

FIC Spring Organization Meeting Shannon Farm Community, VA March 23-25, 2007

Opening ritual & beads
Remembering the Org Mtgs 5, 10, 15, and 20 years ago
2002 Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario CA
1997 Edenvale, BC
1992 Celo, NC
1987 Stelle, IL

Welcome, housekeeping

Present: Harvey, Tony, Jenny, Marty, Fred, Jorge. Absent: Caroline, Raines
Laird, David Galloway, Vince, Ma'ikwe, Bill, DianaM

Nominating Cmtee and Cmtee to Select Nominating Cmtee (CSNC) Forming (Marty)

NomCom is: Marty, Harvey (at meetings only), Peggy, Ma'ikwe, Barbara.

Ma'ikwe and Peggy's terms are up this meeting, so need CSNC.

It was suggested to wait until Saturday to select CSNC so that there will be a broader spectrum of folks to join.

Current NomCom will operate through the end of this meeting.

Tony and Harvey's terms expire at this meeting, and Peggy has previously resigned.

NomCom Report (Marty)

2 terms expiring: Tony and Harvey. No new candidates, Tony and Harvey re-upped. Bd agreed to accept them back.

New bd is same as the old bd.

Committee to Select Nominating Committee (Harvey)

Marty still on. Ma'ikwe re-upped. Added Betsy and Fred.

Happiness. Good mix of new and old.

Marty convenes NomCom.

NomCom will meet before end of mtg to make plan for contacting potential candidates.

Committee to Select the Nominating Committee (Tony)

Concern that bd candidates were coming from too small a pool.

Current bd selection process: NomCom selects candidates, proposes to board. Bd final say acceptance or no.

NomCom is to find potential candidates, screen them, and get them involved. Also in evaluating potential candidates to identify those who aren't appropriate.

Expand pool of candidates by making NomCom robust and diverse. Hence, CSNC. Is short-term ad hoc. Get new NomCom by end of mtg. 3-5 people. Marty is only NomCom member who isn't expiring or vacating.

Need CSNC to find NomCom candidates over rest of course of mtg. Qualified membership (those who have been to at least one other bd mtg at any time in the past) select CSNC. Anyone can be on CSNC, even if first mtg.

George, Molly, Betsy as time allows, Harvey, DianaM

TASK: Marty will inform nominated NomCom member who aren't present that they are called to serve.

Finance 1 (Tony)

Review 2006 numbers, look at adjustments to 2007

2006

Art of Community (AofC) \$4600

Bookshelf is showing a profit, generally because of strong event sales, some of which are not annual sales.

Cmag sales up, but so are expenses, so less of a loss than anticipated.

Other income includes auctions, mailing lists, other unpredictable income items, \$9472.

Most important is to note that most of these are not necessarily repeatable.

Profit is \$22,587, which is 24,444% higher than expected.

Bookshelf Detail: More events than expected? Somewhat because not sure of AofC, but mostly were conservative in projections.

Event sales are basically anything that isn't mail order. Often it's from when Laird travels.

Selling through Amazon? Sell on Half.com, also probably ones we self-publish are on Amazon through our distributors.

Cmag Detail: All sales are above projections. Seems that 2005 was a slower sales year than typical.

2006: Sales, advertising all up.

Seem to have dealt with wholesale backlogging that was causing trouble.

Most expenses are covered by grant money (photo editor, managing editor). Expenses are about as expected and are reasonable, need to increase sales.

Total Equity (bottom of balance sheet): steadily up, now is \$76,387. Means we're in good shape. Tony noted that we have lots of liquid assets right now, but most are earmarked for specific projects or purposes. Tony is working on investing those.

Directory Endowment Fund shows . . . \$9000. Endowment has \$11,000 in CD, \$3600 in checking, some other money being paid back..

Loss Items: Cmag and Web Weavers. Have decided to give money to Web Weavers rather than have them be self-supporting (as they have been).

AGREED: 2006 financial report accepted as written.

2007

Have numbers for first 2 months. "% of budget" number is even if 17%.

It was noted that some items are quarterly, so not necessarily reflective of real picture.

Cmag Detail: Wholesale negative because haven't shipped issue yet this year. Subscriptions are up, as are back issues. Advertising looks slow, but might be billing issue. Good news is that Parke is managing well and following up with Patricia about ad income. Two new initiatives upcoming: subscription campaign to 2000 customers going out in next 2-3 weeks. Also promotion to natural food stores to increase wholesale sales. Also new Directory in May or June, and this generally increases Cmag sales. This budget was approved in fall '06.

Art of Community Detail: made \$4600. Part was NICA putting up some front money for Seattle event, which helped make the event successful. Doesn't include bookshelf and auction income.

One idea is to use the AofC profit as seed money for future events. OS thinks good idea, but bringing to board.

Another option is to put the money into some other 1-time project (pay down loan, invest, . . .). Could divide and use portions for different purposes.

NICA was investing in project more than fronting money: \$5000 advance. \$1000 as investment, \$4000 as loan to be repaid. \$4600 is FIC share. Fred has donated share of profits (\$900) as seed money, so total would be \$5500.

Seed money made it possible to hire someone for publicity at an earlier point in the process, better quality publicity materials, and paying someone with local contacts who looked for local co-sponsors.

Next major event might not have to pay facilities fee because University of New Mexico might co-sponsor. Ma'ikwe is planning to meet with them. If so, \$900 seed money is probably enough. Ma'ikwe suggests at least \$2500.

