

## LICCB General Meeting – Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: Thursday, December 8, 2011

Venue: LaGuardia Community College, Cafeteria

In attendance: Craig Kandell, Erik Baard, Caroline Walker, Nadine Chandy, Patty Erickson, Wes Miller, Erin Heisel, Keith Ott, Jared Mercado, Elizabeth Bloch, Dedrick Johnson, Barbara Alpert, Danika Durant, Victoria Olson, Carter Craft, Steve Ellis, Tony Pignatello, Ted Gruber, Lee Reiser, Jerry Dunne, Louis Kleinman, Steve Watts, John Bradley, Jim Brennan, Dave Matten, Orlova Chaze, Ray Howell, Joe Block, Ann Barry

The meeting was called to order at 7:28pm. The call to order was late due to two room changes.

### Agenda items:

#### I. Call to order/Welcome/Introductions (Victoria Olson)

Victoria thanked all attendees for their interest and participation in the Long Island City Community Boathouse. Victoria thanked LaGuardia Community College for hosting the meeting, noting that LICCB does not at this time have a meeting place that's comfortable in cold weather. Victoria thanked her two preceding Chairs for establishing a vibrant organization and platform on which to build, and thanked the more than 100 active volunteers who are the heart of the organization and without whose contributions the LICCB could not exist. Victoria noted that being the Chair of LICCB is a full-time unpaid position, and she thanked the Steering Council and other active volunteers for taking on essential tasks. Victoria asked each attendee to briefly introduce him or herself, which was done.

#### II. Chair's Report (Victoria Olson)

Regarding organizational matters, Victoria reminded the attendees that the 2011 season involved an experiment; it was the first year in which a Steering Council was put in place. By design, implementing the Steering Council was to broaden the base of decision-making; receive concerns, suggestions and other feedback from volunteers and guests; and take on delegated leadership and programming tasks, relieving the Chair of "having to do it all."

In the first meeting of the newly established Steering Council in January of 2011, the priorities for the year were established. In summary, these priorities were enhanced safety, and improved quality of experience for volunteers and guests alike. There was considerable pressure regarding focus on safety, from other boathouses concerned that any significant incident could end recreational human-powered boating in NY harbor, and especially concerned that there be no repetition of the infamous and widely reported "waterfalls incident."

Victoria recounted her first experience with LICCB at Hallets Cove in 2006, when she assisted in performing an on-water rescue of a straying kayak with two inexperienced persons in it, headed to Hellgate's swift currents. Hallets Cove programming has come a long way since its early days, and much was accomplished to enhance the safety of LICCB programs in general over 2011. One result was a near-incident-free season.

Victoria reported that the Boathouse had completed its best ever season of programming, with more volunteers, more guests, more variety of programming, more outreach and events shared with other organizations, and fewer incidents and injuries, than in any prior season. At the same time, there had been a few challenges and complaints largely having to do with concerns over communications and Steering Council process.

### III. Communications (Victoria Olson)

Victoria stated that her licboathouse email address had received 127 incoming messages, most of them from people not familiar with LICCB and asking questions ranging from "Do you rent kayaks?" and "Can I store my kayak in your boathouse?" to "I'd like to propose to my girlfriend in a boat on the river, can you help me?"

All emails were answered, and in a timely manner. Victoria stated that, with this email address so apparent to the general public, and with Steering Council members' individual email addresses also listed on our website, it was a bit of a mystery why 2-3 volunteers complained consistently that communication channels were inadequate. These volunteers in particular held focus on a matter of personnel which was of volatile nature. Demands for specific information which did not exist were met with more general response.

Early in the season a secure suggestion box was established, quite visible in the main passageway of the boathouse. During the season it collected aught but a \$5 donation.

The Chair endeavored to keep volunteers and guests informed of programs, training opportunities, volunteer opportunities and external events of interest, via a steady stream of blog posts and newsletters throughout the year. Altogether, 38 informative blog posts appeared on the website and 12 newsletters were distributed electronically to over 2000 subscribers this past year. Outreach was also achieved through our Facebook and Twitter channels.

