**Minutes 2008**

Minutes of the 2008 Executive Committee Meeting

Boise, Idaho

15 March 2008

**[attachments are on file at ASEH archives]**

In attendance:  Kathleen Brosnan, Mark Cioc (Editor, *Environmental History*), Peter Coates, Paul Hirt, Nancy Jacobs, Nancy Langston (President), Mark Madison (Treasurer), Lisa Mighetto (Executive Director), Katherine Morrissey, Steve Pyne, Harriet Ritvo (Vice President), Mark Stoll, Ellen Stroud (Secretary), Doug Weiner, Melissa Wiedenfeld, Verena Winiwarter

Also in attendance were Steve Anderson, President of the Forest History Society; Lisa Brady, Co-Chair of the Local Arrangements Committee; Sarah Elkind of the Site Selection Committee; Lynne Heasley, Chair of the Program Committee; Jay Taylor, Chair of the Publications Committee; and two graduate student representatives: Bradley Skopyk and Merritt McKinney.

Executive committee member Carolyn Merchant joined the meeting as it was in session.

Nancy Langston called the meeting to order at 12:31.

Paul Hirt moved to approve the 2007 minutes; Kathy Brosnan seconded, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Lynne Heaseley and Lisa Brady reported on the Boise conference, commenting specifically on the success of the interactive plenary session, and on the success of making the conference more international. Most of the projectors for the conference came from local institutions, which helped bring costs down.  Registrations were strong, as were contributions.

Members of the executive committee praised the conference committees, and specifically recognized the increased time for discussion, which was greatly appreciated.   Nancy Langston commended the committee members for a very smooth conference, and the members were applauded by the entire committee.

Lisa Mighetto reported that targeted donations almost precisely equaled the expenses of the GIS workshop and the fire workshop.  Steve Pyne commented that the idea was to make the workshops revenue neutral, though they offer an opportunity to cover some indirect costs.

Sarah Elkind then presented the report from the site selection committee, recommending Phoenix, Arizona for the 2011 ASEH meeting.  Concerns were expressed about hotel costs, but negotiations continue.   Moving the date later was discussed as a cost saving measure, as was holding the meeting nearby in Tempe.

Carolyn Merchant entered at 12:53, as discussion of the Site Selection Committee report continued.

Mark Madison recommended specifically against page 5, point 2, of the committee’s report, which suggested negotiating with hotels on meeting space to bring down room rates.  He argued that the conference is the association’s most important source of income, and that it would be better to give graduate students direct grants than to incur greater costs to bring down room rates.

The possibility of hosting the conference at a Casino Hotel was discussed, and the general sense of the meeting was that such hotels would be too far away and isolated from restaurants and such.

Nancy Langston summarized the sense of the meeting:  the committee is  excited about site, downtown Tempe sounds lively and lovely, downtown Phoenix is also a possibility, with an appropriate ceiling on hotel room rates.

Mark Madison moved the acceptance of Tempe or Phoenix with a room-rate ceiling of $175, with the conference to be held in late March or early April 2011; Katherine Morrissey seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Sarah Elkind then proposed another issues of concern to the Site Selection Committee:  do members prefer smaller, less-expensive cities that can be harder to get to, or larger, more-expensive cities that are more accessible?  Lisa Mighetto reported that according to an online poll of members, 85% would be willing to pay more to meet in a larger place.  Other committee members pointed out the advantages of smaller places, and the pragmatic problem of the number strong site proposals received in any particular year.  The sense of the committee was there should be a mix of sites if possible, but that constraints should not be placed on the Site Selection Committee.

Steve Anderson then presented the journal report, which was briefly discussed.

Mark Stoll moved that the library rates for subscriptions be raised as recommended in the report.  Harriet Ritvo seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mark Madison made a motion to accept the journal budget, which was seconded by Paul Hirt.  The motion carried unanimously.

Steve Anderson reported that the editorial board supported having an expanded web presence for the journal, and that he would like to see ASEH and the Forest History Society entertain using some reserve funds to that end.  He reported that it could be up and running in a years time, and shouldn’t cost more than $5000 to get going.

