in a dream world of financial assets. Low fee index funds and bonds were easy to buy. The market has changed things as bonds don't offer very much of a return. Time for us to consider some outside help. Number of different options whether we hire a manager or do it ourselves but need some outside help now that we are over 10 million.

R. Kronenberger then reviewed the financials for Year to Date.

Highlights

- 2021 earned income 88% over budget
- 2021 operating expenses \$28k over budget
- 2021 total operating support \$187K head budget, with \$205K from federal ERTC program
- Overall, 2021 operating results \$247K ahead of budget and \$275K better than prior year
Performing well this summer

B. Status of Government Programs

R. Kronenberger

Paycheck Protection Program - 2nd draw

- Similar program to the 2020 PPP programs
- Since the American Rescue Plan Act allows applying to both the PPP and SVOG, an application was submitted and funding of \$466,922 was received in March 2021
- We still have to apply for forgiveness of this loan, after which it will be considered revenue that further reduces our projected budget deficit

Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC)

- Originally the credit was only available through December 2020 and you had to choose between ERTC and PPP. The CAA changes that retroactive to March 12, 2020
- In Feb we filed amended payroll tax returns for 2020 to claim \$199,746 in ERTC for last year. This has been reflected in our year end financials.
- The CAA both extended the ERTC through June 30, 2021 and increased the amount of credit available up to \$7,000/quarter per employee. This was then further extended through December 31, 2021 by ARPA. To qualify your revenues must be 25% lower than



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the comparable quarter in 2019. For the first quarter of 2021 we have claimed \$204,000 in ERTC's.

- The wages used to claim the ERTC cannot be used in determining PPP Loan forgiveness or use of SVOG funds.

Shuttered Venue Operators Grants Program (SVOG)

- We submitted our application on April 28th (the first day possible). Our application status had been in the "submitted" stage until finally on July 1st it moved to "in review" status.
- Then received an email later that night- our grant application was approved! \$570K of funds have already been received.

C. Investments

Snapshot

- Current portfolio consists of 10.8 million
- S&P is up 38.6% over last 12 months, with a 14.4% increase year to date
- Market value increase of 707k year to date
- Investment return over last 12 months is 20.9%

Finance Committee is reviewing our current investment policy and looking at incorporating ESG principles into investment choices.

- ESG relates to applying Environmental, Social and Governance principles to investment management
- Currently considering:
 - What principles does TWC want to foster or align? Environmental and Sustainability related? Or broader including Diversity/Inclusion?
 - What impact will this have on investment performance and fees?
 - What investment vehicles or approaches are best suited to our portfolio size?
 - With investment portfolio now in excess of \$10 million, the Finance Committee is in the process of preparing an RFP for investment management services, which will be reviewed with the Board to determine whether and how we move forward.

Summary

- 2021 May YTD results are \$247k better than YTD budget, with \$204k coming from ERTC's. Admissions revenues are also well ahead of budget. We are on track with all operating metrics.



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- COVID relief funds awarded for 2021 total \$1,241k (PPP loan 467 + ERTC \$204k + SVOG \$570k). This should more than eliminate the \$798 projected budget deficit we started the year with.
- Total endowment funds are now in excess of \$10.8mm, including \$2.1mm in Obie Clifford Fund. The Finance Committee is in the process of reviewing investment policies and considering whether to retain an outside investment advisory firm.

Questions and Conversation

Question: If attendance is up 50% over budget and we budgeted very conservatively with attendance tracking very well, are there implications on that relative to staffing levels and the quality of visitor experience? Should we re-look at budgets on that account or can we flex to this increase?

Response: We did increase the staffing needs based on opening inside the museum in July. We are hiring more staff than we budgeted for and it has been difficult finding all of the people that we need as employment is rough. We have hired more people in anticipation of the higher volume of visitors.

Summary: Applaud management and we must keep mission, guest satisfaction, and value delivered to process we charge in check in consideration of future equity.

Question: Can you comment on the internship program and employee numbers?

Response: Six fellows, 4 in education, 1 youth climate, and 1 in solution project. Less than in 2019 as we do not have seasonal/ summer interns. Fellows are longer term.

Question: Did we change our admission prices now that we are open inside?

Response: We decided to leave admission at last summer's rate. \$20 instead of increasing mid-year to \$22.

Question: How is the indoor reopening going?

Response: It is going well so far and we have people monitoring the flow of traffic inside. We have not had to prevent people from coming inside as it has not been too crowded. Highest visit day was 700-800 people. We still have a limit in place capping admission in



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two hour blocks. We have been selling out of the 10am-12pm time slot, which increased from last year.

