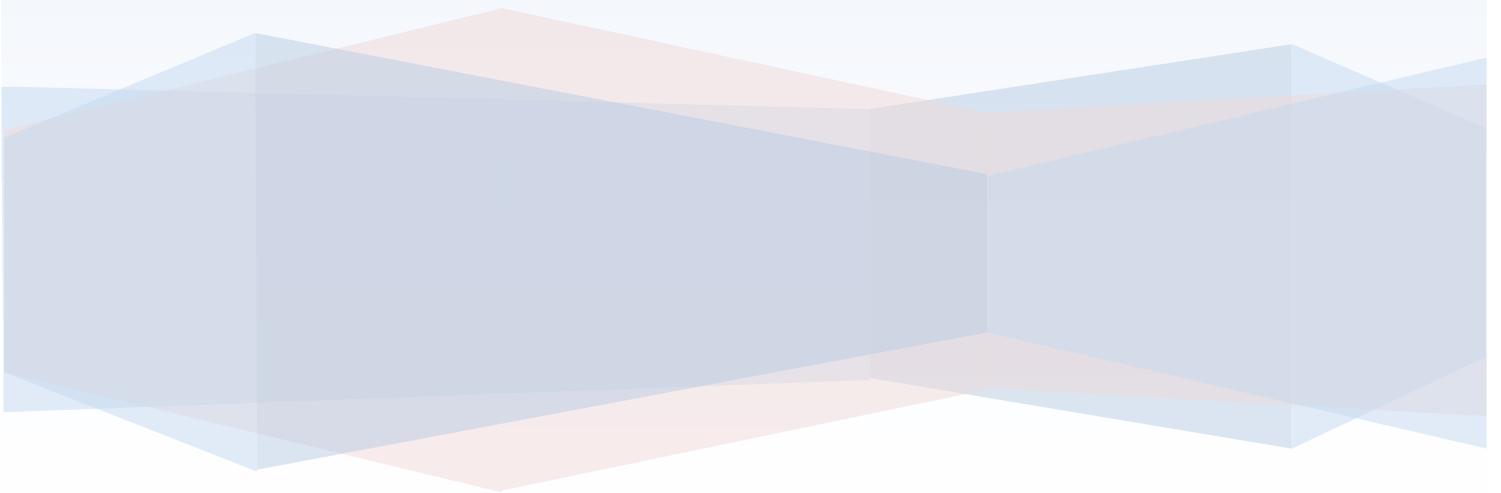


LMCA Planning Notes

March 2011

Lyn Hartley



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BACKGROUND

On MARCH 20, 2011, LMCA Board members and the Recreation Director gathered at the McKenna's home to plan for the upcoming year. These notes summarize key discussion points from the session.

Participants: Ruth Lera, Karen McKenna, Christel Percival, Dave Bouquot and Agnes Seitz.

MANDATE

There is a mandate as well as a preamble in the constitution that speaks to the organization's purpose. The group reviewed both and discussed the fit, based on where the organization is today.

Mandate: LMCA's mandate is to provide the facilities and coordinate recreational opportunities that promote a healthy lifestyle, encourage family participation, provide opportunities for youth employment and training while supporting goals of sustainability and environmental responsibility.

Mandate Discussion Points

- It appears that the mandate was crafted for funding applications. It parallels the constitution but is much more specific (i.e. youth employment). The constitution seems to be much more community driven. There was some concern that funding may be "the tail wagging the dog".
- Additions – at the start "*as a member driven organization, LMCA's mandate is to provide the facilities and coordinate...*"

ACTION: Adjust mandate to incorporate revised philosophy.

- There was interest in making sure that there was a sense that the organization facilitates and supports members to undertake programs/projects of their own interest. The volunteer component of the organization is critical. LMCA encourages members to have a sense of ownership of the facilities and services.

- There was strong support of “supporting goals of sustainability and environmental responsibility.” There is a sense that this represents a community held value.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

What do we value as an organization – what guides us?

- ✓ **Environment** - Sustainability.
- ✓ **All Ages Interacting** - Family participation and intergenerational. Gatherings for everyone together – an opportunity to feel a part of community.
- ✓ **Safety** – everything is well maintained. Facilities are small enough that it is easy to keep an eye on things.
- ✓ **Local Gathering Place** – a place for social and recreational gatherings, special events and functions. A place that is close and does not involve long distance driving.
- ✓ **Active** – supporting recreational and active lifestyles.
- ✓ **Welcoming** – open, supportive and inclusive. Let the community direct and guide what is needed.
- ✓ **Reciprocity** – community members have a sense of wanting to both give and get through their participation.
- ✓ **Food** – gathering over meals and social events.

Who does LMCA Serve?

The group discussed the primary audience it serves:

- Originally, the Association was created by volunteers in order to have a local gathering place as well as speak on behalf of the community on development issues. The Hamlet has taken over the political voice while LMCA focuses on recreation and social priorities.
- Currently, anyone can be a member by paying a fee (daily or annually). Membership is not limited to people living in the geographic bounds of Mount Lorne.
- In order to get funding, the funding sources require that we have larger numbers and go beyond the 350 people in the area.