Nancy Langston suggested that the committee consider such a possibility in the context of the editor’s report.

Mark Cioc then presented the Editors Report, which was briefly discussed.

There was then a general discussion about the need for the journal to have its own web presence.  The sense of the meeting was that the journal website should not be merely an extension of either society's website, but should remain independent and should link to the websites of both societies. Members expressed interest in adding new materials to the journal website, including book reviews, and also expressed concerns about costs for maintaining the site, as well as issues of editorial control.

Nancy Langston called for a motion to create a journal website committee to draft a budget and prepare a proposal for the journal website. Kathy Brosnan so moved; Verena Winiwarter seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Nancy Langston and Verena Winiwater mentioned the need to include young people on the journal website committee.  Verena Winiwater suggested Liza Piper.

Kathy Brosnan made a motion to create a committee to propose a budget and proposal for a website for the journal. Verena Winiwarter seconded, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Break, 2-2:15

In attendance following the break:

In attendance:  Kathleen Brosnan, Peter Coates, Paul Hirt, Nancy Jacobs, Nancy Langston (President), Mark Madison (Treasurer), Katherine Morrissey, Steve Pyne, Harriet Ritvo (Vice President), Mark Stoll, Ellen Stroud (Secretary), Doug Weiner, Melissa Wiedenfeld, Verena Winiwarter

Also in attendance were Steve Anderson, President of the Forest History Society; Mark Cioc, Editor of *Environmental History*; Sarah Elkind of the Site Selection Committee; Jay Taylor, Chair of the Publications Committee; and two graduate student representatives: Bradley Skopyk and Merritt McKinney.

Lisa Mighetto (Executive Director), believing it was time for her evaluation, joined the meeting later.

Nancy Langston pointed out that the committee had a new memo on the table from Steve Anderson and Marc Cioc, about a web presence for the journal.  Discussion of the memo was postponed until after the publication committee report.

Jay Taylor of the publications committee presented the proposed special issues policy.  He explained that a special issue is one that incurs costs above the usual costs for the journal, whether that be as a fifth journal issue for a year, or an expanded issued.  Theme issues, if they do not incur additional costs, are not considered “special issues.”

Several models of funding or arranging for special issues were discussed, including annual special issues on the model of Osiris, and putting special issues on line.

Ellen Stroud moved that the committee report’s recommendations be accepted.  Mark Madison made a friendly amendment to pull out point 3 of the report  for logistical reasons.  Point three had recommended that reserve funds explicitly be excluded from the funding of special issues.  Paul Hirt then offered a friendly amendment to clarify to clarify that anyone who proposes a special issue that adds costs should develop a budget to cover the extra costs that will be approved by the editorial board and the journal editor.  Peter Coates seconded, and the motion carried with one abstention.

At 3 pm, Lisa Mighetto rejoined the meeting.

Steve Anderson, Mark Cioc and Jay Taylor left after the publications report.

Because of time constraints, Nancy Langston announced that discussion of self-archiving would not take place at the meeting, but would be conducted electronically.

Discussion of electronic discussions ensued, and it was recommended that after votes were tallied, comments be quickly deleted from the website.  Conference calls were also proposed as a possibility, though Nancy Langston pointed out that it could be difficult to get a quorum with a conference call.

Lisa Mighetto then left the room as discussion of her performance as executive director ensued.

She was universally praised.  Nancy Langston reported that Lisa Mighetto would prefer to return to the simple self-evaluation procedure used last year, and there was much agreement that that would be a good idea.  Also, the issue of her contract year was discussed, as it is currently out of synch with the annual meeting.

Paul Hirt made a motion to approve the report, but to change the dates of the executive director’s contract to the fiscal year.  Kathy Brosnan seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Lisa Mighetto then rejoined the meeting, to rousing applause.

Mark Madison then presented the Treasurer’s Report, which was accepted.

