**Minutes**

**Southern Maine Sea Kayaking Network**

**Board Call**

**Wednesday, May 1, 2024**

**7:00-8:30 PM**

Members Participating:

John Haile, President

Glen Gordon, Vice President

Chip Woodman, Treasurer

Cathy Kimball

Ellen Gluckman

Greg Fergin, Recording Secretary

The Board call commenced at 7:04 p.m.

1. Welcome.
2. Nananda resignation. John reported that Nananda was recently elected to the Georgetown Select Board in Georgetown and had decided she would not be able to continue as a SMSKN Board member. John expressed appreciation for her contributions to the Board and said he had reluctantly accepted her resignation.
3. Approval of minutes from 4/3/2024 meeting: The Board unanimously approved the minutes of the April 3, 2024 Board call.
4. Ongoing business.
	1. Adding Vision/Mission statement to our website: John stressed that the statement that the Board adopted during its April call needs to be added to the website in a prominent position.
	2. Someone to man the SMSKN table at Stone Soup: Glen, Greg, and Ellen volunteered. John said he would provide more SMSKN business cards to Glen, along with the SMSKN banner.
	3. Large-scale training event: John said he was not sure we have the bandwidth to do a multi-day training event including the public. Ellen thought that we need to have a public event on the water to recruit new members and increase our visibility. Other board members thought that a summer SMSKN picnic would meet this need in a manageable way. Cathy believed we would get a better turnout at Winslow Park rather than Mitchell Field because Winslow is easier to get to. John asked Board members to give thought to possible locations so that the Board could pin down a venue during its next Board call. He noted that July 6-7 and August 17-18 worked best for him.
	4. Skills Committee update: The Skills Committee sent to the Board the following summary of its consensus views on pool sessions:
	* Book longer sessions (4 hrs).
	* Don’t limit the number of participants.
	* Longer, sessions with more participants will make the sessions social events where people take turns in the pool.
	* Charge a small fee ($10-$15) for pool sessions.
	* Fees will ensure commitment of those signing up and offset costs for more lengthy sessions.
	* Allow food at the events (if pool rules allow) to facilitate these being social events.
	* Find pools that will allow us to book more convenient times (mornings or afternoons, not evenings).  This may require booking now for next winter and paying more for premium timing.
	1. Glen said the committee’s basic proposal is to make pool sessions longer and more social. He stressed the need to schedule next year’s session well in advance to secure longer sessions at a desirable time. Chip said we should look at the cost before deciding on a particular venue. Noting the Committee’s recommendation that we charge members who attend pool sessions, Chip pointed out that this year we got a good response by encouraging voluntary donations. John wondered about the mechanism for charging members, noting that Meetup takes a significant cut of each payment. Ellen said Venmo was an option, and Greg said Paypal would work, too, if payments could be made directly into SMSKN’s account. Ellen thought that if we did not limit the number of participants, that would eliminate many complaints about the system. Cathy observed that previous limits on the number of boats in the pool stemmed from COVID limitations or were self-imposed. Regarding possible venues and what they would cost, John said he would contact Bowdoin College. He asked Cathy to see if Boothbay and Lewiston-Auburn were possible, and asked Glen to check on Riverside and Westbrook. He asked Ellen to check on Wiscasset.
5. New business.
	1. Meetup issues. John asked the Board whether we should think about different approach to our website that would expand its capabilities. He reviewed problems we have with Meetup: members getting kicked off arbitrarily; members not receiving notifications; and issues with payments when renewing memberships. Glen said he reached out to paddling groups he knows in California. A Bay area group set up a new website similar to that of the North Shore Paddling Network (NSPN). The Bay area group used paid help ($50/month) and volunteers to manage the website. John observed that the NSPN website is not ideal; and Ellen agreed. John asked Board members to research alternatives to Meetup. Glen said he would get more information from the California paddling groups. John said he would contact NSPN, find out their website’s maintenance costs, and what they like and don’t like about their website. Greg offered to get information on Stack TeamApp as an alternative to Meetup.
	2. Community agreements. Deferred to the next call, when Suzanne could introduce this topic.
	3. Partnership with MITA: Cathy reported that the Maine Island Trail Association (MITA) mentioned SMSKN favorably during its “State of the Trail” presentation recently.
6. Monthly Meeting programs for 2024.
	1. What next?
* John said he would try to get a specific date for Joe Gugliemetti’s kayak repair session.
* Summer social gathering – John proposed that the Board discuss this at the next Board call.
1. Closure and action items.
* Items for next Board call:
	+ Date and Venue for SMSKN summer picnic.
	+ Community Agreements discussion.
* Put Vision/Mission Statement on the SMSKN website.
* Checking on pool session venues:
	+ Bowdoin College – John
	+ Boothbay and Lewiston-Auburn - Cathy
	+ Wiscasset – Ellen
	+ Freeport and Portland (Riverside and Westbrook) – Glen
* Alternatives for Enhancing Website/replacing Meetup:
	+ Glen to query California paddling groups.
	+ John to query NSPN about its website.
	+ Greg to get information on Stack TeamApp.
* John to call Joe G. to nail down a date for the kayak repair session.

The Board call concluded at 8:07 pm.

**Next call: Wednesday, June 5, 2024 7:00-8:30 PM**