



Wostawea Cross-Country Ski Club Annual General Meeting (Virtual)

By Zoom Videoconference
7:00 pm, 21 April 2021

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present:

Executive

Don Wright –President
Eric Luiker – Vice President & Competitive Program Lead
John Ball – Past President
Ian Burgess – Treasurer & Registrar
David Cameron – Trails Lead
Nadya Ladouceur – Member Engagement Lead
Barb Ramsay – Communications Coordinator
Michel Poirier – Youth Programs Lead
Nicki Violette – Secretary

Members at Large

Ron Smith, Anna Healy, Ida Orenbach, William Kerr, Marie-France Turcotte, Andrew McNair, Milda Markauskas, Anika Smithson, Mary Ann Mann, Toon Pronk, Mel Soicher, Nathalie Comeau, Katrina Mulherin, Felix Schwarz, Michele Coleman, Roy, Floriane Place-Verghnes-Wood, Liz Smith

Special Guests

Claudette Kavanaugh (CCNB)

1. Welcoming Remarks – Don Wright

- Don welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- Barb Ramsay motioned to begin the meeting, Nadya Ladouceur seconded.

2. Review of Minutes from the Last Annual General Meeting (November 5, 2020)

- Andrew McNair motioned to approve the minutes, Anna Healy seconded. All in favour.
MOTION CARRIED.

3. President's Report – Don Wright

- Don gave an overview of his president's report.
- The Club worked closely with Public Health and CCNB to develop COVID operational plans. These went off without a hitch thanks to the cooperation of members (there were no incidents of rules being disregarded).
- Much effort was put towards working with the City to try and improve trail conditions and issues at Killarney. This included a presentation to City Council. Key messaging has been "clarity to avoid conflict". Proposed plans include developing ski-only trails (some trails will be shared) and improved signage. Currently waiting on confirmation from the City.
- Other plans already underway by the City include connecting trails 6 and 7 developing an app to show grooming in real time.
- Eric asked if there was a follow-up to the City after the presentation. Don confirmed he wrote to Julie Baker. When they receive the report, they will circulate to groups including Wostawea.

4. Youth Programs Report – Michel Poirier

- Michel reported that the youth program was a huge success again this year with a 20% increase in participation (161 participants by November).
- Registration was full just eight hours after opening (unprecedented).
- Group sizes were reduced and scheduling adjustments made to allow for physical distancing. Some groups met at Killarney, others at Kingswood.
- Hot chocolate was a big success as always. Michel received lots of positive feedback about having hot chocolate at the end – will likely maintain this next year.
- Equipment purchased: pinnies, thermoses for coaches to take hot chocolate on trails, and roller skis for fall dry land training (18 pairs).
- Despite challenges, volunteers made it yet another successful year.
- Next season:
 - All participants will be at Killarney with staggered start times to reduce congestion on trails and in parking lot.
 - Anticipate another increase in participation – hoping for 180-200 kids. This will be contingent on the number of coaches. 200 likely the max with current infrastructure at Killarney.
 - Dry land training will be offered for Track Attack and Level 4 beginning in the fall (September – December).
 - More instructors are needed. Recruitment will take place in the summer/fall.
 - Hoping to offer Community Coaching and Learn to Train training for coaches.

