

## Recap — Meeting to evaluate progress on WPWA 2014 Plan of Work

Present: Alan Desbonnet, Alisa Morrison, Mal Grant, Pete August, Kim Coulter, Helen Drew, Tom Boving, Grace Lentini. Jennifer Mackenzie joined as an observer interested in engaging with WPWA.

1. \$20,000 challenge fell short of expectations, but slightly exceeded the contributions typically seen from an annual appeal to the membership.
  - a. Reasons for outcome—appeal was mailed later than normal and may have arrived later than desirable as a 2013 tax contribution by the donor; the late decision to draft multiple targeted letters, and slow action on the part of the printing company.
  - b. Solutions—Fund Development Committee will get legs May/June as Alan Desbonnet has agreed to chair that committee as he steps down as president. *A process needs to be put in place so that a “thank you” is issued to every donor within a prescribed time span upon receipt of a donation.*
2. Water Quality Monitoring—On Track
  - a. *Develop a target list of businesses that could make up a core group of support for this long-term effort.*
  - b. *There is a need to make better publication of the data, how it is used and why it is important. Climate change assessment is a good facet to explore.*
3. River Restoration & Flood Mitigation—All goals On Track except for facilitation of municipalities regarding USGS gauging station at Wood River Junction. This needs a focused block of time of the ED to convene the appropriate group. Doing this as a follow on to the Adapting the Watershed series may be logical, or delay until winter/early FY15 when other projects should be lightening up. Alternatively this could be made the highest priority as funding for the gage runs out in July. If the Towns are not marshaled ASAP, the gage will be turned off in August until further funding can be committed.
4. Wild & Scenic—not WPWA controlled; may happen FY14 or not until FY15.
5. Education, Recreation & Service—Programs largely On Track, but a major need is volunteerism in WPWA. An article is to be published in Watershed this month, and it is a call for volunteers. There is no real structure for handling volunteers since Danielle left WPWA, at least not at the dedicated level she could devote to that area of work. *Jennifer agreed to be the point person for volunteerism at least until such time that job responsibilities supersede.*
  - a. MAJOR CAUTION—*some form of process needs to be defined for Jennifer (and others engaged) to follow so that decisions are logical and volunteer efforts will be well thought out, placed where needed, and so forth.*
  - b. Consider student help as volunteer coordinators; there are drawbacks but this should be on the table as an option.
  - c. Consider that a volunteer coordinator could, and likely should, double as a membership coordinator as well.
  - d. The reorganized database is needed. Alisa is hopeful that the database will be redeveloped this summer. *We need to set a deadline for completion so that planning can be made around that.*

6. Fund Development—Not On Target/No Action. A shell for such a committee was developed, but a committee was not formed; there was no person wanting to take on the post of chair. *This was noted to be the most critical part of the Plan to put into action.* Alan Desbonnet will step in as chair of this committee May/June and get things up to operational level quickly.
7. Membership—Not On Target. Again, no formal committee has been established. The membership database is being redesigned (by Alisa et al, see above), a survey to the membership is poised to go out in the mail, and a draft charge for this committee exists. *It was agreed that this committee is critical to have in place and functioning, but it was agreed that at present there doesn't appear to be the capacity to have one functional. While not removed from the Plan of Work, it was agreed to wait and see the response of the article in Watershed, and to see if there is interest in this area, and if so, if there is a core group that could be put together, with oversight by board and staff, to get something going. Jennifer will keep an eye open for interest in membership and/or member programs as she manages volunteer interest (see 5.a. above).* Tentative plans were made to convene a workshop in June/July, once reasonable indication of response for volunteerism to the Watershed article, to agree upon a course of action; the workshop should include potential key player respondents.
  - a. It was suggested that consideration should be given to moving Watershed to a digital-only platform. This would ease up staff burden in creating a printed version and would reduce real costs as well. It also would direct attention to the website, which could be kept more current and with greater ease than print.
8. Campus—On Target. Renovations will be done by Annual Meeting. Visitor Center will be open on weekends and Chris passed around a sign up calendar as well as will follow up with an email/e-calendar invite to all board members to sign up for at least 2 days manning the Visitor Center over the season.
9. Digital, Print & Presentation Outreach—Not On Target/On Hold. In light of other things ongoing, this effort has been put on hold until time is allowed from other projects ending.
10. Adapting the Watershed series—is NOT in the 2014 Plan of Work and nothing (per se) has been removed to accommodate this major event. *Granted the bulk of the effort has been taken on by board members via ad hoc committee, but there are still ramifications to staff that were not accounted for in the planning.*
  - a. Chris and I had a follow up conversation about his frustrations with this year's work plan and its implementation, and a summary follows.
    - It is great to have a work plan to work from, and that all staff and board members are behind.
    - It is frustrating that two major elements—Fund Development Committee and Membership Committees have seen no activity nearly half way into the work plan year. While frustrating, there are actions defined and steps in progress to move in those directions.
      - *We need to define a process (policy?) by which these frustrations can come out, in a meaningful fashion, rather than fester or be left unattended to.*

MY THOUGHT is that there is something broken that needs attention; the ED should be fully capable of bringing out such frustrations in a manner that the board can understand and react to, and the board, in sensing frustration on behalf of the ED (which I did but didn't react to in any useful fashion, e.g., I did the chicken thing and hoped it was just the ED having a bad day), needs to be able to productively bring that out and address it. Since the Plan of Work, from an operational perspective is the responsibility of the ED, it falls upon their shoulders to bring these kinds of frustrations to the board in a productive fashion. *This needs to be discussed and a solution forged as it makes for bad business all the way around.*

- It is great to see the board dive in and pull together a major lecture series (Adapting the Watershed) in so little time, with such organization, and with such success. The event however was not in the Plan of Work, and there didn't appear to be a clear process by which it was adopted into the Plan of Work or to clearly think through ramifications for staff.
  - Overall I think we did consider if the event impacted the Plan of Work, but I think we didn't do it in an aggressive enough way relative to the impact and trickle down on staff, etc. As above, I think this is the purview of the ED and he should have productively been able to bring that to the board, but apparently that didn't happen. *We need to discuss this and find a way forward that leads to better interaction between board and ED.*
- b. This is a first attempt (that I am aware of) to develop a Plan of Work, implement it, and evaluate it. There are bound to be some frustrations as we deal with new mechanisms for doing business in an organization that is transitioning from project based work to one more volunteer and donor driven and donor centric. As we continue on our path, and we are making considerable and good progress, we need to address the frustrations and find solutions so that we don't erect barriers to success in our path of our own doing.
- c. Is it policies we need to develop and put in place? Is it that we need to develop some "best management practices" that we follow? *I challenge everyone to think about this.* We will convene a board workshop in the near future to discuss this with the ED and see what creative solutions we arrive at.

Thanks all for your input at the Plan of Work evaluation and assessment. I would not be alarmed or concerned about the summary provided here. We should expect and welcome these frustrations as it means two major things: (1) We are defining a new path for operations at WPWA and putting change into action. If we weren't doing anything we wouldn't have any frustrations to deal with, and (2) Stumbling blocks are being identified, and as long we confront them and make corrective actions, there are in the words of the late John Lennon "....there is no problem, only solutions."