Observation: Membership is lagging and we need to rebuild our membership over the next year or two.

Response: Yes, as a result of last year's closure and limited operations early in the year, first year renewals took an expected hit. We are starting new sales strategies in mid-July to start to rebuild.

Question: Are we doing a good enough job assessing guest satisfaction as people leave TWC? What components currently exist?

Response: Nick Gunn will contextualize some of this in his report. We assess customer satisfaction in a couple of different ways.

The statewide survey that NYSTA put together focused on COVID protocols (referenced in the Step 3 Plan) and touched on value for money. Results of that survey indicated that TWC was delivering a higher experience but we scored lower in "value for money." Assumption is that the low rating was from visitors who came before and were disappointed last year when they were only getting an outdoor experience while paying a similar price. This isn't the case with new visitors, and overall satisfaction across surveys is high. The Customer Service team meets once a week to collate comments, social media feedback, formal survey results, and look for ways to improve. We do a ton of post visit surveys.

IV. Building and Grounds

S. Hart

S. Hart started by giving an overview. The team has been working to develop a draft for the Campus Master Plan by the January meeting. We have a 15 year old campus and need to stay on top of things to prevent maintenance costs.

A. Pavilion

S. Ratcliffe

S. Ratcliffe noted that the pavilion project includes two separate buildings, the pavilion and the ancillary building and shows layouts that are programmatically important, i.e. lecture, concert, Youth Climate Summit, BAGA vendors, festival type events, picnics, or lunch convenings. In the



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past we could only have events in our off season. Cannot have simultaneous events, but the pavilion will change this.

S. Ratcliffe apologized for focusing on weddings last time. Gave the designer our worst case scenario which is weddings. We are not building the pavilion for weddings, we are building it for our mission work, but it could also work for weddings. In the next phase of the design, we will look further into acoustics for concerts. We will also look closer at the fire pit out front and how it could be utilized.

Preliminary pricing is that it will be over 5 million dollar project

Questions

Question: How do you react to this number relative to other projects? Are we being over the top, in the middle, or light?

Response: We spent money to get WW professionally estimated and ended up coming in a million over. Wouldn't bother going through a professional estimate. If we go into a capital campaign, we could try to raise more and any excess could go into the endowment for maintenance.

Question: What is the square footage?

Response: 5600 square feet for pavilion and 1600 square feet for ancillary

Question: Is this a 12 month facility?

Response: It will be a three and a half season building. It will not be fully heated when we don't need it to be and we can shut it down as needed. Tried to be green and sustainable with the design.

Question: Can the building handle changes in the climate? Such as hail?

Response: Thinking about climate change in the Adirondacks, which will likely be wetter as well as hotter, we do have accommodation for air conditioning as needed, but trying to be green. Will look into hail.

Question: Will the building and its multiple uses have accommodations for plumbing?



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Response: Most of the plumbing will be in the ancillary building. There was a request for a service sink and one bathroom in the pavilion and that will be considered in the next phase of design.

Proposal to build the ancillary building first, perhaps 5-10 years earlier than the pavilion as it has bathrooms (genderless flush toilets), kitchen, and conference room. This would relieve our bathroom issue, our kitchen issue, plus there is a conference room. Probably a million dollars to do this first.

A. Master Trail Plan

P. Wagschal

S. Ratcliffe starts by introducing Phil Wagschal, who has been with us since 2017 as IT, but is now our Full Time Facilities Director. In his past career, Phil was responsible for bringing broadband internet into the Adirondacks.

Invited master trail builder Peter Jensen to look at the accessibility of our trails, a new trail for Stickworks, as well as trails to the waterfront. He gave the staff a masterclass in trail building. Took time to train staff on how to build trails.

We are looking at options and examining systems as we attempt to build this plan. Good opportunity to look at what we have and what's lacking, such as deferred maintenance so we can see what needs to go into the plan

Board took 10 minute break - Returned at 10:50 am

The Stickworks Project will begin next month. Structure will be built from August 1st-21st. We have already constructed a trail to access the sculpture. Nice winding trail from the trail to Wild Walk, across the access road to the sculpture location.

S. Ratcliffe showed the existing trail system including access roads. Images from google earth are older. Working map that was given to Peter Jensen, note that it is very steep down by the water. How to design a graded trail on steep terrain. Steep section of trail between pine and Wild Walk. Asked for a more accessible or all person trail. Trail is longer but has gentle slopes.

