**Minutes 2006**

**ASEH Executive Committee Meeting**

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**April 1, 2006**

**St. Paul, Minnesota**

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

Participants: Steve Pyne, Lisa Mighetto, Carolyn Merchant, Mark Madison, Doug Weiner, Sarah Elkind (gone at 2, back at 3:30), Mart Stewart (came in at 2), Ellen Stroud, Ted Steinberg, Katherine Morrissey, Peter Coates, Jeffrey Stine, Kathy Brosnan, Verena Winiwarter, Melissa Wiedenfeld.

Guests:  Jay Taylor (left early), Kathy Morse (left early), John Anfinson (left early), Steve Anderson.

President Stephen Pyne called the meeting to order at approximately 12:45 pm.

**Approval of Minutes:**

*Kathy Brosnan made a motion to approve the minutes for the 2005 meeting.  Verena Winiwarter seconded the motion.  Motion carried.*

* **Updating Roster:**

Ellen Stroud circulated the Executive Committee roster for updating [sent to Steve Pyne and Lisa Mighetto on April 19, 2006]

* **St. Paul Conference Report, John** **Anfinson and Kathy Morse**

Carolyn Merchant made a motion of thanks to Kathy Morse and John Anfinson for all of their hard work on this year’s conference, which Kathy Brosnan seconded.  The motion carried.  Lisa Mighetto then presented gifts to both John and Kathy.

John reported that there were 435 reregistered attendees, and ultimately 520 registered attendees, making this the organization’s second biggest meeting.

Carolyn asked about local fundraising, and raised the question of having an official fundraiser on the committee in the future, since it is a difficult issue for local arrangements committee.

Ellen asked about the issue of information transference between organizers from year to year.  Kathy Morse and John reported that the 14-page report that Kathy Brosnan provided them with last year was a huge help, and John intends to pass along similar information to next year’s committee.

Kathy Morse circulated memos with conference numbers, and commented that AV seemed to work well.  John agreed with Kathy Brosnan’s assessment from last year that outside vendors are much, much cheaper than hotel AV providers, and that future local arrangements committees should always make that option a priority when negotiating with hotels.  He also cautioned against relying on local academic institutions on making their equipment available, though Kathy Brosnan argued that it had worked well last year in Houston.

Steve Anderson raised the issue of adding more breakfasts (perhaps 3 every day) to the program, since they all seem to fill).  John said he would check the sheets to see how full the breakfasts really were this year.

Doug asked about the creation of the program and the panels, and who was rejected from the program.  Kathy Morse reported that intellectual discernment was the primary criteria used in making choices, though of course there were tough calls on the margins.

Kathy Morse and John Anfinson then left the meeting.

**4.  Publications Committee Report, Jay Taylor**

Jay reported on the two-prong strategy for raising profile of EH field and ASEH, both of which have been moving forward.

Discussions of changes in the Library of Congress entry to include Environmental History have moved quickly and smoothly.

Conversation with publishers and booksellers on raising profile of field have also been useful and informative.  On Thursday noon, publication committee members Kathy Brosnan, Frank Smith, and Jay met with representatives from ten presses.  They learned, among other things, that working directly with book sellers might not be the way to go, since over 50% of books are being sold to electronic booksellers and wholesalers.

A more practical approach, the committee suggested, was creating accessible resources for the media to access experts in the field:  a voices bank, a speakers’ bureau, or the like.

Katherine Morrissey raised the question of intellectual property issues, which Jay said hadn’t come up in the meeting.

An example of the kind of thing the committee would like to facilitate was the kind of media commentary that Craig Colton and Ari Kelman were able to offer after Hurricane Katrina.  Verena suggested a German model for getting female experts voices heard might be useful; Katherine Morrissey mentioned there was also a model in Arizona.

Steve Anderson raised the issue of fundraising, asking if we might try to endow a person to be work with media and journalists.  He reported that the Society for Environmental Journalism, which rates web sites for usefulness for environmental journalists, rated the Forest History site quite high; it could be a useful model. He also suggested applying for a Google grant – to be listed on the right of some pertinent journal searches, and to also got the journal at the top of some searches.  Melissa Wiedenfeld reported that the issue had been discussed by the web site committee.

Jeffrey Stine pointed out that being quoted in the *New York Times* gets you into databases, not just on a list that might or might not be used, and that could be something to prioritize.

Steve Pyne suggested moving forward with a directory, perhaps combined with an experts’ roster – something the outreach committee is also working on.  He also brought up the notion of “branding.”

* **Treasurer’s Report, Mark Madison**

Mark emphasized that he is continuing to get things in order from previous years when tax returns weren’t filed [during the 1990s], and emphasized that we need to always file tax returns, even when we owe no taxes.  He said that since there were no taxes owed in the years in which we did not file, we are unlikely to be fined, but we still need to stay on top of this stuff.

Mark also emphasized that the organization is highly dependent on conference income, which he called the backbone of the financial picture.

