

LCEA Meeting Notes August 18, 2020

Board members participating were Kelly Foltman, Louise Cotulla (Brad Willard as proxy), Emily Houston, Stephanie Jennings, Michelle (Sheli) King, Marion Lee, Reid O'Connor, and Janet Vandervaart.

Outside participants: Anna Connors and Jack McCormack

The meeting began at approximately 5:03 pm.

Approval of June minutes: approved

Introductions by Board. Board members introduced themselves to the prospective members. Prospective Board members Jack McCormack and Anna Connors introduced themselves in return. Board answered questions by prospective members regarding expectations and interaction with LCEA members. Kelly emphasized the importance of the advocacy role played by LCEA.

Membership report: Sheli reported 94 members: 21 individual and 73 business. She said LCEA had two new business applications, but had yet to receive the accompanying payment. Kelly gave prospective Board members background on LCEA's membership program. She clarified membership was not a requirement for Expo participation. She emphasized that LCEA's outreach was much larger than just the membership numbers, and that the program was currently meeting LCEA's financial needs. Kelly emphasized LCEA's role as a source of information and activism.

Treasurer report: Stephanie reported a balance \$22,984.99. Since the last meeting, the Board agreed in an email vote to pay \$220.70 of costs to help with maintenance for the opening of the Oatlands trail system. Aside from that the only other expense last month was \$19 for Constant Contact.

LPAT/PROS update: Kelly said that two weeks prior to the meeting the smaller committee had selected three main contenders out of nine who had responded with proposals for the scope of work. Interviews with the three finalists would be held on Thursday, August 20. Once the winner is chosen then the rest of the process can move quickly. Kelly suggested doing a county-wide outreach via virtual meetings to get input. She emphasized the importance of getting the equestrian community to participate so that their voice was heard in the process. Kelly gave some additional background on the project to Anna and Jack.

Oatlands update: Kelly reported that the group had a few great trail days. Janet and Sheli also participated, and Kelly said several other equestrians came out to help with the trail preparations. There were participants from USTR as well as hiking groups. The group put in a lot of posts and medallions, and cleared two stream crossings. On Sunday, August 17, Phil and Kelly met with Glenn Gillis. Together they put in the last seven posts and now have them ready for signage. Kelly said there was additional mowing needed. Brad offered the assistance of their full-time farm helper, and said he could probably do the mowing in a day. Kelly and Brad will touch base after the meeting. Kelly mentioned that Oatlands did have the necessary equipment for mowing. She said that one of Oatlands Board members is eager to get a group out riding, and that there would likely be a day when volunteers ride before they open to the general public. The final steps are additional medallions and mowing the perimeter. Kelly encouraged the Board to look at the Oatlands website under the trails section. She said all payment for access can be done through the web. It is \$10 a day for general use or \$50 for a year pass. Kelly said that the equestrian access parking is off of Gap Road, and riders just need to call and check-in. Kelly and Sheli

gave background on the project to Jack and Anna. Kelly mentioned the project was about five years in the making and that LCEA was thrilled that it had now come to fruition.

Aberdeen update: No updates. Kelly explained property and the concept of potential carbon/tax-credit system to Jack and Anna.

TLAER update: Kelly gave background on the program and the postponement to Jack and Anna. Kelly reported to the Board that she had confirmed the continuing education accreditation was valid for next year.

Brad and advocacy/business development role: Kelly asked Brad to speak about a possible role he could play for LCEA. Brad introduced himself and spoke about his extensive background in business development. He said he was happy to volunteer with LCEA to try and get a sense of what was happening to the Loudoun equestrian community in the current climate. He expressed concern about the withering of many of the smaller horse shows. He mentioned wanting to facilitate youth involvement and show activity in the local equestrian community. Kelly emphasized the importance of the advocacy and publicity role played by LCEA, but stressed that we ourselves could not run a show. Emily mentioned the possibility of doing another survey to see how things had evolved from 2013. Kelly said that the previous survey had been funded by Economic Development and so LCEA did not have the current funding to undertake another survey. Sheli suggested the possibility of a “state of the horse economy” town hall hosted by LCEA in future years. Kelly and Emily seconded the idea, but agreed on the need to wait until COVID-19 had passed. Kelly encouraged Brad and all members of the Board to speak with people they know and gather some intelligence without a formal survey. This would help to identify current trends.

COVID related updates/member updates: Kelly said people are back riding and her business is busier than at the same time last year – more people are home with their pets. Marion spoke about small shows and mask requirements. Sheli said this coming VADA/NOVA is huge. She said most people do not want to stay overnight at shows, but dressage at Lexington was full. Sheli said many places are having to rehire judges and TD’s because of quarantine from prohibited states. Spectators are also not allowed, so the atmosphere is very different. Marion also said there are virtual shows ongoing as well. Reid addressed the struggles of many non-profits during COVID-19, and Kelly mentioned many equestrian non-profits in the area had received financial help/local grants. Emily said she noticed schooling shows were filling quickly. She mentioned, as to Kelly’s earlier point, that her farrier said that people are wearing out their horses’ shoes faster because they are riding more. Kelly wondered if local rescues were being inundated with horses as a result of the COVID-19 economy. She said this was possibly an important issue for LCEA to address during the pandemic. She suggested this could be a great initial project for Brad. Brad said he was going to ask around at local shelters to gauge the effects of COVID-19.

Other:

Emily brought up deadline for the next *Horse Times* and asked what LCEA would like to feature in the ad. Kelly suggested an ad encouraging people to contact us for help and questions during the pandemic. Board agreed.

Emily also brought up the Prime Soil Initiative. She said the public comments session was taking place on September 1. Emily said there was a *Loudoun Now* article published on the initiative. She asked the Board if LCEA should weigh in again. Kelly said REDC was having a meeting on Friday, August 21, and

they would touch base afterwards. Kelly addressed the issue of valuing land based off of the number of houses that can be built.

Emily said she would like to send around the prototype of the new magazine *Wander*. The magazine is a Loudoun County version of *Plenty*, a magazine in Montgomery County which supports the preservation of agriculture. Emily said the magazine will be free and 20,000 copies will be distributed throughout the county. She stressed that the printing had to be funded by the advertising. Kelly suggested Emily present the magazine to the Hillsboro Business Association.