

Independence Squares Board Meeting

June 24, 2018

Attending:

Current board members Kevin Gisi, Tim Harper, Bob Rohde, Leda Sportolari, Susan Turkel, and Bruce Zangwill; outgoing board members Deb Cassel and ML Wernecke.

Absent:

New board member Ted Marvel.

Approval of Minutes

- The minutes for the May 18 meeting were approved and accepted as revised.
- The minutes for the June 5 Annual Meeting were also approved and accepted as revised (minor typos, and Bruce's name needed to be added in section describing election and new board members).

Program Reports

- **Mainstream/Plus:** Bruce reported that everything has been going well. Last semester's programming was well-received, including Betsy's innovative Concepts class for Plus dancers. Bruce has gotten good reports on both Dane's and Betsy's teaching. The current summer has also been successful; Betsy called the first non-Open House dance of the season to 16 dancers.
- **Advanced/Challenge:** Leda reported that some current Advanced students are interested in taking the C1 class in the fall, but don't feel quite ready; on the other hand, they're concerned that a fourth year of Advanced might be dull. Each student will need to use their judgement to decide whether they are ready to move to the next level. They may wish to consult with Betsy (the C1 instructor for the fall class) or Joe (last year's Advanced instructor) for feedback.
- **Wednesday evenings:** see Caller Update (below) for details of our discussion of Wednesday evening options.

Review of Pride

- Everyone had a good time – dancers and audience. We gave out many business cards during the parade.
- We considered whether the table at Penn's Landing was worthwhile; attendance wasn't good, but it rained after the parade so it's hard to say whether interest might have been higher in better weather. One advantage of having the table is that it gives us an opportunity to make contact with other groups.
- We will need to decide in the coming months about next year's Pride: will we march in the the parade, and will we have a table at Penn's Landing?

Review of First Open House

- Our first Open House, held on June 12, went well. We had four new dancers, and the attendees of that session said they would come back in the future. We agreed that the pace of teaching was good and that Howard did a good job teaching and setting a good tone.
- We have several new members of the Meetup group, probably due to flyers and business cards given out at Pride and flyers that have been distributed around town. Kevin sends individual welcome messages to each new Meetup member. We expect at least eight beginners at the next Open House.

Discussion of Related Outreach Opportunities and Ideas

- At Pride, we made contact with the Gay Rodeo and may find ways to work together.
- We have also made contact with the Big Brothers & Big Sisters organization. We hope to set up some fun dance events with that community.
- Our members have distributed Open House flyers all over town.
- Open House flyers are now available at the weekly Mt. Airy contra dance; members of both Independence Squares and PATMAD (Philadelphia Area Traditional Music and Dance = the folks who put on the Thursday and Third Saturday contra dances) will advertise our Open Houses to that community via Facebook.
- Flyers were given out at the Philadelphia Family Pride/Mt. Airy Art Barn event on June 23. (Note: we understand that these flyers were well-received and that the SisterSpace group suggested we do a square dance demo at SisterSpace 2018 in Darlington, MD this fall. Norma will coordinate this effort.)
- We need to continue to distribute flyers, share Meetup announcements with other groups, etc. Keep looking for more opportunities to spread the word.

Turnover of Keys, Locks, Equipment, etc.

Lutheran Church:

- Lou, Deb, and Mary Kay have keys. The closet never gets locked, but there is a combination for the lock in the cabinet inside the closet. (Update: Deb has given Kevin front door and kitchen keys.)

Post Office Box:

- Lou has a key. Deb has given Jenn's key to Kevin.

Equipment storage:

- Kevin currently has the banners, noodles, etc. that were used in the Pride parade. Audio equipment is currently held by Pat and Kevin. Other "stuff" is stored at the church, at

Tim’s house, at Kevin’s house, at Deb’s house... We discussed whether this distributed arrangement made sense or whether we should consolidate all club equipment in a single rented storage locker.

Factors to consider:

	Equipment distributed among multiple people	Equipment stored in centralized location
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No cost • There may be some efficiency if the person holding specific equipment is able to transport it to site of need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some cost • We generally have lead time before any event and can find a way to arrange to retrieve items. (Emergency sound unit is stored in closet at Lutheran Church.)
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can be difficult to coordinate hand-offs at times that work for all parties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Someone would definitely need to travel to retrieve items from storage unit.

- Action item: Tim will research the cost of renting a storage unit, to report back at next meeting.

Website and Social Media

Website:

- We own our domain (independencesquares.org) and may have to pay to renew our domain registration; it’s registered on a five-year term which may be running out. (Update: domain will expire 4/2/19 and needs to be renewed before then. A calendar reminder will be sent to “nag” the group on 3/1/19.)
- Our files currently reside on the IAGSDC club server (not IAGSDC’s own server), at no cost to us. We have the option of using another host.
- We discussed the idea of modernizing our website. Jenn had designed a prototype website that never got feedback; we would like to revisit that. There’s also the option of using a simple site building/hosting service like Squarespace. We have other volunteers who are willing to help with web design and maintenance, including David Blatt.
- We decided that we’d like to set up a web committee to investigate all of these options. Dave Blatt should be asked to chair the committee. Members of the committee can be recruited via Tuesday night announcements and/or mass email to club members.
- **Action item:** Who will approach Dave?

Meetup:

- Susan and Kevin are admins. Susan will make events for all Open Houses; Kevin will continue to write welcoming messages to each new member of the Meetup group.