Carolyn raised questions about fundraising in conjunction with conferences.  Kathy Brosnan reported that last year, she tried on site fundraising, but it was difficult, and that most of the support came from local institutions.  Kathy Brosnan emphasized that when picking conference sites in the future, considering the availability of institutional support is crucial.  She suggested, for example, asking for event specific funds:  the opening reception sponsored by… plenary supported by…, etc., so registration fees don’t have to go to cover such things.

Kathy Brosnan also emphasized that in creating a profitable conference, it is crucial to negotiate a good contract with the hotel.   Among the things to keep in mind:  a room rebate once a block is filled, not using the hotel’s audio visual equipment, etc.  Also, it can be really useful to get two hotels competing.

Carolyn responded that those things were fantastic, but what Jackie Corn would say would be that outside funding in Durham and Baltimore, though they were smaller conferences, made a big difference.  Lisa responded that the groundwork had already been for next year (with the Army Corps of Engineers, the EPA…), and that it takes about a year to get such things in order.  Kathy Brosnan agreed with Carolyn that designating a particular person to do fundraising would be useful.  Lisa mentioned that Jackie Corn is willing.

Mark mentioned that he considered the next three conferences financially questionable.  2007 and 2008 are in smaller places, remote from east coast; Baton Rouge and Boise; and it is unclear what will happen in 2009, the year of the international conference.

The question of buying our own AV projectors was raised, but it was pointed out that storage and transport could be a problem.

Katherine Morrissey commented that the high cost for individual attendee compared to other conferences may skews attendance.  Discussion of the cost ensued, with some disagreement about whether it was an unusually expensive conference.  Lisa suggested that there might be ways to help graduate students figure out how to ameliorate the cost.  She mentioned that the organization had had a graduate student liaison in the past, and that it might be time to resurrect the position.

*Jeff made a motion to accept the Treasurer’s Report, which Carolyn seconded.  The motion carried.*

**Journal Budget Report, Steve Anderson**

Steve Anderson reported that the journal currently has a balanced budget and that there are no surprises.  Page count in the journal  is creeping up.  The budget is allowing for a sixth article now.

Kathy Brosnan asked if we do we anything to follow up and targeting nonmembers who register for the conference.  Lisa responded that we don’t but that it’s a great idea.

She reported that she routinely gives a copy of the journal to speakers, and one-year membership; it could be good to do it that more systematically.

Mark suggested an overrun on the winter issue, which could be mailed out to non-member registrants, to try to get new subscribers.  Carolyn wondered if there would be a lag in getting lists to Forest History, but Kathy Brosnan said it really should be very easy.

*Kathy Brosnan made a motion to accept the Journal Budget Report, which was seconded by Ted.  The motion carried.*

BREAK

Doug asked about membership growth, or trajectory… there was some discussion of gaining control over membership records.

Since Steve Anderson had not yet returned from break, we jumped to item 9 on the agenda:

**H-Env Report, Melissa Wiedenfeld**

Melissa reported that the H-Env listserv has increased to 1900 members, which means that it has doubled in five years.  It gets over 100 posts a month.

Verena asked about the problem of time lag with book reviews;  Discussion about the problem ensued; the issue seems to be bottleneck at H-Net.    Melissa currently circumvents the problem by just posting to the list.

* **Editor’s Report, Mark Cioc**

Steve Anderson presented the Editor’s report for Mark Cioc, who couldn’t attend because of a death in the family.  Steve reported that the transition had been almost flawless, thanks in large part to Adam Rome.  He also reported that the journal was committing to special issue.  The money was still being worked out, but it seems likely to come together.

*Jeff made a motion to accept the report, which was seconded by Mart.  The motion carried.*

* **Online Journal Project Summary, Lisa Mighetto and Steve Anderson**

 Steve Anderson reported that the journal has been online since 2003 with the History Cooperative, but much remains not on line.  The question is how do we get everything on line, and where.

The estimate to get the entire journal on line with the History Cooperative is $87,000.  Smaller chunks are also possible.

The History Cooperative is moving toward pdfs of pages instead of a different format, which would make going with them more attractive.

Another option would  J-Stor, which is pdf, and looks like journal pages.  Journals need to negotiate to part of J-STOR, or be invited.  The journal might get some small revenue; JSTOR scans the journals for free, and sells the service to institutions and individuals.

Issues of cost and access were discussed;  some people were most interested in the unfettered access offered by the History Cooperative.  Others expressed concern about the cost.  Ellen pointed out that having the current issues available on the History Cooperative, with the back issues available on JSTOR could work for everyone; the scanning would be free instead of expensive; we would be in the database used most frequently by historians and other scholars, who we are most interested in reaching with our research; and most people can get access to JSTOR through public libraries, even if they are not members of an organization with a subscription.

Lisa reported that there had been some fundraising to specifically benefit the journal – about $8,000.   Steve Anderson reported that the funds were from long-time supporters.

**BREAK**

 (Jay Taylor did not returning after the break; Sarah Elkind rejoined the meeting)

* **Strategic Plan/Budget Proposal, Steve Pyne**

Steve Pyne asked for comments on the draft strategic plan that he had circulated.

Ellen asked about the inclusion in the plan of diversity goals, and of the re-establishment of a graduate student liaison.  Mart commented that the issue of diversity is an important one for next year especially, in Baton Rouge, and that we ought to think deeply about connections between our work and the work of historians of African American history, Southern history, and agricultural history.