- Given the recent growth of the youth program and heavy workload involved, Michel is hoping to recruit people to help take lead on various aspects of the youth program (e.g. administrative tasks, registration, Fun Day, keeping track of records for coach certifications, etc.).
 - Ski terrain park: The Club is working with the City to have a Ski Terrain Park built behind the water tower at Killarney. This will provide a space for new skiers (young and old) to practice on hills of varying steepness close to the lodge, as well as a 1 km circuit for sprint races and other events. The hope is to have the park completed by January 2022.
- Shelley commended Michel on his great attitude and ability to calmly steer the ship through a stressful year. Michel replied that it was a reflection of everyone involved. Don echoed his thanks to Michel for all his hard work this season.
- Liz expressed her appreciation to Toon for stepping in to teach Bunnies following her knee injury.
- Liz suggested offering mugs as swag for parents to purchase for the hot chocolate break, to help reduce waste and teach sustainability to the next generation. She added that she and Jane Hadley are working together to develop an ethological ethics plan to share with the Club. Michel thought this was a great idea and added that it was unfortunate to have to serve prewrapped treats and disposable cups this year due to COVID.
- Liz shared that she offers a free Healthy Habits for Healthy Humans webinar to young parents through her work at the NB Lung Association and asked if it would be possible to share this with club members. Michel replied that he would bring it up at the next executive meeting to see if it would be appropriate.
- Roy asked if any consideration has been given to keeping Track Attack and Level 4 lessons at Kingswood. Michel replied that while it has been decided to have Killarney as a home base, coaches of those groups can choose to offer some lessons at the other location if desired.
- Nadya pointed out that many programs (adult ski lessons, ski clinics, senior tours, Sunday ski tours, MCAF program, Women of Wostawea, outreach to indigenous communities) are missing from the report and thanked Mary Murdock for her involvement in a number of those initiatives.

5. Racing Team Report –Eric Luiker

- Eric reported that it was another great year with the team.
- The team had 34 members (ages 10-13: 10 athletes, ages 14-23: 20 athletes, masters: 4 athletes).
- Dry land training began in the fall. Unfortunately, COVID caused one race after another to be cancelled both in and out of province. The team did what it could on its own (Skiathlon, Poker Orienteering), trying to maintain energy.
- Some generous donations were made to the team. It is still being determined how best to use these funds.

- Eric thanked Anna for all her help as the team continues to grow. He expressed that the team has a promising future ahead and the club is in a good position to have several athletes in the Canada Winter Games.
- Andrew added that the coaches brought lots of energy and that the season was awesome given the circumstances.

6. Trails Report – David Cameron

- Kingswood/Woodlot:
 - It was a tough season with low snow conditions.
 - New signage was put out to encourage casual users to pay the membership fee and inform walkers of potential damage caused. Efforts proved to be partially successful.
 - David will be speaking with others in the off season about possible ways to improve access points.
 - Further trail improvements will be looked into in the fall.
 - Milda pointed out that areas along the New Maryland highway were plowed out this season and asked if this would be a regular occurrence moving forward, as many skiers used the areas for parking. David replied that this was done for training exercises that took place in the Woodlot and was unsure if it would be continued.
- Killarney:
 - Tough conditions were made tougher with rough sections of trails.
 - Work at the top of 6 & 7 and ski terrain park are scheduled to begin this summer. Eric added that the ski terrain park is moving ahead quickly.
 - Trail homologation work is underway, which would allow the Club to host national competitions.
- Killarney Grooming discussion:
 - Anna asked what feedback loop is in place to provide the groomers with feedback (she noticed sections of trail where they had gone too quickly). David replied that he meets with groomers at the beginning and end of each season to go over requirements, but sometimes they are not open to suggestions.
 - It was discussed that more training for the groomers is needed, especially if any National events are to be held at Killarney. Some suggestions were offered on ways to get city staff on board:
 - Incentivize training (e.g. opportunity to travel).
 - Focus on positive and minimize negative feedback.
 - Gather feedback from skiers on the impact grooming services provide and how much it is appreciated to provide to groomers.
 - Provide groomers with free membership to Wostawea and ski lessons so they are more invested.
 - Eric mentioned that currently, grooming occurs according to work schedules, not when is best to groom. City staff are beginning to understand the difference, but it

is still a work in progress. He added that weather conditions were particularly challenging this year, which did not help.

