Minutes of the 2010 American Society of Environmental History Society Executive Committee Meeting

Saturday, March 13, 2010, 12:00 pm- 5:00 pm

Portland Oregon

**In attendance:**

Officers:

Harriet Ritvo, President

Mark Madison, Treasurer

Ellen Stroud, Secretary

John McNeill, Vice President and President elect

Executive Committee Members:

Marcus Hall

Paul Hirt

Tina Loo

Gregg Mitman

Linda Nash

Mark Stoll

Mark Cioc, Ex Officio, Editor of Environmental History

Nancy Langston, Ex Officio, Past President

Doug Weiner, Ex Officio, Past President

Steve Pyne, , Ex Officio, Past President

Lisa Mighetto, Executive Director

Sarah Hamilton, Graduate Student Representative

Guests:

Kathy Brosnan, Journal Editor Search Committee

Tom Dunlap, Journal Transition Committee

Sara Gregg, Journal Transition Committee

Bill Lang, Local Arrangements Committee

DC Jackson, Program Committee

Melissa Wiedenfeld, for H-Net; sitting in for Thomas Wellock

**Minutes of the 2009 meeting approved unanimously**

Bill Lang reported that things were going very smoothly at the Portland Conference. The plenary session was excellent, and there was no rain on the bike trip.

Lisa Mighetto reported about 1200 attendees, with slightly more people coming from ASEH than from the National Council on Public History (NCPH), with whom this conference was a collaboration.

Discussion ensued about lessons to be learned for future conferences. The program committee reported that there were so many worthy submissions that it had been necessary to move to 9 concurrent sessions, which meant that it was only possible to attend 11% of the panels. In addition, the program was particularly confusing.

There was dicussion of greater use of poster sessions, and possibly limiting the number of panels a single person could serve on, or moving toward a policy of presenting only once every two years. Committee members pointed out that limits on annual participation could create a hardship for scholars who can only get funding if they are on the program.

Kathy Brosnan suggested that the society should craft a statement about the importance of posters, since posters are not as common outside of the natural sciences, which might mean people could get access to travel money for participating in the conference in that way.

There was also discussion of the importance of discussion in the sessions, and the difficulty of keeping panels and panelists to time limits to allow for discussion.

**Motion from Ellen Stroud: We should direct the program committee to call for 15 minutes presentations and 30 minutes discussions, allowing each applicant to submit only substantive role on program, with chairing not counting as substantive**

**Mark Stoll seconded; the motion unanimously passed.**

Kathy Brosnan reported on the search for next Editor of Environmental History [Nancy Langston, one of the candidates, left the meeting at this point as did Gregg Mitman, whose institute had written a letter of support for Langston’s application]. Kathy Brosnan circulated a one-page report, and commented that the pool of candidates has been very strong.

**Nancy Langston was recommended as the next editor of Environmental History.**

**The committee’s recommendation was approved unanimously.**

Harriet Ritvo commented that the search was a challenging procedure, and Kathy chaired it very well.

Kathy Brosnan and Bill Lang left the meeting; Gregg Mitman and Nancy Langston returned.

Harriet Ritvo then moved discussion to the journal management transition, which was in the process of moving from the Forest History Society to Oxford University Press.

Tom Dunlap reported that the change in publisher also means a change in management structure, and a journal management group will come into existence, to work with the editor and the boards of both ASEH and FHS.

Discussions followed on the logistical challenges managing the shifting of financial management and accounting to Oxford, and of meshing the member databases and managing joint ASEH/FHS memberships. The Forest History Society will continue to maintain its own list as a donor base.

The journal transition committee reported that things were going relatively smoothly, and that the plan was that by the end of the calendar year, by Jan 1 2011, the transition would be complete and all reports on journal operations would be available from Oxford in time for the 2011 ASEH Executive Committee Meeting.

Harriet Ritvo thanked the Journal Transition Committee for all of its hard work, and also thanked Sara Gregg, as a representative for Steve Anderson, for all that the FHS has done over the years in cooperation with ASEH.

Sara Gregg and Tom Dunlap left the meeting.

**Mark Cioc offered the report from the journal.**

Neil Maher is continuing as graphics editor, and Melissa Wiedenfeld is stepping down as book review editor. She was thanked heartily for her good work.

**The report was accepted unanimously.**

**The committee took a ten minute break.**

After reconvening, Lisa Mighetto delayed returning and the committee turned to her annual review. She was universally praised.

Paul Hirt moved to accept the review committee’s positive report and offer a renewal of her contract, which was unanimously accepted.

Mark Madison clarified that we were renewing a contract with Lisa Mighetto, and that it could be a good idea to move toward working with a contracting agency that would charge minimal overhead, so that she would be in the position of being an employee rather than a contractor.

**Paul Hirt moved to explore having such a new arrangement in place by 2011. The motion was unanimously approved.**

**Harriet Ritvo suggested that as a first step, some potential packages could be put together and reviewed.**

Lisa Mighetto returned.

**Mark Madison presented the treasurer’s report.**

Discussion ensued of granting and contracting opportunities for the organization. Could ASEH enter into contracts with federal agencies, in which case overhead would go to ASEH instead of universities, and could potentially offer possibilities for grants for students and faculty?

Questions arose of what it would mean to use ASEH’s “brand,” how scholars would be selected to participate in projects, and how quality would be ensured. The issue of potentially competing with home institutions was also raised. Many pros and cons were discussed, and the possibility of a carefully monitored pilot project was put forward.

**Nancy Langston put forward a motion recommending pursuing federal grants and similar funding as a pilot project, and then re-evaluating to see if such pursuits are really benefiting the organization and its members. The pilot program would last three years, and would involve Requests For Proposals (RFPs) and oversight. Ellen Stroud seconded. The motion was unanimously approved.**

**The committee then took a break.**

After the return from the break, the committee took up discussions of awards.

**There was a discussion of nominations for the Distinguished Service award. After the first vote for the award, there was discussion of the possibility of conferring the Distinguished Service award every year, instead of every other year.**

**Paul Hirt put forward a motion for an annual award. Gregg Mitman seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. There had been no call for discussion, so the question was then discussed, the motion was called again, and again passed unanimously.**

**Jeffrey Stine was then unanimously put forward for the Distinguished Service award.**

Melissa Wiedenfeld standing in for Thomas Wellock presented the h-net report.

Lisa Mighetto reported that dues are now $300 a year for NCH, and that they are requesting a further donation, but don’t have an amount. Mark Madison recommended an additional $100 this year, possibly adding more next year. Committee members expressed a desire for more information about ranges of contributions.

**Nancy Langston put forward a motion that we pay $400 but ask more about what the range of donations are. Paul Hirt seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.**

The committee moved to discussing the issue of conflicts of interest, and signing statements disclosing any potential conflicts. The committee agreed that we should have a quick annual reminder of the issue.

**DC Jackson then offered the program committee report.**

Online submission was much more difficult to manage than had been anticipated, and coordinating with NCPH was a challenge. Lisa Mighetto reported that a new online system ought to work better next year.

**Harriet Ritvo called for new business.**

Lisa Mighetto reported that a last-minute proposal for 2013 conference had come in for Toronto. She reported that the proposal looks good though hotel prices are high, and that more information would be gathered.

**The meeting adjourned at 4:59.**