In response to complaints from the prior season of "private trips," all events except for a few outings requiring special qualifications were listed on the LICCB calendar and open to volunteers and the public via Request-A-Trip on the website.

The above communication initiatives notwithstanding, concerns were voiced that Steering Council decisions were not distributed, and that Steering Council meetings were held "in secret." Subsequent to the discussion of "Transparency" (see below), Steve Ellis explained that a disproportionate amount of the Steering Council's time and deliberations revolved around complaints of a personal nature by individuals who did not want to be named, most of them about a single individual, and that the Steering Council agreed

unanimously that it would be inappropriate to expose any of the individuals' names in public minutes. During the lengthy deliberations that led ultimately to the Gowanus Dredgers' Board resolving to expel Erik Baard from the organization on July 19, 2011, the Chair and Steering Council were asked by the Board not to make any public disclosures. Hence, requests that came in from volunteers about "what was going on with Erik" could not be answered except in the most general terms.

IV. Transparency (Jerry Dunne)

Before Jerry could make his presentation regarding appropriate process, a motion was made and seconded for a reading of "the letter" from the Gowanus Dredgers Board to Erik Baard. There being no objection, Jerry ceded the floor to Ray Howell, who read a resolution by the Gowanus Dredgers Board, dated July 19, 2011. The full text of that resolution is appended at the end of this summary.

Jerry Dunne, serving as attorney for the Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club, noted that Erik had failed to comply with the resolution. Having been given adequate opportunity to do so, as well as notification that failure to do so would result in a lawsuit requesting compliance, Erik was served with notification of such suit having been filed.

V. Election of Steering Council and Naming of Chair for 2012 (Jim Brennan)

Long Island City Community Boathouse (LICCB) is an Activity Committee of the Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club (GDCC), a 501c3 nonprofit corporation operating in New York State. GDCC has no formal requirement as to how the LICCB Chairperson shall be selected. Further, LICCB Activity Committee need not have any formal governance structure whatsoever, other than a Chairperson.

The Gowanus Dredgers retain the right to choose, from among the LICCB Activity Committee volunteers, the individual who will occupy the Activity Committee's seat on the GDCC Board. Traditionally this has been the Chair, but it is not mandated to be, and should the Dredgers find the designated Chair an unacceptable candidate for the seat, another volunteer would be chosen.

For 2011 the governance structure of a seven (7) person Steering Council, with a Chairperson elected from that group, was established by LICCB with the knowledge and consent of the GDCC. In previous years there was no Steering Council. A Chairperson was historically appointed by the Gowanus Dredgers or by a vote of the LICCB active volunteer base.

As 2011 was the first year of the Steering Council structure, it had its good points and its learning curves. The current Steering Council members and a majority of LICCB volunteers believe that the Steering Council structure does provide a collective framework to work through the administration and issues requiring attention for the Boathouse during the year.

For 2012 the existing Steering Council has again elected the Chairperson from this year's Steering Council. This process provides continuity to the organization, and provides the organization with a person of at least one year's experience in a committed leadership position. Victoria Olson was the Chair for 2011 and since she is willing to continue for 2012, she has been elected by the Steering Council to serve again.

Last year an Election Committee of LICCB volunteers was formed to provide the framework and the oversight of the initial Steering Council selection process. A condition of such membership was that Election Committee Members would not seek election to the Steering Council. As we grow and learn, in our still young organization, for the 2012 Steering Council selection process we will seek to enlist an independent group for oversight, thereby retaining the largest possible pool of candidates for leadership positions.

Gowanus Dredgers will give input regarding the timeline and framework and may assist in administering the selection of Steering Council for LICCB. To that end, we expect that there would be a call for nominations within the coming weeks, a likely "Meet the Candidates" night in mid-January and an election in February.