- Anna asked if there is any way to thank the groomers personally and commented that they have come a long way from five years ago. Don agreed and suggested the groomers be given Radical Edge gift cards as a thank you (similar to volunteers).
- Mel mentioned that he always tries to leave positive comments about grooming on the trail conditions blog posts and asked if the groomers see those kudos. David is unaware if the groomers see the posts but knows that Neil Trebble (City Foreman) does. Mel added that it would be beneficial to make it as easy as possible for skiers to comment on the blog.
- Nadya remarked on the amount of work that David, Eric and Don put in this year to try and improve the quality of grooming. This was done very gracefully and all feedback from skiers was addressed (even if it did not always end in results). Kudos was given to everyone involved.

7. Communications Report – Barb Ramsay

- Barb shared that club volunteers Rex Boldon, Bob Matthews, Norm Siebrasse and Brian Griffiths (Kingswood/Woodlot groomers) are being awarded Unsung Hero awards by the City and encouraged club members to participate in the virtual celebration.
- Barb commented that communications were especially important this year because of COVID and gave kudos to everyone involved in developing the operational plans which her team was then able to distribute.
- Barb gave an overview of the season's communication activities:
 - Newsletters: 26 newsletters and 4 announcements were distributed this year. 50% open rate. Engagement was positive.
 - Facebook: hoping to ramp this up next year (currently only doing status quo). Engagement seems to also be coming from non-members.
 - Website: Visits increased. Hoping to ramp up next year.
 - Daily Gleaner: four articles this season. A great relationship has been established with Bruce Hallihan (reporter).
 - Swag: renewed effort this year. Nearly 300 of 400 swag items were sold. Thanks to the Radical Edge for selling items on the Club's behalf.
 - Paul Jordan (photographer): was great to have him out again this year.
- Andrew congratulated Barb on the newsletters and asked if there is any coordination between the City and the Club on communications about grooming. He noticed the Fredericton Tourism Facebook account provides updates, but they require several click throughs until getting to relevant details. Barb was unaware of these posts by the City. David added that grooming details are sent to the City's Recreation department at the same time as the Club and that others have also expressed how difficult it is to find information on the City's website.

- Liz shared that she is part of a Nordic Skiing group on Facebook in which people share photos and videos of their ski experiences all over the world. She has shared about Fredericton's trails a few times on this group.
- John recognized Barb as the recipient of the Nancy Hamilton Award and thanked her for her long-serving volunteer efforts for the Club, including:
 - Leading and providing expertise for the Trails for Life Campaign, resulting in skis for MCAF, the PistenBully, Snowmobile, and much more;
 - Helping start the MCAF program;
 - The newsletter, swag items, and so much more.
- Barb expressed that it has been an honour and joy to be involved in Wostawea and that she continues to feel inspired by everyone involved.

8. Membership Engagement Report – Nadya Ladouceur

- Nadya thanked everyone who volunteered this year. She remarked on the immensity of the passion, experience and enthusiasm of club members.
- Despite several events being cancelled, there were still 142 volunteers this year. See report for full list.
- Several volunteers were involved in multiple programs (some up to five areas).
- COVID made it very difficult to organize activities for members. The hope for next season is to have more activities outside of regular programming to help engage members.
- Nadya plans to work with program leads in the coming months to identify people who would be interested in volunteering.
- Nadya gave kudos to Barb and everyone who got involved in photos at the Lone Pine Café.
- Don thanked Nadya for her leadership and energy and help with the COVID operational plans.

9. Loppet Report – Donald Wright

- The loppet was held virtually and hosted over three days. Don thanked Claudette and CCNB for their help and the organizing committee for picking a great loop.
- The 42 km ski marathon is to be a permanent fixture moving forward.
- Over \$2000 was raised for the Fredericton Homeless Shelter through donations (thanks to Ian for building this into registration).
- The Bett's family visiting from Oregon skied 179.5 km to win the Morimanno Family Cup.

10. Registrar's Report – Ian Burgess

- Ian reported that it was once again a record year for participation.
- Membership grew from 893 to 1158 members.
- Jackrabbits/Track Attack enrollment was capped at 161 participants.
- Despite being virtual, Loppet participation was also at a record high.

