

OUR FAIR CAROUSEL, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
January 10, 2013

Present: Peter Boehm, Clyde Boysen, Barbara Deneen, Michele Furrer, Bob Herskovitz, Bob Marabella, Carrie Martinson, Mike Merrick, Nancy Peterson, Bill Nunn

The meeting came to order at 7:05 p.m.

Minutes of the meeting of October 4, 2012, were approved as mailed. Nancy Peterson said she will post them on the web site, where we already have minutes from the past several years.

Nominating committee report. Boehm noted that four current, long-serving board members are not running for reelection, and the committee recommends conferring emeritus status: Bob Herskovitz, Lorraine Kenfield, Muriel Poehler, and Vic Wittgenstein. All have made significant contributions to the operation and restoration of the carousel over the years.

The committee nominated two new board members: Peggy Kipka is a special-education teacher who has been a volunteer at the carousel for six years. Kevin Points is a millwright with Alltech Engineering who over the past five years has provided assistance with major carousel maintenance as part of his employment..

As an OFC board member, Points will do an inspection and assessment of the carousel's operation each April and October and will make his report to the board (as Arthur Curtze has done until recently, when a family health crisis has kept him from traveling to Minnesota). Points will recommend any special maintenance measures he considers advisable. As in the past, these will occasionally require assistance of a millwright. Boehm noted that in fairness to Alltech, Points will continue to do those projects as a paid employee of the company. In order to prevent an apparent conflict-of-interest situation for Points, we will have mechanic Mark Carlson approve the decision to bring in millwright assistance. This continues the current practice, in which Carlson identifies the need for outside help. In addition, we will continue the practice of requiring board approval for any significant outside expenditure for maintenance.

The board unanimously approved the nominating committee's report, adding Kipka and Points as new members and conferring emeritus status on Herskovitz, Kenfield, Poehler, and Wittgenstein. The board also approved new terms for all officers and the executive committee.

Financial report. Boehm said Jim Weichert reported to him that all filings are up to date. The audit should be completed by the end of January.

Boehm reported that we have \$78,000 in the checking account and \$102,000 in certificates of deposit. The total is more than one year's operating budget.

Season debrief. Boysen reported on the annual year-end debrief of selected volunteers. The list of "what went well" was far longer than the list of "what could have been better," and he noted that each year the gap grows wider. The volunteers said things seemed to go smoothly this year, and that volunteers seemed more experienced and more willing to do things "by the book." They said learning about the lawsuit from an injured rider, and hearing about how our documented procedures help protect us in the case of such a suit, seems to motivate volunteers to take the message to heart.

Suggestions included removing rain water from the floor when it comes in, telling volunteers not to climb the green railing, emphasizing courtesy to customers and smiling more, and providing hand warmers to volunteers.

Personnel committee. Clyde Boysen reported that the base pay for the operations manager will be increased by 1.7 percent for the 2013 season. In addition, the medical stipend will increase and the mileage reimbursement will continue. The board approved the increase.

Budget. Boehm reported that we had an operating loss for 2012, the first since the carousel moved to Como Park. Annual ridership had been growing, to a high of 90,000 in 2009, and has fallen to only 73,000 in 2012. Bad weather and nearby construction were factors, and this season the construction will end and the sidewalk next to our building will reopen. We will also explore other avenues to increase revenue.

Boehm's proposed 2013 budget is based on a ticket price of \$2. This would be our first increase in 13 years and is competitive with ride prices at ComoTown. The board approved the budget.

Michelle Furrer said that people have been coming to the park earlier in the day, especially on hot days, and they mill about on the lawn as much as an hour before the Visitor Center opens at 10 a.m. She suggested they are a captive audience who might welcome having something to do if we open at, say, 9:30 instead of 11 a.m. The board discussed the potential difficulty of finding volunteers for that time slot, but agreed that we should experiment to see whether we could gain riders by opening early. It was agreed that we will open at 9:30 a.m. alternate Thursdays throughout the summer so the test encompasses a variety of weather and other variables.

Volunteer committee. The committee thoroughly updated the volunteer manual and gave the material to Nancy Peterson for her review. She will give the changes to Tammi Buckley when she returns for the new season. Peterson said the committee had done a good job and she is adding just a few small items.

Gift shop. Boehm said last year more was spent than what was budgeted, so he will caution those doing the buying about staying within limits.

Carousel operation. Boehm said the carousel has been in good condition and is excellently maintained. Having Kevin Points inspecting it twice a year and discussing its condition with the board will give us a fresh perspective on a regular basis.

Band organ. Mike Merrick said after the maintenance he has done recently “it should be good for another hundred years.” He and Bill Nunn are planning to contact Art Curtze to see whether he will give them the recordings he made along with permission to create a new CD for sale. We would like to have it completed by 1914 for the centennial.

Restoration. Bob Herskovitz has a horse’s leg that broke off after Labor Day and he will replace it when the weather is warm enough for the glue to dry.

Linda McDonald is experimenting with aluminum leaf and a glaze that makes it look like gold. She did some in fall 2012 and will see how it performs.

Fund-raising. Boehm said a couple of discussions about horse adoptions did not come to fruition.

Communications. Nancy Peterson said she is working on the outline for the history book; Bob Herskovitz offered to read a chapter when it is drafted. Peterson also is stepping up the carousel’s presence on Facebook, updating the carousel’s listing on various travel and entertainment sites, and making some updates to the web site. Board members made some suggestions about keywords to optimize the site’s performance in searches.

President’s report. Boehm said the attorney hired by our insurance company has deposed the plaintiff in the suit against us and has concluded that she doesn’t have much of a case. She has asked for mediation; the attorney and insurance company are deciding whether to go that route.

Boehm then talked about the future of the organization and its leadership. He noted that in the early years many board members did a lot of volunteer work that helped keep our operations going. Today, the activity and involvement of board members overall is less than it was, and many who did the large-scale volunteer work are retiring from the board or already have done so. Boehm and Peterson continue to do a lot of work but they are not able to do as much as they once did and they are asking themselves how much longer they can provide this level of leadership and service. He told the board it seems very unlikely that anybody will be found to take on his and Peterson’s roles on a volunteer basis.

Boehm said most non-profit organizations that reach such a point and still want to carry forward their missions make a change from volunteer board-driven to staff-driven. Typically they create an executive director position for someone who will take the initiative to steer policy and procedures, making recommendations to the board rather

than waiting for the board to take the initiative. The person would handle the finances, prepare the budget, manage marketing and promotion, and other professional tasks. To staff such a position requires a significant commitment to staff compensation. Boehm said he has approached Jerry Cafesjian about setting up an endowment to provide salary for this kind of high-level staff. Mr. Cafesjian has asked for additional information.

Boehm suggested that an ad hoc committee discuss the future of the organization's leadership. Clyde Boysen and Barbara Deneen agreed to join Boehm and Peterson in these discussions.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m. The next meeting will be at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 25, at Como Streetcar Station.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy A. Peterson, secretary