

IS Board Meeting

July 21, 2020

Present: Dave Blatt, Steve Demos, Tim Harper, Dick Michelin, George Rizor, Leda Sportolari, Susan Turkel (guests: Linda, Norma, Will)

Meeting was held via teleconference.

Approval of minutes from June 15 -- Steve et al.

Approved unanimously. Susan will upload the minutes to the club website. (Note: this has been done.)

Treasurer's Report -- Dick

We discussed the June treasurer's report. In June, we had no expenses and we received the \$3000 donation from the Belle's Run convention group.

Our check to the final fly-in caller cleared on July 2, so there are no more outstanding payments.

Donation to Lutheran Church – Dick

Dick proposes we donate another \$200 to the church. Our first check, sent in April, has cleared.

We think that the church is still closed. Lou has not been able to contact anyone there. There was concern about the status of the church and whether a mailed donation would be received at this point.

A motion was proposed: *We will make a donation of \$200 to the church on the condition that we can establish communication with them.* The motion passed unanimously.

Action items: Dick will email the pastor and Norma will contact Norman, an administrator there.

(Note: after the meeting, contact was established with the church pastor. The church and community center are currently closed, and they are appreciative of our past and potential donation. They said we could mail the donation to the church's street address.)

Caller Liaison Update -- Linda

The CLC has been in touch with Dayle Hodge, the caller for our scheduled August dance. We will hold this dance as a virtual square dance. Dayle will set up and manage the Zoom meeting. We will advertise this as an IS-sponsored dance, and it will be open to all.

Dayle has been doing a lot of virtual calling and will also promote this dance to his followers, so we anticipate a good turnout. We have reached out to the original location in Newark, Delaware to cancel our reservation there. We are looking forward to this dance.

We discussed several of the other dances currently scheduled for the rest of 2020. A motion was proposed: *We will cancel the Barry Clasper dance in September due to U.S./Canada travel difficulties. The Caller Liaison Committee is authorized to offer him full payment.* The motion passed unanimously.

We have two October dances on our calendar. We agreed that it is too early to make a decision about cancelling them right now.

We have until late October/early November to decide on whether we will cancel the Glitter Ball, currently scheduled for December 5. Merion Friends asks for one month's notice for cancellations.

Program reports/Game Night and Social Night updates -- Steve and Leda

The July 14th Zoom social, marketed as Joke Night, was a lot of fun. We discussed other ideas such as having folks do cooking demonstrations, or play easy games like “two truths and a lie.”

Our club game nights are going well, and mah jongg is also going well. We may gain a mah jongg participant from Rutgers Promenaders.

We discussed the possibility of skipping the August social, given the facts that that Leda will be away and that there will be a social component to the August dance. We decided to go ahead and hold the event using Linda B’s Zoom account. Steve will host a party game activity. (Note: in the intervening weeks, the club got its own Zoom account which was used for this social.)

Long term club future -- all

Tim introduced a discussion of possible options for the long-term future of the club: dissolution/repurposing, going virtual, or staying in a holding pattern.

- **Dissolution/repurposing?**
Repurposing is not an option, as the club’s stated purpose in our Articles of Incorporation is to teach and promote square dancing. We can do social activities *during the time we can’t dance*, but we cannot permanently repurpose Independence Squares as a social club.
- **Virtual dances and virtual workshops?**
We discussed the differences between virtual DANCES and virtual WORKSHOPS. There are live virtual dances every day of the week, plus there are many recorded dances on YouTube. Would IS have anything to add by coordinating virtual dances? It was noted that virtual dances seem to be built around the caller, not the club.

Workshops could focus more on teaching and practicing specific calls. Dayle’s weekday afternoon dances feature two-couple dance workshops as the third tip. (These dances are held every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from noon to 1; see www.daylehodge.com/calendar). Workshops could help prevent us from getting too rusty; and could be focused on our club.

We agreed to wait and see how our August dance goes, and whether our club members attend. We’ll also get a feel for club members’ interest in virtual dance activities when we run the survey.

- **Holding pattern?**
We could keep doing what we’re doing, with social activities and game nights. Several other clubs, including Times Squares and DC Lambda Squares, have been holding similar activities.

We agreed to regroup in August to discuss this topic further.

Finalize member survey - Steve et al.

The survey is designed to take the pulse of the club. Steve has continued to work on the survey based on board member feedback on the first draft.

We discussed the need for an opening statement introducing the survey. We also talked about modifications that might be needed to the survey item regarding virtual dances/workshops/lessons.

We talked about possible venues for an outdoor dance. Steve noted that there is a covered open-air pavilion at Ridley Creek State Park that has electricity. If we plan an outdoor dance, we can reserve that pavilion ahead of time.

Action item: Steve will add a preamble and re-draft the virtual dance question within the next couple of days. The board will approve or provide suggestions so that the survey can go out to the members in the next week. (Note: the survey was updated and approved, and was sent to the membership on July 23.)

We agreed that once we get closer to actually dancing, we will need to have a virtual meeting of the membership to confirm that people are willing to show up.

Retention and recruitment – all

Mike sent out notes from an IAGSDC recruitment and retention meeting that was held during the virtual Take a Peak convention. These notes indicated that other clubs are doing the same things we're doing, e.g., social events, game nights, and staying in touch with the membership, all of which help with retention of current club members.