It was noted that costs expand to fit available funds, so having \$5500 might lead to extra spending. One suggestion was to start with \$2500 and then perhaps add to that as events are successful. More seed money could mean ability to do larger events.

Seattle event compensation was based on income generated, rather than paid up front. Fred thinks this worked well and seed money should be used for other purposes.

If don't use full AofC profit, the rest would go into general operating budget.

It was noted that an event that loses money could take away from seed money.

A suggestion was to use some of the seed money to fund smaller regional special events, or work on more than one event at the same time. If so, would be best to pay up-front for event organizer. Then more money would be best. Event more successful with happy organizers making some money so can focus on event planning.

It was suggested that cost (risk) sharing with regional or special events would make it easier on FIC. Probably each event will have its own negotiations. NICA was extremely generous.

Board called for at least one event every 18 months. Would like this money to initially go toward those events. The Cmtee is not prepared to commit to more events because we have seed money.

It was noted that Bd might not be willing to risk full seed amount on all events.

What about when seed money isn't used? Invest, keep liquid.

If invested, what about interest? Build up seed fund or put in general operating budget? Remains to be decided after decide how to use money.

Authorize Events team to spend money as they see fit, or go to Bd with each expenditure? Bd will approve initial amount of seed money. Team should provide budget in order for Bd to see how much money to risk. Bd will continue having close oversight over Events cmtee and budgets for now.

It was noted that Bd has defined this as a growth income area. Seed money supports this expectation so can budget event as needed, not have to pull money away from another project to fund event.

Incrementally increase seed money by setting aside % from profits of each successful event. When we have enough, we will look at big event.

It was noted that \$5000 was good for Seattle event.

It was noted that each event will have different budget. For instance, Seattle has bigger audience but is more expensive. New Mexico smaller audience but probably cheaper.

Cooler: It was suggested that \$5000 be designated as seed money. This could still be invested until needed. Leave off question of whether to continue increasing fund from future event profits. For now, could keep the full amount invested because have enough cash available to cover expenses as needed to seed event.

Cash Management

Fall org mtg decided that profit (\$22,000) would be used to pay down loan in order to reduce interest expense.. Paid off \$15,000 loan, saving about \$1000 each year.

Tony has approval to do cash management (in safe investments). More direction from Bd requested. Pay down more loans? Partner with FEC PEACH fund, which would yield higher interest. Fund one-time projects? Endowment fund(s)?

Still about \$30,000 PEACH debt balanced with loan from FIC loan fund. Paying off PEACH would free up loan fund money. This would create more interest income from loan fund.

Request guidance from Bd—general vision, invest in one-time projects, ongoing financial investments.

Also authorize Tony to do day-to-day management, and what is guideline for going back to Bd.

There was appreciation for having some money to spend rather than feeling tight. However, note that Loan Fund is cushion covering some debt, and need to recognize that debt exists. Just happen to have some liquid assets right now.

\$8000 after paying down loan, and this includes money that may be used for AofC seed money.

Also noted that bounty has only been for one year.

It was suggested that financial investing (vs. project spending) could create more regular bounty.

Set target of paying down PEACH loan over next 5 years? \$2500–3000 in interest which is 2% of overall budget.

Development has been successful in raising money, mostly earmarked, but it allows more money to stay in general operating budget.

It was suggested that could use \$5000 for AofC seed, and \$3000 to pay off PEACH. Save interest paid, increase interest earned if invest seed money.

COOLER: Think about vision for money and bring to later session.

Increasing compensation rates is another stated Bd goal. This would be an ongoing expense, so some risk to maintain money.

It was suggested that Bd direction in cash management would be facilitated by knowing cash flow and operating expenses.

TASK: Tony, Jorge, Bill will meet and decide what additional info Bd needs.

2007 Budget Adjustments

Mistake on Dir4, now corrected to show 1,010.

Cmag bd mtg travel is currently budget as \$0. Wanting to do major Cmag evaluation at fall mtg, so want Parke and probably DianaC to attend. Need travel reimbursement available for them to be able to attend. Nice to cover on-site expenses as well.

Set aside \$1000? Don't necessarily use full allocated amount, but best to budget for both attending.

What about other 2 Cmag staff people? Not directly needed for planned review. If wanted, try to get other funding for that.

Assume greater income to offset, or just one-time expense?

What about income from selling off Dir4? Some income from that because of donation. Money for mailing and cost of books, but about \$500 left over. Laird thinks \$1000.

Don't need to worry about balancing number. Cash is okay.

Noted: budget doesn't show break down. \$2500 negative not included somewhere.

\$10,000 loss in budget right now, but have good cash flow. Tony thinks is okay with just adding to budget and not finding offsetting income.

It was noted that DianaC was brought to org mtg last year, and glitch in communication led to added expense for her to attend AofC. Be sure to communicate to them that more isn't available unless they request and is approved.

Add \$1000? About \$400 each for travel left.

AGREED: add \$1000 to 2007 budget expense as travel reimbursement allocation specifically to bring DianaC and Parke to Fall org mtg.

Financial Management (Tony)

How much to put in Event fund?

Paying off debt

Inform about investing strategy

Cmtee met. Money in various funds, some long-term, some shorter, esp. those that are earmarked and so could be spent sooner. Also surplus cash recently.

\$35,000 (rounded) PEACH loan. Balanced with exact amount counteracted by loan to PEACH from loan fund. Done because wanted to work down loan, but loan fund can't be used for operating expenses.

Decided to not pay this down at this time (assuming PEACH is okay). Financially better to put surplus money into different investments. Don't have \$35,000 available, but could pay some.

Not best financial decision, but might be best for morale.

