

KACHEMAK NORDIC SKI CLUB BOARD MINUTES

April 13, 2009

6:30pm, Kachemak Conservation Council Office

PRESENT: Richard Burton, Alan Parks, Tara Schmidt, Jan Spurkland, Allan Phelps, Steve Rykaczewski, Dave Brann, Molly Brann (Absent: Lisa Wood)

GUESTS: Doug Schwiesow, Kenton Bloom

This was a special meeting of the board of directors to identify project priorities and discuss funding options. Meeting was called to order at 6:40 by President Alan Parks. Alan had to leave for about 30 minutes at 7:00pm for an appearance at the city council meeting. During this period, the meeting was conducted by Vice-president Dave Brann.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The agenda was amended as follows:

- Add a budget review
- Add discussion of plan to hire a grant writer
- Swap the order of discussion of the project matrix and funding

Jan moved to approve the agenda as amended. Dave seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

MEETING GOALS:

Alan requested that we start with a brief discussion of what we should try to accomplish at this meeting. Jan indicated he would like to see a common vision that we could present to the community. Richard suggested we should try to come up with a set of projects that we need to start work on immediately. Steve indicated we need to set project priorities and review the budget and funding options. Allan would like to see us determine how to use the revenue sharing money. He emphasized the need to work together toward a common vision and that we should start by identifying the projects we want to pursue. Molly indicated we should try to identify a responsible person to lead any project we intend to undertake. Dave emphasized the need for a financial understanding of what we can afford.

This discussion led to agreement that we would go through the project matrix that Alan created, identify projects that could be started this year and that would require additional funding, and remove projects from the list that are already underway, do not require additional funding, or are more long term.

COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS:

Doug discussed the effort to certify the new trails at Lookout as homologated. He has been in correspondence with John Aalberg, the Nordic director at Whistler Mountain, about doing an inspection of the Lookout system to determine what additional work, if any, needs to be done to get this certification. John has indicated a willingness to make a trip to Homer to inspect the site. He would waive his normal inspection fees but we would need to provide transportation and his lodging in Homer. Doug emphasized that the main purpose of this trip would be to see what additional work needs to be done for the certification. The certification would probably not be finished with this trip.

There was some discussion about the benefits of this certification. Both Doug and Allan suggested that it could help gain additional funding for the club. There are currently only 4 certified courses in the U.S. with 3 of them being in Anchorage. Allan feels the certification would lend credibility for additional grants and that we would be able to attract big events that would generate additional revenue.

Doug would like to have permission from the board to continue the effort to bring John to Homer. He said he is willing to be the lead person for this project. Dave suggested we need additional information before we could commit to spending money for this. Doug indicated he is in correspondence with John and would find out more details about timing and expenses. This discussion led to the following motion by Richard, seconded by Allan:

Motion: The KNSC board approves having Doug investigate further the possibility of a trip by John Aalberg and requests that he gather additional information about time and cost. Approval of funding for the trip would be done separately at the May meeting.

Motion passed unanimously. This will be added as an item on the agenda for the May meeting.

Kenton then discussed the issues of parking and land purchase at Baycrest. He feels that the club should undertake a land use plan for all of the Baycrest area before any decisions are made regarding parking or land acquisition. He thinks this should be a priority goal for Baycrest. Tara indicated that there are already efforts underway by other agencies to develop such a plan but that it is a fairly long term process (probably 2+ years) and that a club project needs to be done in conjunction with these existing efforts. Molly suggested that there has also already been considerable discussion of this issue by the board and in meetings of the Baycrest committee but that it probably needs to be better publicized. .

A land use plan was added to the project list for Baycrest, but it was subsequently removed when it was decided to concentrate on immediate projects.

BUDGET REPORT:

There was a fairly detailed discussion of the existing budget in an attempt to determine how much money is available to fund the projects we are proposing. Tara pointed out

that we are in a period of transition this year and that the original budget was not put into quickbooks so it is difficult to reconcile the budget with existing revenues and expenditures. There is about \$22000 in existing unrestricted revenues, but without comparing with the budget it is hard to know how much is available for spending on projects. Steve indicated that the club usually has a number of bills to pay at the end of the year. He suggested that we should not fund out of the existing revenues until we know all of our expenses and that such expenditures should be accounted for in a new budget. Molly also pointed out that, in several cases, the budget anticipated more revenue than has actually been raised.

There is about \$6500 in borough revenue sharing money allocated for McNeil and about \$9800 available for Baycrest/Lookout.

It was suggested that, since we do not have enough information for accurate figures at this meeting, we should convene a meeting of the budget committee before the next regular board meeting and attempt to get more detailed information for that meeting. Tara will announce the budget committee meeting.