We discussed our new recruitment committee, which is being spearheaded by George, Leda, and Steve. This group will pay special attention to diversity and inclusion in our recruitment efforts. They will hold their first meeting on August 5.

Linda talked about the experience of getting to know people with different backgrounds and characteristics through LGBTQ square dancing. This experience opened her mind and made her a better person. Our form of dancing is more inclusive than straight square dancing, and she likes the idea of bringing this experience to more people.

We discussed concerns about targeted recruitment of individuals based simply on demographic characteristics vs. targeting individuals **regardless** of demographics. Tim urged the recruitment committee to ensure that any community groups we approach share our values of openness and inclusiveness, especially regarding LGBTQIA+ individuals.

We talked about the conundrum of *how to recruit new square dancers while we are on hiatus from square dancing*. Will posed the question of whether we are a square dance club trying to socialize, or a social club that square dances. If we are a social club, we can recruit people to our social activities during the pandemic, and then invite these new friends to dance when it's possible. If we're primarily a square dance club, it is harder to recruit during this time.

New business - all

We briefly discussed the possibility of purchasing a Zoom license for the club, with plans to make a decision during our next board meeting.

Action item: Dave will investigate the cost and logistics. (Note: this was discussed via email in late July and the new club Zoom account was set up in early August.)

We consulted our calendars and scheduled the next board meeting for Tuesday, September 1, 7:00 – 9:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 pm

Caller Liaison Report

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – July 2020

The information below is accurate as of Saturday, July 18, 2020, and may not reflect any updates received after this report's preparation. Please note that all dances are at the Lutheran Church unless otherwise noted.

Opening Discussions for Board

Barry Clasper is due to call for us on September 12, 2020 for a double header dance. Based on the current situation and his coming from Canada, we are recommending the cancellation of his dance. The border is currently closed, and its opening does not appear likely anytime soon.

Dances Through December 2021

Callers have been contracted and confirmed for the following dances taking place July 2020 through December 4, 2021.

Saturday, July 18, 2020 – Plus and Advanced – Daryl Murphy **CANCELED**

Saturday, August 15, 2020 – **Changed to a Zoom format being hosted by Dayle Hodge.**

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm Mainstream and Plus

2:00 pm – 2:30 pm Social Time

2:30 pm – 3:30 pm Advanced 2 and C1

Saturday, September 12, 2020 – Barry Clasper Double Header with Potluck

3:30 pm – 5:30 pm Advanced through Challenge 1 with C2 Star Tip

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm Potluck

7:00 pm – 10:00 pm Mainstream through Plus with Advanced Star Tip

Saturday, October 3, 2020 – Mainstream through Advanced – Brian Jarvis 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, October 17, 2020 – Advanced through C1 – Geo Jedlicka 7:00 pm – 9:30 pm

Saturday, December 5, 2020 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Dayle Hodge 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm The Merion Meeting House will once again be the site of the Glitter Ball with paperwork and checks to be finalized. **See Note Below**

Saturday, December 4, 2021 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Betsy Gotta 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm The Merion Meeting House is the first choice as the site of the Glitter Ball 2021

FYI Notes

- 1) 2021 Fly-In Callers: Bill Harrison, Eric Henerlau, Kris Jensen March 12-14, 2021 New contracts have been issued to the callers per the board's instructions. All of them were agreeable to the requested changes.

- 2) 2022 Fly-In: Callers: Mike Kellogg, Chris Phillips, Anne Uebelacker March 25-27, 2022
- 3) If by some chance we can begin dancing this summer, Joe Bradshaw has offered to hold classes to complete the Mainstream class that was near to completion when dancing was halted in March.
- 4) I have contacted the church in Newark, Delaware to cancel our reservation there for August 15, 2020 as we will no longer need the space.

Items of Concern for the Caller Liaison – To Be Discussed by the Board

- 1) Discussions were held with Mark Franks and Betsy Gotta regarding classes beginning in September 2020. Both are aware that no classes are planned for this fall. They understand that once dancing begins again, workshops will be held at the various levels with the completion of the Mainstream class being on the agenda. No contracts have been signed pending the resolution as to what classes or workshops will be held in the fall.
- 2) The Merion Friends Meeting House should be contacted to see what their cancellation policy is. The Glitter Ball may be four months off, however, we should determine what their cancellation policy is. Also, are they even renting out their space right now?
- 3) Lou Partridge has been unsuccessful in contacting the Lutheran Church regarding their status. While we are not dancing, this is not a problem. However, Lou had been told by Rand's replacement while Rand was away last year that the church was considering selling the community center to offset costs. This may be more of an FYI but is something that the board should be aware of for future planning.

Upcoming Dances and Callers

Our advice is to not cancel the remaining dances in 2020 until it becomes clear that the club should do so. The ability to obtain callers is not always easy, however, that is not our concern here. Our main concern in not canceling the dances is two-fold: one is to give dancers hope that we will be returning to dances soon, and two, to support the callers who are a part of our community. Paying the callers at 100% of the contract amount shows the callers that we respect them as a part of our community and to support them financially during these difficult times as these dances provide a good portion of their livelihood in many cases. The callers are the small businesses in our community being affected by COVID-19.

No dances have been scheduled for 2021 other than the fly-in in March 2021 and the Glitter Ball in December 2021. If we are not dancing at that point, there are much larger issues to deal with besides who to hire as a caller.