Investment Strategy

Take surplus and other funds and invest in CD's in Sunrise. "Ladder" by putting in staggered CD's so always have some money becoming available. Tony would manage.

Put endowment (Dir?) in long term CD, but otherwise would manage with the goal of having cash to pay our way, but have as much as possible in interest-bearing investments.

Authorize to do it this way? Pay off part of debt?

Amount of \$\$ in Event fund would impact how much can pay down loan. Money in Event fund could earn interest to some degree.

Cmtee recommendation about Event fund? No. No other specific compelling need for money.

How much of PEACH loan paid off in last few years? Lump 5 or 6 years ago, then balanced out with other loan so not paying.

More about counterbalancing loan? \$35,000 borrowed for Dir2 (with accrued interest). Loaned money to PEACH, but can't call repayment. Interest on each loan is also balancing. Somewhat not debt, but ties up loan fund. Kind of like FIC borrowing from loan fund, and still need to pay back.

Events fund: \$950 currently available. Ma'ikwe doesn't think will need more than that for next 6 months, so that can be available for investment. So far have kept earmarked accounts somewhat separate. Tony wants to combine into best investment package, making sure money is available regularly. Accounting will keep track of earmarked amounts. Easier to add to investment as more surplus cash is available when done this way.

Good because have strong financial position.

Bill clarified that interest in CD's can be drawn off if need more cash than anticipated without any penalty.

Independent audit? No legal issues with what's been done, even with PEACH. Really only need if major funder would want to see audit.

It was noted that we might be required to do audit if grow to a certain size.

George clarify: don't really feel in good position to do long-term investments (>2 yrs.). Tony doing cash management in consultation with cmtee. Will be other considerations once grow to certain size of investments. Until then, just in cash management situation.

Laird: can partner on loans that would be much higher interest, still <2 yrs. Higher risk, but Laird thinks he has possibilities. Could grow 90% in one year. A: can think about it, but don't want to do things that are too risky at this point. Tony wouldn't want to have sole oversight over that.

Isn't that what the loan fund is supposed to do? Feel okay using loan fund to offset PEACH loan because PEACH does what loan fund is supposed to do. FIC can partner with FEC and possibly make more interest.

It was suggested that Loan Fund convener make a proposal to increase loan fund if this is desired.

George wants cash flow portion of money to be in low-risk investments.

Finance cmtee open to further consideration. A q is how much of Tony's time this will take vs. increased money earned.

Tony also noted that not so much available cash because of where in cycle on Dir cost. Next year or so cash flow is tighter because of this.

Tony reiterated that doesn't want authority to get into higher risk or more diversified investments. Perhaps in a year will have more cash to play with.

Back to Events fund: Ma'ikwe reiterated \$950 is great. Would love \$5000 in time, but perhaps would be better if org had that money to play with in other ways right now.

How feel about \$5000 Event fund?

Either way is available, but makes budgeting easier if know has this amount of money earmarked. Won't necessarily use, but good to know is available.

AGREED: Earmark \$5000 for Events fund.

Pay off PEACH loan? Leave to investment managers? Fine to leave as long as PEACH is okay. Laird (PEACH fund manager) thinks is okay.

AGREED: Tony as cash manager.

Cmag (Tony)

Tony gave us a very rough historic overview of Cmag--geared towards the review coming up in the fall--to address the questions about how we're going to evaluate Cmag ... if and how will we keep it running? How do we make that decision? Also there's a component of evaluating how the staff is doing. We gave the new hired staff a 2-3 issue trial period and will be evaluating how they're performing and working as a team, and this would be a natural point to evaluate.

* Items were identified as the highest priority for someone in the circle today

How does it look?

* Gestalt of the list below under this heading

Design & layout

Variety of themes

Quality/relevance of photos

Interesting/relevant content?

Quality of the writing? Breadth of writers & movement segments covered.

Dynamic covers?

Satisfying the target audiences? Reaching new audiences?

Overall production quality?

Website: a related topic; and also how to get feedback online

How's the production process going?

* Timeliness/meeting deadlines

* Staff satisfaction & retention

* Communication and team dynamics, problem solving

Relations with authors, photographers, advertisers, etc.

Ease of collecting content

Financial? (Taking steps toward independence? General support available?)

* Circulation figures/total subscriptions: new, renewals, newsstands

* Break even or satisfactory progress toward better bottom line? [Not expected by October]

Have appropriate business plan?

% of subscribers compared to newsstand sales

% of new subscribers to total subscribers

Evaluate marketing packages and techniques

Management of the wholesale accounts

Analyze relationship of themes to sell-through (which themes were popular?)

How much would cost or circulation need to be increased to break even?

Sense of the elasticity of the demand (how unique is our information?)

How to define the markers/metrics

Ability to understand/reach the various identified markets

Interplay with the rest of the org?

Is there good communication with rest of the org?

Satisfaction between staff areas (Cmag and other areas, going in both directions)?

Feeling of being on the same team, or sense of us/them dynamics?

How vital is Cmag voice in creating a public face for the org?

Value to FIC's other projects or services? (Via ads, articles)

Relationship to membership numbers

Provide outlet/voice for other areas of the org (ex: RegNet)

* If we weren't financing Cmag, how would we spend that money & energy?

* Same question for how much energy we're putting into it

There are mitigating factors about whether breaking even versus serving other missions of the org which have high value.

Fulfillment of Cmag's mission and FIC's mission?

What's the article mix compared to our targets?

How do our target audience(s) feel about what they're getting?

How does content match with our mission?

How is Cmag supporting “building cmtty wherever you are”?