PLAN TO HIRE A GRANT WRITER:

Molly would like to get started looking for a grant writer. There are 8 people on the volunteer list who are interested and she would like permission to contact them individually to see who could help us and what they would charge. This led to a discussion of what we are asking of a grant person and what qualifications we should be looking for. Allan suggested we need someone who has professional experience, especially with grant research. Tara reported on her effort to see what the “Alaska Funding Exchange” could offer in the way of research and grant writing. They do offer professional grant writing services but the service is quite expensive. There is also a sister agency, “Grant Station”, that provides research services on a subscription basis. This service would provide lists of possible grant sources, but it would be up to us to research and write the grants. We could use it to do some of our own research and also could provide the information to whoever we ultimately hire to help us. There is currently a special subscription rate of \$135 for six months. This discussion led to the following motion by Richard, seconded by Allan:

Motion: We approve spending \$135 from the grant fund for the purpose of obtaining a 6 month subscription to the “Grant Station” service.

The motion was passed unanimously.

There was additional discussion of how to go about finding a qualified person and what we should be willing to pay. Tara suggested asking potential people in writing to provide a cost and the list of services they could provide for that cost. Molly would like to be in a position to approve someone at the May meeting so she would like to have board permission to pursue this immediately. The discussion led to the following motion by Tara, seconded by Dave:

Motion: We should put out an RFP to the membership to supply grant research and writing services.

In discussion, it was emphasized that no monetary commitment has been made and that we should try to make a decision at the next meeting.

The motion passed unanimously.

EVALUATION MATRIX:

There was detailed discussion of the evaluation matrix that Alan passed out by email prior to the meeting. Allan wanted to know how the matrix would help us prioritize projects. He emphasized that we need to decide what projects we want to pursue. Alan indicated that his intention was to provide a format that would allow a discussion of funding options and would encourage a budget for each project.

Several members suggested that we should get rid of the area designation tags and just list the projects by type. Molly thought that removing the areas would just confuse the issue. In the end, it was decided to proceed with the existing matrix since that was what we had to work with at this meeting.

Molly emphasized the need to identify someone to be responsible for each item on the list. Allan suggested that the project manager does not necessarily have to be a board member. However, Alan thinks that big capital projects should have board oversight.

There was discussion about what should be included for immediate consideration in the matrix. Steve suggested that items that are already in the budget do not need to be considered. Neither do items that are no cost or low cost. We should concentrate on projects that will need extra funding that is not already budgeted. It was agreed that we should go through the project list and identify projects that need additional funding and that we would like to start work on this summer. This analysis resulted in the shorter project list that is submitted with these minutes. The intent is to determine a budget for each item, identify possible funding sources, and try to prioritize the use of existing funding.

We then went through the projects in the resulting list and tried to fill in the detail that is currently known about each project. That information is summarized in the submitted project matrix. A couple of items were discussed in more detail. The new 3k trail at McNeil Canyon School is being done in conjunction with the school. The club cannot build trails on school grounds. The school needs to do that, but we are providing help and some funding. The capital improvements at Lookout attracted some discussion. Allan suggested that additional temporary parking would be essential for holding the Besh Cup at Lookout next year. Improved parking is being addressed through the hiring of a grant writer, but a grant probably would not be available in time for next season. The complete project would probably require a grant for about \$100000. Allan suggested that

the planned parking area could be leveled and made useable for next year at a cost of \$4000-\$5000. Dave suggested that a possibility for temporary parking that would be cheaper would be to expand the existing area at the Hayfields by plowing out some additional space. Allan indicated expansion of parking at the Hayfields would require permission from the state since they own the land. Dave said he would talk to the state about getting permission. A permanent warming shelter would probably cost about \$300000, but a short term solution would be a pole barn which has a cost estimate of \$15000.

There followed a brief discussion of which projects need high priority for funding. It was noted that the McNeil/Eveline projects could be funded through the borough revenue sharing money that is allocated for McNeil. Steve indicated a high priority should be improved mapping. He also suggested that we not continue to rely on grant funding to provide the money for upgrading the snowmachines since this is an ongoing cost. He thinks it should come out of the regular budget. Jan suggested providing outhouses for all areas and grass seed to stabilize the new Lookout trails. Molly thinks a high priority should be obtaining a new 4 stroke snowmachine. Dave thinks trail work should be a high priority. Allan suggested that preparation for holding the Besh Cup next year at Lookout should be a priority. He thinks this would include a timing shelter, warming shelter, and additional parking.

The meeting ended with an agreement to try to get more detailed project and budget information for the projects on the list before the May board meeting and a commitment to follow up at this meeting.

REVIEW FUNDING OPTIONS:

Other than the budget and grant writing discussions, this was not addressed at this meeting due to time constraints and lack of information.

Meeting was adjourned about 9:45 pm.

Next meeting: May 6, 2009 at the Kachemak Conservation Council office.

Documents submitted:

Modified Project Matrix

Richard Burton
Secretary