Though the Steering Council for 2011 was an elected body, there is no official requirement to hold elections for the remaining Steering Council membership for 2012, or for any position of any volunteer whatsoever to be an elected position. The GDCC Board has endorsed the process put forth by the Steering Council in selecting the Chair for 2012, which was the same as it had been in 2011 in which the Chair was chosen by and from the elected Steering Council members. In addition, the Dredgers have advised that the Chair may select a non-binding advisory body from among any volunteers or others, using a process that is acceptable to the Chair.

After long discussion, it was moved and seconded to select an election committee in a subsequent meeting.

Having reached the end the allotted time and needing to relinquish the cafeteria to the College staff, it was moved and seconded to defer the remaining agenda items (listed below) to a subsequent meeting. There was no objection.

- VI. Networking with other waterfront advocacy organizations (Ted Gruber)
- VII. New equipment (Ted Gruber)
- VIII. Hallets Cove Program (Steve Ellis)
- IX. Volunteer Recognition and Volunteer Opportunities (Victoria Olson)
- X. New Business

Carter Craft requested a few minutes to express his observations. There being no objection, Mr. Craft was given the floor.

Carter offered some input from his experience in the Hoboken Cove Boathouse, an organization which has succeeded in obtaining a sizable sum of money for development, yet found itself hamstrung by the persistent obstacles of internal strife. The money remains inert, a resource untapped, as of yet unable to be applied in any worthy direction.

Carter offered a strategy document in three parts, including:

- Organizational needs and responsibilities with roles and personnel defined;
- Administrative functions to tend the legal entity's requirements properly; and
- Organizational stability and growth, including:
  1. managing relationships,
  2. managing money and boathouse construction,
  3. city relations with police, fire, ambulance, parks
  4. outreach, organizing special events
  5. volunteer recruitment and training
  6. equipment
  7. safety first!

Carter then expanded upon the inevitable growing pains experienced by all organizations great and small, no matter their mission or directive. He contributed the calm perspective of a person who has experienced the process soup to nuts, more than once. Carter expressed optimism that LICCB could overcome its differences and mature into even more of a major contribution to its community.

Mr. Craft also offered his services in assisting with the Steering Council selection process for 2012.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm.

July 19, 2011

RESOLUTION of the GOWANUS DREDGERS CANOE CLUB Board of Directors

Whereas, Erik Baard, in the capacity of a Volunteer of the Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club (GDCC) principally active with the Activity Committee called the Long Island City Community Boathouse (LICCB)

... has willfully and repeatedly disregarded directives from the Chair of the LICCB Activity Committee with regard to running programming under the 501(c)3 that is not authorized by the Chair;

... has repeatedly used GDCC equipment without authorization;

... has falsely advertised paddling events as if they are sponsored by and organized under the auspices of the Activity Committee;

... has threatened the LICCB Chair and members of LICCB's Steering Council, in person and in e-mail;

... has harassed volunteers of the LICCB Activity Committee Chair and Steering Council and is a distraction to the productive activities of operating LICCB programs;

Therefore it is resolved that Erik Baard's participation in the Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club is terminated effective immediately.

Mr. Baard's privileges to participate as a volunteer or in any capacity in any GDCC programs, activity committees, events, venues or facilities are hereby and immediately revoked.

Mr. Baard is not authorized to claim current affiliation with the Gowanus Dredgers Canoe Club, Long Island City Community Boathouse, or any other Activity Committee, in any advertisements, communications, Facebook pages or other written, audio or electronic media.

Mr. Baard is directed to relinquish his keys to all GDCC and LICCB facilities effective immediately, and to remove his personal belongings from the Long Island City Community Boathouse facility on or before August 15, 2011.

Multiple attempts have been made to deliver this document in person to Mr. Baard. That effort was concluded today, August 4, 2011 and a phone call has been made by Owen Foote to Erik Baard to inform him of the above Board resolution, which has been delivered via email from [gdredgers@gmail.com](mailto:gdredgers@gmail.com) to [erikbaard@gmail.com](mailto:erikbaard@gmail.com).

Owen Foote  
Treasurer