Satisfaction of the advertisers? (Value received for the money paid)

* Retention rate

Could survey the advertisers or get other evidence.

Ease of submitting ads?

Promptness & accuracy of the billing?

Are we in a place where we could increase the ad rates?

Q: Who will be doing the work to organize the evaluation? Will we ask Parke to do it, or find someone else who would carry the focus and responsibility?

The plan is that Tony will write up a proposal for how to do this evaluation, which will be presented to Oversight or the Board for approval of the process.

Question raised about doing the mag online, reaching the young generations, how to support the staff financially, etc. We’ve had a long-term interest in doing that, but don’t have a clue about the economic model to use to accomplish that goal.

Cmag Evaluation Criteria (Tony)

(Handout: Cmag Evaluation Criteria)

Noted that this was intended as draft to Parke, who will then work on and probably eventually he’ll probably work on it with his production team.

Cmag interaction with rest of org? Came out of first discussion, but not on handout. Will Cmag work with rest of org?

It was suggested that this be presented in terms of trying to avoid us/them dynamic.

Add that.

Discussion

Great.

Current relative independence of magazine could make it easier for magazine to continue on its own if FIC doesn’t wish to continue.

Why #132 picked as benchmark issue? Because that was the first one Amy did the redesign.

Doesn’t make sense to compare to issues before that.

General sense that tone is correct/great.

Good to ask Parke if he needs it to be more specific.

AGREED: Accept this as draft for review process, to become more firm in collaboration with Parke and production team.

Event in Austin (Ma’ikwe)

Enthusiasm and interested expressed in having an event in Austin, which wasn’t originally planned in events cycle. No one has stepped forward to manage there, and Ma’ikwe won’t be available to organize full conference. Think more in terms of well-publicized gathering or workshops on Saturday afternoon at student coops where mtg is happening. So won’t need to find venue or put in other energy and money resources. 4–6 workshops. Will have people on-site from org mtg who can do workshops.

Would be a new kind of event between full conference and small soiree.

Austin onsite contact expressed enthusiasm, but now not returning calls promptly. Jeremy is contact person. Open question to him about whether to find another organizer, also haven’t run this event format by him, yet. Have someone who will do some publicity.

Paying event or free: Perhaps \$10 / workshop.

Discussion

Would want to see more (than just Jeremy) interest from co-op as a whole to know that it will be worthwhile.

Another suggestion was to use free attendance for ICC members to offset org mtg costs, then small fee to others attending.

It was noted that Austin has existing cohousing group looking for site, and others in earlier stages. Have had successful workshop events there. Also noted that it's a university town, so perhaps partnering somehow. Would require more work trying to find partners, but then low risk. Sense that trying to do this would be good, but would really need FIC person to commit to work on this. It was suggested to hold a conference call with Jeremy and other two co-op presidents to see if there's energy, buy-in. If they're interested and will sell it to locals, FIC risk is low because presenters will already be there, venue is available, flyers etc. not so expensive.

FREEZER: Find FIC manager, have conference call, and then get back to OS so can try to have go or no-go decision before Laird and Ma'ikwe's wedding in April.

Also need someone to manage from FIC end starting in about 2 weeks through early June. Then Ma'ikwe can pick it up if necessary.

Fred not available next couple of months.

TASK: Ma'ikwe will talk to Peggy.

Raines has offered some involvement in finding resources.

Saturday, October 27 is event date.

Albuquerque event

This is next event in 18-month event cycle

Students at UNM working on event, good venue, hopefully on trade. Budget when know about site costs. Peggy is really helpful. Not much available in area, so probably wider range of attendees.

Mid-late May targeted timing. Contingent on availability of student union. Ma'ikwe's schedule defines some limits.

It was suggested that some work could happen in concert with wedding. Hesitation because don't want to schedule FIC work during Laird and Ma'ikwe's celebration.

Coho conference is in 9/08 in Boston, so good staggered timing with that.

Fred and Syd and Ma'ikwe and Peggy core workers on event. Great to have continuity of event team.

ic.org Wiki and FIC's Online Directory

A wiki allows a broad number of users of the site to access the site and post info on a related topic of their choosing. Alternately, can also be used internally for a group to share internal documents or brainstorming/organizing things. Webweavers and Oversight have been talking about hosting something more similar to Wikipedia ... allowing people to post anything relevant to IC living, so we could tap the collective wisdom of the users of our site. One major issue is moderating what's posted, either inappropriate submissions or actual vandalism. This isn't a space for FIC to put up its organizational stuff. This would essentially be a decision to create a virtual community that relates to and interacts with the org. Molly has created an online page that has about 70 regular visitors who read about what she's experiencing in her community research.

The point of this section of the site is different than for what we allow, for example, on the Online Directory pages ... to allow users to comment on the communities listed. Some communities don't want comments, others do, and we don't want to discourage ICs from listing in the Online Directory if they are reluctant to the possibility of negative user comments. Options

would be something like: Allow all comments; No comments; Edit/Choose/Select which comments are displayed (they would automatically be notified whenever a new comment got posted). Most of the software development has already been done, though Tony has a few more things he needs to get ready before activating it online.

Would there be ads on the wiki pages (ex: ads for Cmag with a very visible link)? There are several possibilities. The core team of moderators would create an initial package to prime the pump, then the users will expand and edit it however 're inspired. Some of our listed ICs will likely feel betrayed by us when they experience negative feedback, so it will require some of our time to manage it, possibly a substantial chunk. We don't yet have any sense of what the volume will be like.