- The facilities are well known to people in Whitehorse and many people believe that there is no charge to use the trails, rink, golf, etc.
- Programs tend to depend on outside volunteers and participants for both leadership as well as to have large enough group size.
- LMCA staff coordinates and supports locally driven priorities. There is priority employment for members.

The primary focus is people who live in the area and “outsiders” that make a significant effort to participate and volunteer.

Current Facilities Usage

- a) Regular Group Rental – there are about 10 groups that meet regularly and there are no clear guidelines for charges or volunteer expectations. These groups tend to require more supervision.
- b) Commercial Hall Rentals – there is a policy and expectations for hall rental.
- c) Membership-driven Special Events – Approximately 20-25/year.
- d) Community events – i.e. Canada Day.

As a Board, Who do you REPRESENT?

- It feels like LMCA is a slave to the building. It was not a strategic decision, rather a requirement due to the troubles with the previous zamboni shed limitations.
- The community members who have a sense of commitment – all my neighbors who are committed to living this lifestyle.
- Local groups those are open to anyone to participate.

Ideally, we represent members that demonstrate ownership and a willingness to be involved.

CURRENT SITUATION

The group discussed what they are noticing about the current situation for LMCA.

- There seems to be increase usage without member ownership or responsibility. This increase usage means there may be fewer opportunities for members to use the facility (i.e. the Board couldn't use the facility today). The impact is increase costs in maintenance.
- There is not clear policy on rental usage so decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. There may not be contributions from the membership.
- There is amazing staff but a lack of organizational structure. We have grown beyond a "grassroots" organization and there is a limited capacity and number of hours to meet increasing expectations. Staff is often overextended. Board members are not clear about their role. Staff and Board members are reacting rather than proactively planning.
- The quality of the recreational facilities is excellent though we struggle to maintain the aging facility.

Crossroads – what crossroads are we at?

- We are thriving but beyond a sustainable level of grown. There is a demand as we provide a quality service. We are beyond a level that can be supported with existing resources and staff. It is hard to scale back!
- The Recreational Director has spent 70% of time on facility management and 30% on programming. Last year, there was a higher level of funding so she was able to do a lot more. People now have very high levels of expectations. This role is changing and there is no job description.
- The Board is shifting from being hands-on to a governance role.
- There are fewer volunteers.

ACTION: Clarify roles and develop job descriptions.

The OPPORTUNITY CONTEXT

What are Members Calling For?

- They are cautious about growth.
- Want to keep locals in the focus and in mind for programs, events and facility usage.
- The new building may have “spooked people” as it was expensive and requires responsibility. Volunteers built the original building as a grassroots effort. There is an organizational transition from grassroots to more professional service provider. The new building may be a symbol of the best of both worlds.
- People have high expectations for the level of facilities. People are more users than volunteers or members. Are our standards too high?

VISION FOR FACILITIES FOR UPCOMING YEAR

Vision: look after the existing facilities with the purpose of keeping community members coming.

Vision Discussion Points:

- It would be good if we could do less grant applications and still get the same amount of funding.
- Board needs to get tight on the direction to staff – provide a more hands-on approach. We need to document the number of hours spent as well as support staff to do less.
- Safety is paramount. We need to develop a list of priority areas and ensure safety. This is particularly important as we can’t monitor or enforce who uses the facilities. The office also needs to be kept safe, clean and risk-free for staff.
- Need more volunteers to participate in maintenance.

- We need to think about how we communicate to members about the user fee and how they are used.

ACTION: Strike a Maintenance Committee with Dave as the Board Liaison, Andy and other interested volunteers. The role of this committee is to research and discuss equipment and the facility's needs; develop a plan; and facilitate volunteer days.

More Discussion on Membership

The group continued to discuss what does it mean to be a member. The common understanding was that a member is not geographically restricted; rather, it is a sense of belonging and a level of commitment. There is reciprocity and members treat the facility like it was their own.

HALL RENTAL

Current Situation: The group discussed the current situation with the hall rental. About \$8k/year or 1/3 of our profits comes from the hall rentals. There are challenges as it is hard to coordinate with the 20 hours of Agnes week and often she has to make repetitive trips. There are also issues with keeping the facility clean, particularly for the regular groups that use the hall. Generally, people need supervision in making sure the facility is kept in good shape.

Guiding Principles – staff work/life balance, clean and safe facility, member contribution and appropriate financial contribution.

Potential Ideas – hire a cleaning person; have more staff to cover the full week; increase rental fees; limit the number of available dates to work around Agnes' limited time; develop a hall user contract for the regular 10 groups to ensure there is a contribution; develop policy on equipment usage; develop a cleaning strategy.

ACTION: Christel will research on fees for comparable facilities with attention to cleaning fees and contract requirements.

VISION FOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Current Situation: The group discussed the current situation with programs and services. Currently, things are going well though there is a sense that it is more rental groups than community-based groups. There is a shift from grassroots programs to more professionally produced and directed services.

Ideas: Would like to do more fundraising so we are not reliant on hall rental fees. Would like more inexpensive community events that are multi-generational. May need to limited events to once a month in order to work with the limited hours.