- Eric commented on how there are fewer members in the 20-29 age range and that it might be worth targeting that group next year. Ian pointed out that this age range did increase from the previous year.

11. Treasurer's Report – Ian Burgess

- Ian reported that the Club did very well overall this year, all things considered.
- Average revenue per member was \$38.
- Donations: very generous this year. Received almost \$5500 from members for trail maintenance (grooming) and again for racing team.
- Lodge: Spent \$6000 less in lodge fees due to COVID.
- Hot chocolate: expenses increased significantly this year. Received a generous donation to help offset this cost.
- Equipment: Purchased a new snow mobile. First time this was done using club funds (2014 machine was fundraised, 2018 machine was funded through Trails for Life). Plan to sell the 2014 snow mobile (can only store 2) which should help recoup cost. Ian noted that snowmobiles do not last long due to their heavy use. According to groomers, it takes 5 hours of machine use just to do a touch up in the Woodlot.
- Racing Team: has nice carry forward for next year.
- Trails for Life: Should reach goal next year. Remainder will be used at Killarney (ski terrain park + storage building).
- Came ahead ~\$9,669 for the year. Final bank account balance (after a few last-minute expenses) expected to be ~\$79,900.
- Don thanked Ian for all his help keeping funds in order, and on Zone 4.

12. Election of New and Returning Executive Members – John Ball

- John explained that there are a combination of one- and two-year term positions to realign position terms with the constitution.
- Nominated for new two-year or one-year terms:
 - Vice-President: Eric Luiker (two-year term)
 - Treasurer and Registrar: Ian Burgess (two-year term)
 - Communications Lead: Barb Ramsay (two-year term)
 - Member Engagement Lead: Nadya Ladouceur (two-year term)
 - Trails Lead: David Cameron (two-year term)
 - Coaching Lead: Ron Smith (one-year term)
- Continuing in 2021-22 (serving the second year of a two-year term):
 - President: Donald Wright
 - Secretary: Nicki Violette
 - Youth Programs Lead: Michel Poirier
 - Competitive Program Lead: Eric Luiker

[Note: John Ball will continue on the executive as Past President serving the second year of a two-year term]

- **Eric Luiker** agreed to let his name stand and was acclaimed for the position of Vice President for a two-year term.
- **Ian Burgess** agreed to let his name stand and was acclaimed for the position of Treasurer and Registrar for a two-year term.
- **Barb Ramsay** agreed to let her name stand and was acclaimed for the position of Communications Lead for a two-year term.
- **Nadya Ladouceur** agreed to let her name stand and was acclaimed as Membership Engagement Lead for a two-year term.
- **David Cameron** agreed to let his name stand and was acclaimed as Trails Lead for a two-year term.
- **Ron Smith** was nominated and acclaimed as Coaching Lead for a one-year term.
 - This new position was approved at the last AGM to assist with coaching administrative tasks like keeping records of training, criminal record checks, etc.

Summary of Executive

President: Donald Wright

Vice-President: Eric Luiker

Past President: John Ball

Secretary: Nicki Violette

Treasurer and Registrar: Ian Burgess

Youth Programs Lead: Michel Poirier

Competitive Program Lead: Eric Luiker

Communications Lead: Barb Ramsay

Member Engagement Lead: Nadya Ladouceur

Trails Lead: David Cameron

Coaching Lead: Ron Smith

13. Closing Remarks – Don Wright

- Don thanked John for his help as past-president and said that it has been a great pleasure working with everyone. The club is a special group of people and continues to get better year after year.
- If anyone is interested in volunteering, please let Nadya know.
- Don expressed that he is confident Wostawea will produce a national team member at some point in the future.
- The executive thanked Don for his hard work leading in a challenging year.
- Motion to adjourn by John Ball, seconded by Eric Luiker.