Two weeks ago Fred Olson launched the wiki.cohousing.org site, so we will get to learn from his experience running that site. Perhaps we should allow all comments (so we get that info/feedback) but allow groups to choose one of the other options regarding what is actually posted for public viewing. Our current baseline is that groups automatically opt in for us to share their contact info with like-minded groups, and must proactively opt out if that's their preference. AGREED: Our default mode for the Online Directory would be to allow comments on listings, and groups could choose to opt out if that was their preference.

Present: Harvey, Tony, Jenny, Marty, Fred, Jorge. Absent: Caroline, Raines Laird, David Galloway, Vince, Ma'ikwe, Bill, DianaM

Added Friday afternoon: Raines, Betsy, Molly, Jill, Amanda

Added Saturday morning: Brookes, Heide, Galen, Kevin sat in for a bit with friend Evan.

ic.org 5-yr Plan (Raines)

Brainstorm stage, no set draft plan. Gather info about whose using sight, what works, what they wish for. Are people asking for things that are already on site? Site organization issue.

It was noted that 3 years makes more sense because technology changes so much. Plan for 1 year or so, set trend / growth direction for beyond, but not firm beyond end of 2007.

Website background: launched '94. Webweavers sort of independent in structure. First 10 years mostly organized list with links. Little original content. Reachbook around 2000. Store in 2000 (?), relaunched in 2005. 2004 launched online directory, with cmtly database online. Major site redesign in 2006. 2004 (?) launched joint database w/coho. Still there, but coho not so active. Next six months-year: More interactive, esp. Wiki.

Plan: complete overhaul of Cmag portion, with much more content (not necessarily whole mag) that is somehow interactive. Clarify: articles not interactive, but some forms, maybe way to write letters. More frequent inflow of fresh content will bring more to site in general.

Nothing planned with newsletter content.

Further out: Seekers database, or profiles of interested individuals, user-editable system for networks to describe themselves (e.g., NICA, NASCO). Now some integrated into cmties listings, but would be better to be own thing.

Currently working on NICA site (with more detailed NW info), which could grow into more full regional networking group. Others have asked for cooperation for other special interests, like veggie cmtly. Again, can lookup in online dir, but more detailed info in mind.

Since 2004, more interactive trend rather than one-way info flow, which parallels general internet trend.

Easier to add new features because much code is available for use by others.

Example of making it easier for people to add themselves to lists rather than have to fill out forms. Creates engagement.

It was suggested to revive cmties skills database. Let cmties post specialty areas to share. Also (perhaps with seekers db) for people to post their skills/knowledge areas for cmties to peruse. Suggested to call Communitarians db.

Another thing in the works: automated updates for people to take content, link. Called “syndicating.” Copyright concerns?

Looking for thumbs-up on direction.

It was noted that NASCO is building Wiki. Cross Wiki-ing (integrating Wikis)?

How to make so cmties individual sites all point back to ic.org? Art of search engine optimization. Cmty building technique to build networks, make visible.

There was a feedback that membership signup page didn't work. Then left message at TO office. Had to work hard to become member.

TASK: webweavers make it easy to become member.

Example of design feature “user experience.”

Other technologies and sites to plug into, other cool interactive things to add. It was suggested that find way to find people who know these cool things and will do it for us. Also a variety of other suggestions that were too numerous to capture.

It was noted that there is technology to make more human connection—is existing technology that allows person to hear recorded messages. Perhaps also video. E.g., Laird speaking.

Shared events calendar? Regional.

It was suggested that web team have regular place on org mtg agendas to keep us updated on new existing or upcoming technologies / possibilities.

General excitement about possibilities.

This introduces re-juice web team. Request for all to try to find people who could help and who might know cool technological stuff.

Directory Report and Help Needs (Tony)

From Dir report

3 positions open: managing next print edition. Ma'ikwe interested.

Managing online directory. Marty interested. Also maybe Jan (?)

Finally, coordinating project (have a grant) to get Dir4.x to libraries and other information centers. Create list of places to send book, get address. Office will ship. Dir5 probably out late spring. Don't want to ship all books until new dir out, but can send out some because have more stock than need.

Compensation on 3rd role? Not clear how to budget within grant. Could be simple as getting clean list from a distributor, could be more labor-intensive. Have 4-500. General FIC pay is \$10/hr. Would probably set some kind of salary cap in budget. It was suggested that person doing job come up with a proposal because labor needed seems so variable.

Does this include NASCO member coops? Not clear from terms of grant. Funders were told it would go in public and academic libraries, so don't assume coops are okay.

Send inquiries before sending? Have done this before, so probably some of this is known. Sometimes know which libraries ordered directly, others get from jobbers so don't know if they got it. Takes time to see if already have copy. Probably send to libraries in high-use areas, and okay if they have 2 (one already, one we send) because so labor intensive other way. Nice if can do some advance checking to make sure they go where they'll be used.

Who might coordinate this project brainstorm: Ma'ikwe knows someone. That's it for the moment.

Is standard to take out costs for other overhead (office labor, shipping)? Will be taken off the top for this project.

Staff for other 2 positions? Tony wants to talk more with Ma'ikwe to get common understanding on goals, compensation, staff needs.

Dir5.x q: how does it work getting copies to sell at events (NICA specifically). Best to buy wholesale, then can sell at whatever price they want.

Regional Networking 5-year Plan (Fred)

(Handout: Regional Networking..., also bd report)

Proposing 5-yr plan. Realistic. Based on track record / results from efforts of this past year. Fred has been cautious in his expectations this past year, so has had slower start.

