**Minutes**

**Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network Board Call**

**Wednesday, February 2, 2022**

Members Participating:

Janet Robinson, President

Chip Woodman, Treasurer

Joe Herlihy

John Contas

John Haile

Nananda Col

Vytas Marciulionis (Vic)

Greg Fergin (Recording Secretary)

1. Welcome
2. Approval of Minutes: The Board unanimously approved the minutes of the January 12, 2022 Board call.
3. Old Business
   1. Committee Updates
      1. Skills Committee: John Haile reported that the committee met last week. The key focus was scheduling skills sessions and preparing a budget to hold them. The committee is exploring training sessions with Nate Hansen and Jonathan Oltz in July. A Wilderness First Aid Afloat (WFAA) course with Nancy Zane is in limbo while searching for venue. Sieg Siegfried is looking for a venue, with an eye to keeping the cost to members down. Janet commented that there is no hurry in scheduling this session because of the current Omicron coronavirus spike. John said the Cheri Perry is working on organizing regular skills sessions, similar to previous years’ sessions, in the spring. Three SMSKN members have volunteered to be mentors, and one member has asked for mentoring. The committee will follow up and connect people, and is thinking about how best to match them up. Janet suggested, as one possibility, that mentors could meet their mentees in a pool some morning to help them. Nananda commented that mentors working with paddlers on their rolling technique need to be more interactive with mentees, and more flexible in approach. John Haile said the committee is not emphasizing mentoring in specific skills, but thought that would happen naturally in pool sessions. Mentoring is focused on two things: mentoring for trip leaders, and mentoring for new paddlers on trips. Janet said she will organize a meeting for trip organizers this spring. Vic volunteered to help anyone who’s looking for help with paddling skills.
   2. Website Update
      1. Training Provider list: Vic said he is working on a spreadsheet listing of kayaking skills training. Janet suggested that the list have a date of preparation so that members know how current it is.
      2. Transfer of SMSKN FB page videos? Vic said he would send a link to Janet so that she could check out the videos.
      3. Website visits: Vic said he had looked at statistics on usage of the SMSKN website. Visits average 14 per day. Most visits are from new visitors, and mostly from the USA. The website’s most visited pages are the homepage, the Participant Agreement, Meeting presentations. Might think about having fewer pages. Three outlets: the Meetup link, and the Instagram link. There is still a need to better integrate the website with Meetup; that is a long-term goal. Janet commented that SMSKN needs to utilize website a lot more. Nananda suggested having Meetup open in a separate window rather than replacing the SMSKN web page when the Meetup link is clicked. Janet suggested make website improvements a continuing action item, in order to make website more useful and user-friendly. She asked Nananda to work with Vic on this, and for the Board to monitor improvements through the summer.
      4. Last Name status: John Contas reported that he had reached out to all SMSKN members on Meetup who did not list their last names – 48 in all. 29 responded and complied; 14 did not. Three or four members had pushed back on the request, citing privacy concerns.
   3. Upcoming Events: Janet said the subject for the April membership meeting is still not confirmed, and she asked the Board for new ideas for the meeting. Board members suggested the following:

* Joe: presentation on every-trip equipment.
* Nananda: have people talk about trips they’d like to do or their favorite trip.
* Joe: get a guest speaker from another group, referencing the podcast Paddling the Blue.
* Vic noted that Joe Gugliemetti is working on repairing Mike Merino’s kayak from damage suffered in Mike’s rock gardening accident last summer.

1. New Business
   1. 2022 Budget: Janet reviewed the spreadsheet for a $3,600 SMSKN budget for 2022. She said SMSKN’s substantial reserves could serve as a backup for the budget in case revenue projections are not achieved. Nananda said SMSKN should schedule pool sessions in mid-Coast Maine this spring or early summer if possible. John Haile said that would be hard to schedule this year but was on the plan for next year; Cathy Kimball is working on it. He said he would see if it could be done this year. Greg asked if SMSKN had the ability to charge for events as a way of reducing their budget impact. Janet noted that Meetup has a payment feature. Chip added that SMSKN has collected cash or checks in past for events. John Haile asked about insurance for pool use in Bath, since unlike Riverton Pool, it would not be covered by Portland Paddle’s insurance. Janet noted the $300 charge for use of the Bath pool might include insurance, but said SMSKN should ascertain this.
   2. 2022 Goals:

* Increasing member participation in trips: Janet suggested getting members to post easy trips, not just high-end trips. Nananda commented that SMSKN had lost some non-hardcore paddlers as members, not so much because of the lack of easy trips, but because people need encouragement to join trips. The key question is how to make kayaking more accessible to a variety of members. She suggested giving members opportunities for variety, tied to other interests in outdoors. She also suggested creating a panel of advisors who have a lot of knowledge in planning trips. Joe suggested that SMSKN come up with a list of various types of trips, ask for volunteers to run them, and offer mentors to partner with organizers. That way members don’t have to come up with an idea for trip, but can just put up their hand to organize one.
* Connecting with younger and novice paddlers: Joe suggested working with Portland Paddle to get a special rate for SMSKN members to lower the cost of gaining skills and confidence for new paddlers. Nananda suggested expanding outreach to to like-minded organizations, such as universities and the North Shore Paddling Network.
* Reviving the SMSKN newsletter: In response to Joe’s question, Chip noted that SMSKN used to do a periodic newsletter. Since many of the topics covered were still current, it might be worth republishing some of the old ones. Janet said it would be possible to do a new series of newsletters through Meetup.
* Annual retreat: Nananda suggested that SMSKN do an annual 2-3 day camping retreat in a place like Stonington.

Janet said she would look at these suggestions and winnow them down to 3-4 goals, assign action, and move forward.

* 1. Summer party - decision and owner: Janet suggested that this would be a good topic for the next SMSKN newsletter. We need to make phone calls and reserve a group space. Nananda said she would call Winslow Park to find out if they will accept reservations for the group site this year.

1. Closure and Action Items

* Nananda to work with Vic on making the SMSKN website more useful and user-friendly, and for the Board to monitor improvements through the summer.
* Janet to look at Board members’ suggestions for 2022 goals to winnow them down to 3-4 goals, assign action, and move forward.
* Nananda to call Winslow Park to find out if they will accept reservations for the group site this year.

The meeting concluded at 8:30pm

Next call: **Wednesday, March 9, 2022, 8 pm.**