Verena pointed out the importance of creating institutional memory that is not directly linked to Lisa’s brain, and that this document seems to be moving in that direction, which is a very good thing.

There was discussion of the means of revision; Steve Pyne suggested that it could be thought of as a rolling five-year plan.

*Mart made a motion that the draft be approved as a conditional document with which to work, which was seconded by Carolyn.*

Steve Pyne called for discussion, which ensued.

Mark suggested pointed out that we don’t necessarily want a legally constituted endowment, and we ought to delete the term “legally.”

The issue of green investment was discussed.  Katherine Morrissey asked if we should have a financial advisory committee, green investment plan?

*Mart amended his motion to accept the draft strategic plan subject to future modifications;   Carolyn seconded.*

Katherine asked to continue discussion of things we’d like to add.

Mart suggested that  goals and strategies should be separate from one another.

Ellen said that she would like to see diversity as a specific goal in the document.

Kathy Brosnan suggested deleting the 2009 issue from plan, since it is a one-time issue.

May 1 was suggested as a deadline for getting suggestions for revisions to Lisa.

*The motion as amended carried.*

* **Executive Director Position, Steve Pyne:  Lisa asked to leave the room (To come back at 4 pm)**

Lisa left the room before discussion of the executive director position began.

Discussion ensued on how to move forward on the executive director issue.  All were in agreement that we need a full-time director.  We all agreed that Lisa is an excellent director, and would be ideal for the job.  Katherine pointed out that we need a process in place down the line for choosing directors in the future.

A goal was suggested of having Lisa in the job by January, and forming a committee to decide how that works, both in the short and the long term.

*After much discussion, Ellen made a motion for a short-term raise for the part-time position to $20,000, and the creation of a committee, to include Mark, that would determine the long-term procedure; Kathy seconded, and the motion carried.*

Ted offered to chair, and Katherine and Mark offered to serve on the committee.   They agreed on a deadline of June 1 for having things in place.

Doug pointed out that we should do some targeted fundraising, and let our members know how vital the position is, and what funds are needed.  Mark pointed out that this should be part of our strategic plan; we can’t afford a full-time director now, but we need one, and should be able to make it work, so it’s a worthwhile leap of faith.

*Kathy Brosnan made a motion to approve a $500 discretionary fund for the executive director.  Ted seconded the motion, and it passed.*

Lisa then rejoined the meeting.

* **Outreach Committee Report (Nancy Langston)**

Steve Pyne reported for Nancy, who could not attend for health reasons.  He reported that the committee had been very active, and was working on two particular items:  putting together a roster of experts for the media to contact, and looking at other organizations to cooperate with – in particular, the Society of Conservation Biology.

A report will be submitted at a later date.

* **Procedure for Distinguished Service and Distinguished Scholar Awards, Steve Pyne**

Jeff offered to lead to lead a committee to set up guidelines, so that it’s clear in the future that decisions are not arbitrary.  Peter and Sarah offered to serve on the committee.  It was agreed that the procedures can be fairly loose.

* **Institutional Memberships, Lisa Mighetto**

Lisa reported that the FHS has about 36 institutional memberships, but ASEH had none.   A price has now been set at $100, and we now have 6, including HRA and several universities and federal agencies.  It was suggested that there be a section of the new website highlighting institutional members.  Steve Anderson suggested raising the rate to $130 in the future, to make it the same as the library rate.

* **Draft memorandum of Understanding for future ASEH/FHS Conferences, Lisa Mighetto and Steve Anderson**

Steve Pyne reported that this memorandum had been drafted just to be certain that there be no misunderstandings in the future, but suggesting tabling it for the time being, until we’ve had a chance to assess this meeting.

* **New ASEH Website Demonstration, Lisa Mighetto**

Lisa reported on the new website, which will be live soon.  The question of on-line voting was raised.

*Mark made a motion to move to online voting this year; Sarah seconded, and the motion carried.*

Melissa pointed out that we could always return to paper if there were significant glitches.

* **New Business**

Steve Pyne initiated discussion of the 2009 meeting.  The organization is fully committed to the World Congress, but there are still questions about whether to host an ASEH meeting in the U.S. as well (for both social and financial reasons).

The Site Selection Committee reported that it would be too difficult to have two meetings, and that having a second meeting would discourage attendance at the international conference

Kathy Brosnan asked if there could be more ASEH travel grants for student members.  There was general discussion of the idea, which was generally considered a good one.  Sarah suggested targeted fundraising campaigns.

*Ellen made a motion that we create a diversity committee to foster diversity of all kinds within the organization and at our conference.  Ted or Mart seconded, and the motion carried.*

Ellen volunteered to be on the committee, as did Ted and Mart.  Lisa recommended that we be in touch with next year’s program committee, which is especially focused on diversity issues for the Baton Rouge conference.  Among the suggestions for increasing diversity in conference attendance, at least, was to offer free day pass registration to local graduate students and scholars.

*At about 4:34, Ted made a motion to adjourn. Kathy Brosnan seconded, and the motion carried.*