Initiatives started are in bd report

1. Increase...

Work with NICA to create model for regional database. Raines working on for Bay Area once NICA model is in place.

Use internet to identify and work with local regional networkers. Have website include download materials. Post organizer example on handout.

2. Expand...

Difficult, but one notable success. Article in first FIC newsletter brought out 2 people who said they would network local area. Given cmtty dialog packet. Got 20 people (seems like one woman carried ball) for ongoing group.

Use as basis to increase, get out message that building local groups is possible, how it can be done.

3. Develop.....

Video is great tool to create local excitement and involvement.

Update dialog packet to include video.

4. Promote

One of the most effective ways to get ic's in front of larger cmty. Create awareness, and build on, overlapping areas of interest. E.g., Laird getting involved with Bioneers. Also in Bozeman Montana [ask Fred] getting on local satellite TV. Conference [Bozeman, Seattle?] had 50 people and was very successful.

Find local people to work with satellite public access TV to create conferences in their area.

Questions

Where to go to get involved? Talk to someone on cmtee (Raines, Fred, Geoph, Vince, Craig Ragland, Kip Gardner). Looking to find local people who want to organize, will find way to get interested folks involved.

Discussion

Noted that Coho next meeting in Boston also has focus on building regional networks.

It was noted that Coho bus tours have been a great way to get people engaged and involved.

It was noted that there might be a larger range of symbiotic organizations (gun control, I think was the example.) and try to get materials or staffing at their booths at events.

More detail about woman: created conference, advertised locally, flyers, etc. People came, are continuing. Katherine Murphy in Florida

It was suggested that pass on to Bioneers that group is happening.

Group is now 16, and still in process of forming and/or committing to form ongoing.

Presentation: It was suggested to create a PowerPoint presentation. There was support for this idea. What / how cmtees are doing. Would generate interest, forum. Short. Geoph interested. It was suggested that more focus speaking, presenting at universities. Anthropology, global studies classes perhaps.

Issue that some people might use FIC name but do inappropriate things. Need to figure out screening. Fred responded that this is something the cmtee is aware of and working on a structure. So far, person in Florida had cmty experience and some hx with FIC. It was made clear to her that she was representing self rather than spokesperson for FIC.

Noted that don't have to be really careful because not same as representing at conference.

Regional might shake out people who would be good for full org. Potential bd members, e.g. Also find resources for Development: house parties, potential donors.

Has been challenging both to recruit focalizers, but harder to find those who maintain once they get involved, especially if they start forming or join a cmty.

Jorge said could do a few gatherings /year if had PowerPoint presentation. Sees difficulty of not knowing how to answer some questions that might arise. Slide presentation, video, talking points would help him structure and feel more confident answering questions.

Inform cmtee of potentially interested people? Definitely, will guarantee contact if people are passed on.

FIC budget available for outreach/marketing/booths? No. Have negotiated representation at events, esp. Bookshelf, but complicated.

Clarified: cooperative booths that are designed to be shared. Still no. No budget for that.

Board blessing for plan? Encouraged bd to review carefully.

COOLER / FREEZER: Will work on, bring back later in meeting if ready.

Final plan, or draft for feedback? This is pretty much what cmtee agreed and can be seen as ready for bd approval.

It was requested that plan include more specificity – process, timelines, deadlines, priorities.

[[[[Somewhere in there: structure within bioneers sights. Left off agenda. Added to 4pm timeslot]]]]

Regional Networking 2 (Fred)

(Handout: same 5-yr plan page)

Have added additional objective under goal #2: engage regional networking in organizational work.

In cmtee added above, also some target dates and plan for how some will unfold.

6 can be done this year: 1a,c; 3b,c,e; 2a be able to name one person as prototype active regional networker. Galen was at cmtee mtg and might be this person.

Further clarification / dialog needed? Would like bd approval.

New goal means bringing networking into national org? Yes. Great, glad doing that.

How does woman in Tampa fit in? Possibly she could be the prototype. Not fully on board yet.

Discussion

Great. Good has been made clear, feasible.

One of the most vibrant things in the org. Really serving org.

Cmtee has decided to have monthly conference calls.

AGREED: Regional Networking 5-yr plan as written with additions

Personnel (Jenny)

Handout: Personnel Board Report

From Songaia: how much authority in hiring or firing staff: Jenny read from bd report: “is the Personnel Cmtee only to staff positions that ‘serve the bd,’ or should it be involved in overseeing/staffing of any/all critical roles within the organization?”

Continue status quo. Committees do their own thing and just tell Personnel. Personnel more actively work on cmtees that serve the bd.

Personnel was much more active in finding new staff for Cmag. Tony is liaison to bd, Jenny as representative of Personnel will team with Tony in overseeing Cmag staff transition / issues.

Feedback from the bd? Cmag is special case so far.

Good shift. Have changed layout people for Cmag in past, but Diana did it and just consulted with bd. Informal. Is really Personnel’s job and so good to formalize and do a good job at HR.

This is a value for us to work well with staff and manage Personnel issues in keeping with our org culture. Some things don’t need Personnel input (e.g., proofreader), but still need to oversee to make sure in keeping with our culture.

Personnel revised job description.

Parke has responsibility to hire / fire, but in consultation with Personnel. Bd or OS approval.

Tony noted that he’s been doing his own hiring / firing on Dir5, with approval of bd to have that authority, but doesn’t check with Personnel or bd, and doesn’t want to.

It was noted that Tony is very involved, and on OS, so there's de facto consultation. Also that these are one-time jobs, not ongoing, so is different.