Also asked Peter for a trail down to the waterfront to see the bog. He mapped out two trails, one lower trail and one upper trail. Phil prefers the upper trail as it walks on the hillside and gives you a broader view of the ecosystem. We would never do both as you could see one from the other.



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The Building and Grounds committee will be doing a bushwhack tour of these two trails within a couple weeks. An invitation is forthcoming for those who would like to attend.

B. Waterfront Planning

S. Ratcliffe

Waterfront Update

- Hired consultant Dan Spada to assist with permitting
- On-site visit with the APA at the end of July
- There are many steps to this process

Consultant, Dan Spada strongly advises that we get permits for the largest structure possible, even if we don't build it to the full capacity immediately. Moving toward an enclosed boathouse versus covered docks, so that it has storage for equipment as we don't want a bunch of sheds anywhere.

S. Ratcliffe does not want to tie the hands of the future staff and board in the case a larger boat such as a pontoon boat is desired in the future. Although the current staff and board are not enthusiastic about the pontoon, we should not limit future operations and future decision makers. We will explore this during the design phase.

Next design phase: enclosed with two bays, flat roof, accessible ramp to lower deck, and stabilized bank.

V. Programs and Marketing

H. Logan-Dechene

A. Summer Programming

H. Logan-Dechene reviewed some new summer offerings: both inside and outside. Per an earlier question, we now have more for our visitors to explore, providing increased value for the admission fees. She described the new:

Barney Bellinger Exhibit

- New composition in Forest Music by Eric Sturr
- Unremarkable patch of woods is now very exciting
- With Stickworks coming we have **two** new outdoor experiences

Nancy Sargent Animal Viewing Area

- Staffed and open all day



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- Can see animals you previously weren't able to see
- Plus we have two creatures features every day

Indoor Living River Trail

- Building off one of the original organizing concepts in the museum
- We enhanced this experience and are highlighting 12 stops with floor markers
- Designed to safely socially distance visitors, as we still need to be concerned about safety
- Finding that people are spending more time reading labels than ever before and are understanding the organization of exhibits
- People are getting more from the exhibits, even though it is a one way loop

B. Marketing Updates

N. Gunn

Tactics Update - Digital Marketing

- Includes social media, Google Adwords, regional advertising, email marketing, and connected TV
 - Connected TV - way to reach those who have cut the cord and moved away from traditional television and using smart TVs, etc.
 - Made a considerable investment a few years back
 - Small campaign that blended connected TV with cable and it performed okay

Web Traffic Results

- We are seeing our highest website visitation since 2017
- Up 109% from 2019, 8% from 2018, and 31% from 2017
- Year over year, organic searches are up 98%, traffic from Facebook is up 634%, and Adwords 163%
- Invested money in social media advertising and Lunch Time Live which is why Facebook number is so high
- Email traffic is down 13%

AdWords Campaign

- Targeted Virtual field trips
- Impressions and virtual field trips in NYC, PA, Georgia, and Southern CA

Public Relations



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- 24 placements and 312 million media impressions

FAM Trip with Cory Lee

- Accessibility travel blogger and influencer
- Accessibility trip to the Adirondacks, highlighting TWC, John Dillon Park, the VIC, Mirror Lake
- 438,000 impressions, 5,049 reactions, 447 comments, 735 shares
- Huge amounts of exposure and also picked up by our partners, I Love NY and Visit Adirondacks

I Love NY

- Referrals from I Love NY increased from over 131% from 2020
- Noted that TWC is featured in current TV and other ILNY promotions

Main Street Lake Placid

- Main Street is packed so we capitalized on foot traffic in Lake Placid
- Put up banners in a vacant building owned by Merrill Thomas, which was donated to us
- Average web traffic from Lake Placid was 21 people a day, and we have more than doubled that since we hung the banners

Effect on Visitation

- Attendance Numbers
 - Summer 2020 (7/15-8/31): 280 visitors/day
 - Summer 2021 (5/21-7/7): 366 visitors/day
 - Since reopening indoors: 798 visitors/day
 - In 2020 we were serving people from a 4 hour drive
 - In 2021 we are seeing a higher number of people more spread out
- Nationwide Visitation
 - Much more spread out than in 2020
 - Texas, Southern California, Florida, etc.



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C. Step 3 Plan Approval

H. Logan-Dechene

H. Logan-Dechene noted that we have a moral obligation to keep people safe, especially our youngest visitors. Plus we need to continue to keep our staff safe and healthy and have been very fortunate throughout the pandemic.