Facebook Group:

- This is generally used internally to communicate with current IS members. Admins of the group are Dane Bragg, Casey Bradshaw, and Ken Cooper. Anything posted on the group displays the name of the person who posted it.
- **Action item:** we need to ask to have a board member (probably Susan and Kevin) added as admin.

Facebook Community:

- Our Community page is open to the world. Admins are Jenn, Deb, and Susan. Anything posted to this page is attributed to Independence Squares, not the individual who put up the post. We usually post our events to the Community page and then cross-post those postings to the Group page.
- **Action item:** someone needs to create events for the upcoming Open Houses (Susan?).

Financial Report and Prepay Options

Prepay options:

- There are 15 Tuesday night dances (including Open Houses) this summer. Bob mentioned two prepay options: either 3 periods of 5 weeks each (\$40 prepay) or two periods (one 7 weeks - \$56, one 8 weeks - \$64).
- Bob moved for three periods of 5 weeks each. Motion is passed.
- Who can collect money at the door? We need to work that out. What about expense reimbursement?
- Bob will be out of town on several upcoming Tuesday nights; volunteers are needed to be responsible for taking money at the door.

Dates:

- June 26 - Kevin
- July 10
- July 24
- October 23
- November 20
- December ?
- February 26

Budget:

- Bob presented a proposed budget for the 2018-19 fiscal year.
- Total expense for Saturday dances is off because we hadn't finalized which dances might include one-hour C1/C2 pre-events. We decided to budget for C1/C2 pre-events for eight out of nine of the Saturday dances over the course of the year; there definitely won't be a pre-event at the Glitter Ball.
- Our income will go up if more new folks start attending and current members keep attending, but we're estimating income conservatively.
- New member recruitment is a priority this year. Bob has budgeted \$2000 for recruitment and \$500 for publicity.
- We have a reserve fund for the Fly-In, but we already have pre-registrants. We decided that we do not need to add to the reserve fund this year, in order to preserve that money toward any other budget short-fall.
- We've approved the budget with the minor changes of eight weeks of C1/C2 pre-dance sessions.

Lutheran Church:

- Due to administrative changes at the Church, we've been asked to sign a written agreement for our room rental. The arrangement is that we pay \$75 per event (club night or dance) for access to the two rooms. We will discuss this at the next meeting.
- We pay for the hall monthly for our Tuesday and Saturday events. We pay for the hall in several-month periods, three times per year, for Wednesday night programming.
- Action item: we need to make a \$50 donation for the May board meeting we held at the church.

IAGSDC Report

- Tim reported that club development grants are available from the All Join Hands foundation via the IAGSDC. A club can receive one grant per year for up to \$1000. We will need to discuss this at a future meeting to see if we have anything to propose.
- ***Future conventions:*** Already set are Philadelphia 2019 and Denver 2020. There are proposals for Houston 2021 and Minneapolis 2022; there aren't local IAGSDC clubs in those cities, but there are experienced people who've run conventions before who are willing to take the lead. There are also other local square dance communities who want to be involved, and these cities have local convention bureaus who are seeking these events. These are interesting opportunities, and they give IAGSDC members a chance to explore new locations. (At this point conventions are returning to cities over and over.)

Caller Update

- Deb handed out an updated monthly dance schedule.
- We discussed possible dates for C1/C2 pre-events: October, January, April, May, possibly additional dates. If we have pre-events, some of those folks don't stay till the end; some don't stay for actual dance. (We discussed the option of having C1/C2 dances on a different day entirely, rather than having pre-events or star tips. However, it's cheaper to do it all on the same day.)
- **Potlucks at dances:** several members have asked to have these reinstated. Dancers get hungry and blood sugar effects are an issue. Without potlucks, a number of folks leave the dance an hour or two before the end. We could adjust dance length if we add potlucks; the time frame could be 4:00-8:00 PM instead of 4:00-7:30 PM. Since this is up in the air, Deb will take times off the website.
- **Wednesday evenings:** We discussed frequency (every week or every other week?) and possible programming (Intensive C1, and C2 class? C1 Workshop?). What effect does Wednesday night programming have on Tuesday night attendance? C1/C2 dancers have expressed an interest in continuing Wednesday night sessions, but sometimes it's been difficult to get eight people to attend. Class rep will ask around, take survey.

Suggestion: On 2nd and 4th weeks of the month, offer Intensive C1 alternating with C2 class. There could be a kick-out clause in the caller contract: if we don't get 8 dancers three times across the year, the Board can choose to discontinue Wednesday night sessions. (These sessions would be 2.5 hours, not 2 hours, so we need to budget a bit more than currently.)

Tabling discussion of interest in C1/C2 – Leda will speak with members of the target constituency, and possibly conduct a survey; we'll discuss at next board meeting.

- **Caller Liaison role:** Deb can keep doing it or Mike could take over (or at least be trained). Someone needs to decide what's happening ; Kevin says it's between Deb and Mike to work that out.

New Business, to be discussed at upcoming meeting

- We need to work out the Tuesday night programs – how the four classes will fit together, and the length of semesters (equal time, or first semester longer?).
- Leda's new business: can we do outreach to college campuses in Center City? Ideas: rather than asking students to come to us, we could host a dance on a campus to incite interest. (Jenn is approaching Drexel folks related to Jenn's research.) Lou is reaching out to a gay/straight alliance person who's a contact for multiple universities. After these demos or open houses, we might try to offer a blitz weekend to get folks up to speed.

- There are 5 standing IS committees: Bylaws, Caller Liaison, Facilities, Fly-In, and Nominating. We need to name leaders.

Adjournment - The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 PM.