More hands-off when things are working well, but Personnel have authority when issues arise. Personnel / bd / OS will always get involved when there's a staff issue.

It was considered that a line of when Personnel review is good is if the person has a public or representational face (e.g., photo editor who interfaces with photographers). Not fleshed out.

Summary: find balance between free range when going well, getting involved when issues. Both reactive to requests for help, and also proactive checking in. Authorized to ask, gather info without bd input. Some discomfort with this from cmtee about making this judgment call. Can always err on side of checking in.

How to Promote the FIC (Laird)

Casual contact. Groups of three. Each take a turn answering in 1-2 sentences: Imagine you're in a conversation where the name FIC crops up and someone asks: "What is the FIC?" How would you answer?

It's an organization to promote the concept of people living together and function ...

Difference US & the world vs. just in this country.

The answer is different if the person already knows the context of ICs.

It's a clearinghouse for people living together based around intentional values. If anyone is looking for more community, and we'll help them connect with what they're looking for.

People aspiring to work together with a sense of cooperation.

It's not just for people who live in ICs.

Media or Event. Context of a panel or speaking with a media rep ... so you're somehow speaking in behalf of the org. Laird's strategy is to first think of the primary 3-5 points you want to make, then go with the flow. Play off what they give you, and take the conversation where you want it to go. Main points:

- Help people find community

- Website

- Directory

- Cmag

- 800# and the website URL

- Events that give info and a sense of what it's about

Usually the best way is to tell stories to personalize it. One type of great story is where you talk about experiences about yourself that are funny. How much do you focus on FIC specifically, or IC living in general. Try to do both, to make it interesting and useful. Having a few basic sound bytes in your repertoire is extremely useful.

House Party. Taking on the Directory, developing Cmag, programs in place, things we have in current plan, ideas about what might be possible/inspiring on down the line. Where have you been, where are you now, where do you want to go? How can they help? Talk about other segments of the movement we network with, how we can work with a broad range of groups.

Laird has a facts sheet, but could also put together a sheet of talking points.

Think about how costume, jargon, etc will affect the presentation. It's normally most effective to dress and talk in ways that don't supercede the IC message. Speaking as "we" is often most engaging than about "they", but brings up the issue of folks not authorized to formally speak for the FIC.

Video Conferencing (Jorge)

Would be great to see each other. Issue require computer to be on call. Also, many cmties don't have fast internet access. DSL is fast enough.

Jorge did a demonstration on his computer of what the video looks like (with faster line).

Original idea was for Personnel Cmtee to work on this more, but no progress.

Significant difference in conversation quality when can see each other.

Wants to keep this idea alive, understanding that won't really take effect until more have fast lines. Wants to do pilot demonstration.

An issue is that most systems are just one-to-one, meaning that it's not ready for a group conference yet and group conferencing is awkward and expensive right now. Expects that group conferencing will be available soon, probably before rural cmties have broadband.

Camera costs \$40-300, software is standard free messaging system. Also many computers have cameras built in right now, and many standard digital cameras work.

It was noted that this would be helpful for those who are hard of hearing.

It can work with some on video and some on regular, but it seems complicated to do.

Those without broadband could go to internet cafés, but this isn't private.

Satellite is available at Shannon, but it's somewhat unreliable dependent on the weather.

Networking the houses is somewhat complicated at Shannon.

It was noted that this might reduce the amount of travel time because can be effective enough to eliminate some face-to-face meeting requirements.

It was suggested that the Events team might be a good pilot committee. It's been Personnel, but Jenny only has a land line. It was noted that Caroline hasn't used email much, but it's hoped that she might be more comfortable with video. A concern is that she won't be willing to do this either.

TASK: Jorge will talk to Caroline when they see each other next month.

Climate Change and Communities (Raines)

Been speaking about climate change to various groups. Did workshop given by Al Gore at Farm last year. Noted how many people in room seemed to be thinking about it for the first time, and noted that many cmties have been working on solutions to climate warming for decades because of structures, philosophy, economy of scale, sharing, alternative building, etc.

Feels like one of those times where rest of world is catching up to what cmties movement has been into for a long time.

What can we do? Leaders in this area? How can we help, using what we've learned to guide larger population into more appropriate technologies, practices?

What do we have to share? How can we create more engagement?

It was suggested that small groups gather to discuss, then come back to full room.

One issue was the sense that there isn't much more to share in this area because we talk about it with each other and know what each other is doing.

Small Group Reports

Group 1: discussed possible new initiatives, experience of members, possible areas can help mitigate global warming issues. No one in group had much direct connection within home cmties / orgs. Also peak oil. Some sense that cmtly gardens, other kind of sharing, especially in urban areas, is helping reduce resource use.

Group 2: Wide spectrum of views. Cmties could become centers of consciousness raising — organizing workshops, activist work. Easier because already working as groups. Discussed alternative fuels, and how needs to be used oil, using new doesn't really help. Same with carbon credits thing. Looks better than it is. Gov't pushing consuming.

Cmties naturally conserve because of sharing. Various solutions in cmties to reduce impact. Discussed conservation awareness techniques. Cmty is naturally low-consuming. Other end of range is cmties/groups that really focus on preparing for crisis, and could help larger community prepare based on what have learned in community.