NYS passed the Hero Act which is for airborne illnesses, and delineated legal obligations for non-governmental entities, like us. We need an approved plan as an organization, by the end of October. Another requirement for organizations is a Safety Committee generated by the staff, without supervisory people involved. Our staff had already done this, so we put it in the plan to document.

The plan includes the current mask policy, vaccination policy, etc. We started with a more restrictive plan, because we can always modify and relax as warranted, while it would be much harder to get stricter. There will be amendments to this plan as things change.

Paul Maroun motioned to approve the plan
Rick Godin seconded the motion
Step 3 Plan was unanimously approved

VI. Development

L. Fox

A. Development Updates

L. Fox noted that the new expanded development committee will be good to have more feet on the ground. We still have 14 people volunteering for the Take 5 outreach, but the committee is still looking for volunteers. C. Svenson had a great idea to write to Take 5 folks about The No-Reservations list to give them the opportunity whenever they can visit. The Development Committee will be back in October, with a plan to increase the endowment. L. Fox has a personal goal to keep or increase the number of our patron donors

VII. Generative Session

S. Ratcliffe

A. Generative Discussion

S. Ratcliffe stated that the point of the generative discussion is that the issues being raised are unresolved. The generative curve is an attempt to get board input early in the formation of ideas and strategies.



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B. Tech Task Force

G. Cigale

Members include G. Cigale, R. Godin, J. Rodriguez, N. Simpkins, J. Sammon, L. Clifford, S. Ratcliffe, N. Gunn, P. Wagschal, H. Logan-Dechene, plus programming staff.

G. Cigale states that this has been an intensive effort with six meetings every couple of weeks starting in March for a couple hours each, digging deep into what has happened this year and what the opportunities and challenges are with technology. This has been talked about for 5 years, but had to swing into action last year. We went from mostly in person offerings to an overnight change. We met the challenge by creating daily and weekly content and expanding our audience from a day's drive to a national one. Our capabilities with limited staff, technology, and bandwidth was amazing. If we plan this out and look at it as an investment and strategy to break through the blue line to reach a broader audience and engage in ways not possible in person, there are lots of possibilities. Think of this as a new wing or a massive effort and a long-term investment to make a bigger impact. This may require some creative thinking about our mission and new strategies.

The Tech Task Force is a board and staff task force to:

- Assess current digital footprint and programs
- Articulate what we have learned to date from digital experiments and reflect on what that might mean for the future. What strategic decisions have we already made to date?
- Review our current infrastructure - is it up to date, is it holding us back, what are our needs?
- Visioning the future - articulate for the board our current strategic directions and what vision is emerging from our group thinking by July 2021.

Progress to date:

- Met 6 times for 1.5-2 hour work sessions
- Added additional programming staff for focused discussions
- Discussion topics include: critiquing all digital programs to date, review of digital analytics, summary of work with schools, assessing tech infrastructure needs, developed new ideas/broad direction/frameworks, initial discussion of pay walls

A few working assumptions and things we have learned:



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- Lunchtime Live is working for us on many levels. It has been integrated into the staff program/marketing workflow. It is art of our DNA, we have developed the skills to execute at a high level
- There is a demand for virtual school programs from inside and outside the region. The limiting factor for expansion is staff time.
- There is demand for in depth content, but it is a small devoted audience. Broadening that reach will require marketing investment and specific strategy (i.e. members only, virtual member only, fee per event, etc.). More experimentation is needed to see clear patterns.
- Staff have developed solid skills sets - this is a new asset.
- Our digital audience has grown because of our concentrated focus on distributing and amplifying new content.
- We are already at the point where we need devoted staff BOH for coordination and social media management - one position to start.
- Current bandwidth is sufficient for the next few years, additional production equipment would be helpful but not essential.
- Youth Climate Program has a parallel but different growth track affecting the needs of the community. Perhaps the digital world can support the network of organizers, while the event remains primarily in person.

C. Example: Lunchtime Live

S. Ratcliffe

In order to accommodate time and resources the Lunchtime Live schedule has been reduced to focus on the content that creates the most engagement on the days in which we see the most activity. This leaves room for staff creativity - the ability to create a one off program that doesn't fit into any one particular category. It also provides us an opportunity to expand platforms.

