

14th District Agricultural Association

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY FAIR

Established 1885



Board of Director's Workshop

MINUTES

2601 East Lake Avenue, Watsonville, CA
Wednesday, July 11, 2012
The Harvest Building

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

CALL TO ORDER: 7:10 PM

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Bruce Oneto, Director; Loretta Estrada, Director; Stuart Yamamoto, Director, Don Dietrich, Director; Stephanie Fontana, Director.

DIRECTORS ABSENT:

DIRECTORS EXCUSED: Jody Belgard Akimoto

TEAM LEADER: Dave Kegebein – Interim Manager (IM)

Director Estrada called the meeting to order. Introductions were made by the Board of Directors and the Volunteer Management Team

MANAGEMENT TEAM REPORT: Interim Manager Dave Kegebein presented a slide show with an update on the status of Fairs in the State of California. He presented the financial outlook for the next 6 months. Cash flow projections indicate a balance in January 2013 of \$100,000, based on actual to date. With typical expense rate of about \$30,000/month, the facility will be out of cash by March 13th.

BOARD COMMENT:

Director Estrada praised the IM for his work, especially the crystal clear financial reports. She supports the idea of a new 501(c)3 and getting out from under the control of the State.

Director Yamamoto agreed that getting out from under State control is key.

Director Fontana agreed with the idea of creating a non-profit to run the facility

Director Dietrich thanked the crowd for attending and agreed with creation of a non-profit. He would not like it to be exclusive, however.

Director Oneto agreed with the entire board. Stressed the importance of the Fair to kids and families, and recruited for the Friends of the Fair drive.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Dennis Howell – expressed concern that the various non-profits – Heritage Foundation, Ag History, Friends of the Fair are competing – need to join forces, and then get out from under the State.

Gina Locatelli- has worked at the fair for over 14 years. She respects the Board and wishes them good luck. She encouraged the Board to meet the Department Heads.

Betty Dietrich – was on the Fair Board in the 1970's (and her son now sits on the Board). She understands that the Heritage Foundation raises money for capital improvements and the Friends of the Fair funds will help run the fair. She will donate her Home Arts premiums back to the Fair and hopes others will too.

Ron Hedecke – noted that the days of State Department of Food and Agriculture funding are over. Consideration of merging the various groups is needed. We don't need the help of the State any longer.

John Prentice – asked if the new non-profit group has been formed (IM replied no). Asked if it would take legislation for the Fair to be turned over to a local group (IM replied yes).

Kathy Thomas Miller – thanked the Volunteer Team and IM for their dedication and work. She noted the similarity to what she sees in Salinas with its downtown association and Steinbeck Center. There could be a partnership between the various groups.

Barbara Andrews – thanked IM and the Volunteer Team and Board for their commitment. She reminded the Board that some oversight is still needed. Noted that the community loves the fairgrounds and want it to succeed.

Ken Schwan- noted that taking care of the customers is key. He is on the Heritage Foundation Board and supports the Fair Board, supports the Fair activities and understands the struggles in a down economy. He offered to support a fundraiser for any of the various groups backing the Fair.

Jeannie Kegebein, part of the Kegebein clan – she has been involved in the State Parks issues and although she understands that the State is not interested in selling the land, she has seen a not-for-profit successfully run a State property in other settings.

Trina Kaufman-Gomez – wants to keep the Fair in the community. She also is a Freedom Rotarian and that organization supports the Fair (and is planting the new trees that were recently purchased). She noted that the Fairgrounds are of significant value to the community.

Pat Johns- is involved with the Ag History Project but also volunteers with the Parks Department. She supports the idea of a non-profit taking over the Fair. She also acknowledged the tremendous volunteer commitment and level of resources supporting keeping the Fair alive.

Dave Cavanaugh – has been involved for years and has seen lots of activities and good projects completed – including automated irrigation system demonstration project, solar panels. He felt the hiring of John Scurfield was crucial in keeping the Fair in the black, and thinks the Fair needs to be run as a business. He thanked the IM, board and Volunteer Team for the hard work they've done. He noted that if the legal framework of the Fair is changed the racetrack grandfather clause may be in jeopardy.

Nic Kiederling – doesn't think that Ag History or the Heritage Foundation are interested in running the Fair. He quoted Andy Griffith who said "we need a lot more Mayberry and a lot less Beverly Hills 90210!" He hopes the Board takes a common sense approach in moving forward.

Gary Stubblefield – co-chair of Livestock – noted that he has a lot of faith in the current Fair Team.

John Kegebein – suggested that there are several prior fair managers locally who are willing to come in and help the Fair moving forward.

Allan Molho – is a board member of Ag History Project. He noted that the Fair is loved and supports a non-profit running the Fair.

Sam Cooley – is on the Board of the Ag History Project – recommended that the Fair Board leverage the facilities – lower the rental prices to bring back the various activities that were revenue generators in the past.

Fred Chamberlain – has faith that the Fair will continue. He stated that to consider not having a Fair would be inconceivable. He has faith that the current Management Team and Board plus the community will work to keep the Fairgrounds viable.

Kirk Schmidt – noted that two opportunities are present now – there is a need for a very strong PR effort to build support and convince the broader community that the Fair is alive and thriving.

Phil Ybarra – supports the Fair and the idea of a team taking local control of the facility.

Robin - asked why there are no Art and/or Wine Festivals being held at the grounds. She also misses past music events like the K-PIG Swine Soiree.

Diana Paluszak – with the Division of Fair and Expositions – was encouraged that there is a community outpouring of support for the Fair and encourages the community to approach the Secretary of Food and Agriculture with a plan.

Stan Nielsen – Ag History Board member – pointed out the need to have a Fair Manager – a central, go-to person to lead the charge.

Stephen Rider – stressed the importance of 4-H – noted that the younger generation is missing from the discussion. To make the Fair relevant there must be a vision, and the youth must be brought into the discussion.

BOARD COMMENTS

Director Estrada thanks everyone for attending. She noted that the Board will meet in two weeks to consider options for the fairgrounds and will support the formation of a non-profit to run the facility.

Director Yamamoto -- thanked the audience for their input.

Director Fontana – thanked the public for their input and looks forward to work toward a solution with supporters.

Director Dietrich – asked the IM to set up meetings with the Department Heads – also invited everyone to attend the Board meetings.

Director Oneto – Thanked everyone for attending and encouraged the attendees to become Friends of the Fair – which is not a new organization, but rather an opportunity to provide support to keep the Fair solvent.

ADJOURNMENT: The workshop was adjourned at 9:12 PM.

Next Board Meeting: July 24, 2012 @ 7:30 PM in Board Room