

Stowe Trails Partnership Board Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2021 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Location: Field Guide Outdoor Pavillion



Board Attendees:

Erik Timmerman	Lucy Nersesian	Jeff Kaufmann
Cyril Brunner	Rob Connerty	Roger Murphy
Leslie Gauff	Mike Waldert	
Nikolas Coffrin		

Quorum present? Yes (9/10)

Other Attendees:

Rachel Fussell	Executive Director, STP
Emily Rogers	Guest and Rider

Item	Notes
Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone introduced themselves to Emily
Approve July Board Meeting Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> July Board Meeting Minutes <i>Roger moves to approve the July board meeting minutes</i> <i>Rob seconded</i> <i>All approve</i>
Trail Committee Meeting Updates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail Committee Minutes New Americorps member (Lauren) will start in mid-september Will start off with bridge inventory and put up blazes in sterling, Grady will be her mentor for the first couple of weeks. Brief discussion about IMBA ride center Board in general agreed it's worth at least looking into. understanding what it involves, pros and cons, talking to IMBA. ERSA (Covid funds) discussion. VMBA chapters are going to apply and submit a grant application. STP is applying for \$36,000. Conversations on ride center application back in early 2000s and impacts to act 250.
Event Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptive Demo Day - booked out until October 16, planned date is Oct. 16 Leaf Blower - October 9th Farid - MTB Afghanistan - will be back in Vermont soon and will be working with STP and Ranch Camp to host a drive to get more bikes Sponsor Appreciation Event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some new people we haven't seen before In general sponsors were super excited about S&A Disappointing turnout Likely issue was the changed date
High level Brainstorming Session : Transitions and Moving Forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roger shared with the board via email that he will be stepping down as president Good time to think about the organization and brainstorm what challenges STP faces, what good things we should keep. Always a good opportunity to reflect Roger shared that he felt that STP should continue to professionalize the activities of the organization

- Additionally discussed existing board members responsibilities and what tasks have been overburdened
- Cyril shared that we put a lot of expectations on our board members and it makes it difficult to expand our board diversity.
- Leslie shared that one of the successes of our organization is that we have a very involved and working board. Collaborative and congenial group for many years.
- Important to have strong leadership in both the staff and the board.
- Is there an opportunity to meet less frequently (not every month)?
- Mike shared that the weekly update has been a huge success, enables the board to have the opportunity to engage in any topics that are going on but also stay at a high level
- Rachel shared that for her the most helpful resources would be:
 - Someone who is more focused on trail planning, coordinating volunteer days. (5-10 hours a week extra from one of our existing trail crew)
 - Someone to manage social media/events/newsletter (see comment below)
- Roger asked if it's possible to have both.
- Nik shared that this should really go into the pile of all of the priorities (medical benefits for instance)
- Cyril shared that it's not a given we find the right person and it will take time for Rachel to keep those employees motivated and engaged.
- Rob asked how many hours a week would be helpful for Rachel. Between Mike and Rachel it can be as little as 8 hours and 20 hours a week.
- Rob felt that in the 10-20 hours range we may be able to find someone locally.
- Jeff thankfully brought us back to high level thought of how mountain biking has evolved and become more legitimate. It is a huge economic driver, things have evolved and we have to be more professional. Boards eventual role is to be advisory, provide that connection to the past, and dream to the future.
- Jeff also shared it may be an opportunity for an internship/coop model as well
- Mike briefly gave an overview of how the budget of the organization has grown.
- What do we want to be? What does the community expect from us? Where is biking moving to?
- Roger has felt very distant from the sport he got into. Is bigger necessarily better, Roger shared he is longing to get back to the smaller/quieter stuff. STP has a responsibility/expectations. Roger felt that we have exceeded capacity
- Leslie shared that Sterling and Adams Camp still feel quiet, did not feel that we have exceeded capacity
- Board agreed that we don't need more but we need better. Better parking, better trail maintenance.
- Mike shared that sometimes more is better (sterling connector, S&A). "Strategic opportunities" to enhance to experience we offer
- Rob shared that we are concerned long term about funding, discussed renewals, we may have an opportunity to push that harder.
- Needle is being moved by the large donors not necessarily the smaller donors, different messages needed for different categories.
- Leslie shared that we should go back to the strategic plan and identify what are the priorities to help guide us on what the needs are in regards to resources and budget
- Rachel briefly discussed the master plan which could answer some of the questions above
- Roger briefly discussed the amount of time and the role he has filled as President (3-10 hours a week on average, many more hours spent "thinking"). Sokoloff exponential was discussed.
- Mike shared what he sees in the president. In addition to strategic thinking/planning. Roger has done an incredible job having conversations with the key stakeholders in town and walk away feeling effective.

Election Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cyril shared that we have had a very informal officer election process in the past. B <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Best practice would be to have nominations and votes ○ How long should terms last? STP currently has 3 year terms. Is there a reason/opportunity to change that. ● Brief discussion of President and President-elect/VP to ensure the transition happen ● Do we do something every year to ensure that board members at least commit to another year. ● Rachel to put together what Sierra Club and SLT does to send out . ● Mike mentioned what VMBA had shared (rachel added) in the agenda ● Cyril asked if Rachel can put together a priorities list in addition the staff we discussed (include things like healthcare for employees)
Endowment and Cash Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rachel would like to be in a position where we have some sort of endowment being built ● Mike talked about a short term CD, given the amount of cash we have ● Endowment would be purely for operating expenses, dividends from the account would help pay for operating expenses. ● Stewardship Fund (15% of total fundraised/cost, would be put towards maintenance of the trail)
Meeting adjourned	7:50 pm