Details

- Frequency: 5 days per week (used to be 7)
- Topics: Nature Detective, Mindful Moments, Animal Check-ins, Field Trips
- Platforms: Facebook, Instagram, You Tube, Tik Tok

D. Discussion Prompts for Breakout Rooms

1. Each Person shares one story: What is something you experienced or participated in virtually during covid that surprised you in that it was enjoyable/useful/workable. Will you continue to participate in similar activities virtually in the future?
2. Will remote services/communities continue to flourish in a post pandemic world?
Report out on question 2 only.



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9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Zoom Meeting

Board members were divided into breakout groups and discussed the Generative Session topic for 35 minutes. After the break out session Board members were asked to give a brief summary of their discussions.

Room 1: S. Ratcliffe, J. Rodriguez, L. Rosenstock, N. Howard

S. Ratcliffe reports:

- Hybrid method is the way of the future
- Still need some in person convening, i.e. Youth Climate Summit, Seminars
- A plus was that Linda could invite guest speakers to seminar classes, easier to plug in than fly in, selective advantages
- Juan believes that online services will be on demand for a couple of years, covid will continue as its hard to predict
- Juan adds on about teleworking

Room 2: H. Logan-Dechene, B. Lowe, J. Sargent. L. Fox

H. Logan-Dechene reports:

- Be sure to look at underserved audiences, such as elderly people in assisted living or nursing homes
- Pandemic will never be over totally, preparing for what's next
- Targeting audience, higher education, talked about hybrid, ideal venue for training
- Discussed what technology needs are, programmatic desires drive the technological need
- Partnerships to get information spread further, partner organizations that have their own audiences
- This is a huge priority for us moving forward, treat tech as a new wing
- What comes first chicken or egg, could open up opportunities for more funding

Room 3: J. Sammon, C. Frenette, J. Ryder, J. Scoff

J. Sammon reports:

- Technology is important for the future of TWC
- What of online behavior is complementary to TWC's mission versus what is supplementary
- Visitation, membership, & donations
- Charlie adds that we have a mission and a business model and technology supports both so how do we accomplish both



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- We need a strategy that knits together both so we can be deliberate with where we invest resources

Room 4: N. Simpkins, B. Ireland, P. Alioto, R. Ellis

N. Simpkins reports:

- Creativity is not benefited by zoom meetings, but break-out rooms help
- When you participate in a zoom, it's helpful to be a combo between physical and virtual, i.e. wine tasting, working out
- Augmented reality, SOS is underused, way to plug into it on your phone
- Investing in QR technology up on Wild Walk
- Wild Walk is great for instagram but not a lot of spots inside the museum, instagram will eventually drive people online to other resources
- Ben adds more info on conversation around augmented reality through phone over time or related to climate change would be a cool use of technology, that doesn't use physical space

Room 5: L. Clifford, C. Svenson, J. Triesman, K. Thomas

L. Clifford reports:

- Hybrid technology brings all sorts of opportunities
- Joel talked about the art of gathering, interesting resource on how people gather & how it has changed or stayed the same
- Wild Center app, QR codes, app called Picture This, helps with ID of trees and mushrooms, resources like this can enhance visitor experience

Room 6: N. Gunn, K. Colson, L. Birdsong, M. Bullock, R. Kronenberger

N. Gunn reports:

- Technology provides accessibility and is not going away, it's our new reality
- Sponsorships of LTL and virtual field trips

Room 7: P. Wagschal, J. Beck, B. Reynolds, L. Bailey

P. Wagschal reports:

- Advantages to zoom
- Physical is stronger than virtual, feelings the wind, touching the plants, symbiosis between virtual and physical



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- Virtual needs to bring folks back to TWC, engagement with TWC moving forward
- Joe adds that their needs to be a linkage to use virtual to get more donations and memberships, or more admission traffic

Room 8: G. Cigale, V. Valkenburgh, P. Maroun, P. Kindler

G. Cigale reports:

- Paul noted how quickly things changed
- Lots of good changes: less travel, saved money, ecommerce,
- Cons were with school and zoom fatigue
- Shouldn't change our core message of anchoring in the ADK and core value of loving nature and taking care of it, but it can be transferred online
- Seasonal ups and downs should level off if we do this properly

Room 9: R. Godin, S. Hart, T. Birdsong

R. Godin reports:

- All were more connected
- Reflected on virtual programs, rough at first, but came a long way
- Opportunities to speak up in zoom meetings
- Need younger advice, junior board to help advise, young people are living with a device in their hands
- Being online makes everyone equal and keeps people focused on a subject
- Digital programming isn't hardware, it's people, and another department within TWC staff

The Board then entered into the Executive Session at 1:06 pm