Nancy Langston presented a report on Financial Recommendations for ASEH, reinitiating a conversation that Steve Pyne had begun at the 2007 meeting.  Steve Pyne thanked Mark Madison , Lisa Mighetto, and Nancy Langston for their work in trying to make the financial situation of the organization less opaque, but the problem remains that the organization currently has no real operating budget.

Paul Hirt made a motion to accept point 2 of the report, which recommends consulting with Vanguard about account distributions.  A modification of point two was proposed to have Steve Pyne added to the committee.  Carolyn Merchant seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Ellen Stroud moved that we approve recommendation #3, which recommended putting a modest percentage of ASEH investments in socially responsible funds.  Paul Hirt offered a friendly amendment that we also look at renewable energy funds.

Conversation continued, and the motion was reworded to read:

We accept #3 in the report but in addition to socially responsible investing we consider environmentally responsible investing, with possible interest in renewable energy funds and with an annual report on our green investments, perhaps in a written form.  Kathy Brosnan seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting then turned to discussion of point #1, the operating budget.

The sense of the meeting was that Nancy Langston, Lisa Mighetto, and Mark Madison would continue to discuss point 1 of the report, about the scheduling of budget years and balancing budgets, to be clear what makes the most sense for the organization.

Katherine Morrisey made a motion that as part of our upcoming financial audit, we include the following:  consulting with Vanguard, investing in other external funds, and examining our financial agreements.  Paul Hirt seconded.  The motion carried unanimously.

Mark Cioc re-entered the meeting during the discussion of the budget.

Paul Hirt made a motion that Lisa Mighetto’s contract be extended through June 30, 2009, to rationalize budget years.   Doug Weiner seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Katherine Morrisey made a motion that Lisa Mighetto’s request for funding to take a class be approved.  Mark Madison seconded.  Kathy Brosnan offered a friendly amendment to include the cost of text books.  The friendly amendment was accepted, and the motion carried unanimously.

Kathy Brosnan moved that the committee begin awarding the Hays Fellowship, for working historians, next year (at $1000 a year, with a plan to offer it for 20 years), on the understanding that Lisa Mighetto will distribute a page later with requirements, deadlines, committee membership, criteria, and requirements for reports as to what recipients have done with the money.  Mark Stoll seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

For the Rothman fellowship, for students, the proposal on the table was that a $1000 fellowship be offered once a year for ten years.  A committee and application process are already in place, though other details remain to be worked out.  Mark Madison moved that we move forward to award the Rothman for the next ten years.  Paul Hirt seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Melissa Wiedenfeld then presented the H-enviro report, which was accepted.

Mark Stoll moved that we table items 13 and 14 on the agenda (archiving ASEH records and guidelines for joint meetings) for electronic discussion.  Peter Coates seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

The meeting then turned to new business.

Verena Winiwater gave the committee an update on the World Congress for 2009.  Because the organization lost the secretary in charge of the conference, there is as of yet no complete budget.  We made a contribution of $1000 last year with the promise of more on the condition of seeing a budget.

There has been high turnover in Denmark, and they recently lost another secretary in charge of the conference. Verena mentioned that she has an incomplete budget table… we can have them take out those items that are relevant for us… we made our contribution last year contingent on getting a budget.  They are not going to make any money out of the conference.  They will need substantial amounts of money to make this work, but it looks like it is going to happen.

Nancy Langston reported that we had been asked to sponsor a reception or party, which could cost $5000, and that there may be further requests.

Katherine Morrisey moved that we dedicate $3000 of ASEH travel grants to the international conference.  Paul Hirt seconded.

Discussion continued, and the question of dedicated grants was raised.  Mark Madison offered a friendly amendment that $2000 in unnamed grants be dedicated to the international conference.  The amendment was accepted.  Steve Pyne offered a friendly amendment that the international conference be a particular fundraising target, and that we look for additional funds.  The friendly amendment was accepted, and the motion carried unanimously.

Carolyn Merchant moved to adjourn, Paul Hirt seconded, and the motion carried.