Group 3: discussed what was happening in different areas because somewhat location-based. Biodiesel pumping station, plant in NC. CO constructing largest wind farm in west. Sunrise Credit Union gives loans for converting to biodiesel. CO now democratic govt, noticeable change in philosophy, looking to set standard as state in ecological awareness. TN to so aware of larger issues. Dunmire and local area using alternative energy sources. NM growing awareness of need for changes, frustration because no clear path to putting into effect. Ecohood — taking over city block, try to choose area where can work locally. Being outside urban/suburban areas generally means driving more. How to reduce that? Ecovillages, self-sustaining, enviro-minded cmties. Yogaville (Galen now living outside Yogaville, really) working to transition to Ecovillage structure in past year. Looking at many issues, from water to terrorist issues and natural disasters (being so close to DC). Some change happens piecemeal through different disasters (e.g., Katrina), could be major global crisis. Galen tried to organize local ministers and other leaders, some larger gov't political activism, conversations. Bleak.

It was noted that there are bright spots outside of cmties. Cleveland, e.g., has created dept of sustainability. So some larger governmental entities mobilizing without waiting for feds to get with it. In this case, it was someone from a sustainability-focused cmty who was hired to head that dept.

NM has strong sense of "cmty where you are," so not much larger organizing, even between ic's. Some cmties have had difficulties when go larger than selves. Issue of diffusion because small local culture (native American, Hispanic), with deep cultural identity. Keep in mind as move toward focus on "cmty where you are." Strong cultural cmty bases aren't necessarily environmentally based. So strong in identity, hard to break in or change focus, or find ways of connecting/plugging in from outside.

It was suggested that cmties begin documenting changes, within cmties as awareness raises, and also diff from before joined cmty and then when joined. Send to Betsy, perhaps in Cmag.

What about FIC organizational response to climate change? Cmties are strong in cultural basis for more sustainable world. Can be resource as outside needs to change. Tell stories (as Betsy suggested). Also about efforts to organize with outside. Could inspire others, or at least inform about difficulties. In good position because have forum (Cmag).

Are there others out there who have tools, but don't know how to share them? FIC could organize and be resource for focalizing.

Not necessarily seen as resource. Try to be, because we have the information. FIC as org, and also what we bring to collaboration with other groups.

How to get people together to talk about issues and possible solutions.

It was noted that Wiki could be a big step toward spreading the word about issues, and also that cmties have so much strength / experience. Trade information about what cmties have done (biodiesel, sharing, whatever.)

Bioneers 2007 Beaming Sites Oct 19-21

The primary site is in California, and so far there are 21 satellite “beaming” sites that have been identified. Fred and Craig were representing ICs at the Bozeman site last year, and had 50 interested participants from the 400 attendees gathered there (the local workshops have competing time slots). Do we have folks in the FIC network who could represent us at any of these sites? We don’t need to cover them all, but this is a great opportunity to do outreach. We will have a PowerPoint presentation that will be able to be used to open the presentation and give an overview, however the rep will need to be well versed overall about IC living and able to handle a Q&A session afterwards. Bioneers provided room & board and free admission.

Anchorage, AK – Raines knows a coho group up there in Sitka who may be open to doing it.
Baltimore, MD – Martie Weatherly or Ron Petrolito (Laird); Karen Stutski, Heathcote (Valerie);
Mid Atlantic Coho (Raines)
Bloomington, IN – The Vale/CSI folks (Laird)
Boulder, CO – Betty Didcoct, Katheryn Lorenz, Marjorie Wholey, Zev & Nashama
Bozeman, MT –
Carbondale, IL – Vince; Carol Braford (Laird); Aur (Vince)
Cleveland, OH – Cleveland Ecovillage folks, Kip Gardner, John Morgan, Jim Henning
Cobleskill, NY – Liz Walker, Allison Krause (Molly)
Detroit, MI – Jacob Cordovae, Elph & Jillian, Chris Coon & Christina Snyder
Grinnell, IA – Alyson Ewald; Alline; Jennifer or other Sandhill/DR folks
Houston, TX – Eric Best, Jim Ellinger
Logan, UT – Watsach Commons-Heather (Laird); forming community (Raines)
Brigham City, UT – [same as above]
Marion, MA – Mary Krause, John Sable, Laura Fitch, Bruce Davidson
Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN – Fred Olsen; Joellen of Monterey Coho
Santa Fe, NM – Ma’ikwe & Peggy; Rich
Seattle, WA – Fred & friends, SYd, Parke, Rob Sandelin
Spokane, WA – Sirius Israel, Chelan Coho group
Traverse City, MI – Song of the Morning Ranch (Ma’ikwe); Step; Chris Coon
Turlock, CA – Raines, Betsy, Lotus, Sacramento Coho
Victoria, BC – Brad Jarvis, Brandy Macpherson, Jan Steinman

If we made an official request from the FIC we may have more success. Fred will keep that in mind when doing the inquiries. Fred has a reference from the Bozeman presentation last year.

Evaluation

=nice mellow atmosphere
=lotta new faces
=great accommodations
=2 long-term cmties come for first time
=no apparent stress
=good financial shape
-need more laughing
-need more host community involvement

- not enough DanQ
- more new people
- need new people for bd
- =expansive agenda
- sometimes objectives unclear in plenary
- =improved organization
- =SFA hosts involved made easier
- =good information as part of decision making
- slow internet access
- =good reminiscing
- miss Caroline
- miss Nancy
- =good flow in plenary, esp. decision making ease
- =regional networking 5-yr plan
- =minutes management, support
- =finishing early
- =good food
- =good singing
- =good party
- =beautiful land
- =maybe more orientation throughout
- =lack of inreach (hard for new person to see how to plug in)
- =very comfortable, open for new people, happy to be able to participate, welcoming
- =we're all around good people

New Bead was chosen at the beginning of the meeting by DanQ
Dan chose a frog for the story spiral.