

I S Board Meeting Minutes

April 21, 2022

Present: Norma B., Steve D., Chris D., Will H., Ron R., Ted M., Mike R., Tim H., Dave T., Sarah P., Ed G..

This meeting was held via teleconference (Zoom).

Approval of Minutes from March 10, 2022.

Motion: Approve minutes as presented. Will H. moved, Steve D. seconded. passed unanimously.

Between Meetings By Email:

In a discussion that Steve started on 4-6-22 & ended on 4-7-22, it was decided we would end the second semester on 5-24-22. The discounted fee for the semester will be \$48.

The discussion to hold the Annual Meeting by zoom on June 7 was begun by Chris D. on 4-7-22. It was decided by polling on 4-11-22.

A joint effort by Mike R. Norma B. has scheduled a dance for August 13 in Newark, De.

On March 20, 2022 the RTD committee submitted their report* from their March 17th meeting.

On March 24, 2022 the board agreed to the recommendations.

Volunteer of the year award - Steve D.

The secretary will keep a list of the volunteer of the year award. Suggested that it be done in the club's cloud account.

Action item - Ron R. will ask Susan T. if she knows the ownership and password for the club's cloud account.

Caller Liaison Report**- Mike R.

Highlights were reviewed and had board agreement.

Mainstream Class Proposal*** - Chris D. & Bob R.

Discussion :

It is not obvious to how we will find dancers to take a Mainstream blitz class. It is also not clear how successful it would be. Chris D. and Bob R. can continue to work on the concept.

General Discussion of Independence Squares Dances Going Forward**** – Steve

Discussion :

We need to provide dance time for all four dance programs we support. Very few of our dances break even. The caller liaison committee will look at possibilities for the upcoming year possibly adding one dance in the fall and 1 or 2 in the spring.

Treasurer's Report - Chris D.

The finances of the fly-in were reviewed. It was complicated by the number of registrations carried forward from the years we were canceled.

We are in the process of receiving a grant from the IAGSDC.

Joining of DeVal Federation – Ron R. and Chris C.

Recommendation: We not join the DeVal Federation. They have rules potentially barring any dances that would conflict with other DeVal Federation Dances. Therefore this proposal to become a 501(c)(3)**** is tabled as it required joining the DeVal Federation.

Return to Dance Committee Report***** – Ron R.

Motion: Recommendation #1 be approved as written.
Ron R. moved, Steve D. seconded, passed unanimously.

Motion: Recommendation #2 be approved with a revised Stop Sign.
Will H. moved, Steve D. seconded, passed unanimously.

Recruitment Committee Report – Steve D.

The last Fun Dance was poorly attended. We expect that the next one will do better because Zip is expected to be a draw.

Motion: The I S board authorizes the recruitment committee to spend up to \$500 to participate in Pride events for the purpose of recruiting and advertising our club.

Steve D. moved, Ron R. seconded, passed unanimously.

Publicity Chair Report – Ted M.

The website is updated including the fly-in registration on the IAGSDC website.

Mainstream & Plus Report – Steve D.

We will graduate 4 plus dancers.

Advanced & Challenge Report – Ron R.

Many Challenge dancers are coming back to dance.

Storage Unit Discussion – Mike R. and Chris D.

The storage rate where we are is going up. There are options closer to center city. Norma B. & Chris D. will investigate.

Old & New Business

Motion: Move I S organize a club outing to the Phillies Pride Night on Tuesday June 28, 2022.

Will H. moved, Steve D. seconded, passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Motion: Moved to adjourn.

Steve D. moved, Chris D. seconded, passed unanimously.

***RETURN TO DANCING COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT**

MARCH 21, 2022

The Return To Dancing committee met on March 17 in order to review the club's current COVID-19 related protocols in light of a recent CDC update. Below are the topics that were discussed.

Vaccination requirement

We agreed that our current "up-to-date" vaccination requirement should remain in place for the time being. While the weekly numbers are coming down substantially, there is still risk to our dancers. New variants are beginning to pose a threat, especially BA.2. The NY Times recently stated that "Covid isn't going away, but vaccination and other treatments can keep future increases manageable". Additionally, we recently saw an increase of new cases, week-over-week, in 7 of our 11 monitored counties in the reporting of March 14.

Second booster

We agreed not to require a second booster at this time. It is recognized that Pfizer is seeking emergency authorization for a second booster shot for adults 65 and older. However, the FDA has not yet authorized it and the CDC's website states that "At this time, CDC recommends getting only one COVID-19 booster shot". It is generally understood that a second booster might be recommended by the CDC in the fall.

Masking requirement

We agreed that our masking requirement should remain in place at our events. While the new guidance from the CDC, the state of PA, the city of Philadelphia, and the venue in which we dance allows us to remove our masking requirement, we recognize that our population is at higher risk than that of the general public. Joe Iser reminded us that square dancing is a risky activity in terms of infectious diseases, and our population tends to be older and more likely to have chronic diseases. NPR recently interviewed several infectious disease specialists who felt that the CDC update is premature, and that the general public should be looking for new cases per 100k to be between 1 and 5, and the positivity rate to be at about 1% or lower. Our region is not there yet. We didn't feel that we HAVE to be there in order to remove the masking mandate but felt that we should at least be closer to those numbers. Additionally, there was, as noted previously, a slight uptick in new cases on the reporting of March 14. We should continue to

monitor that and make sure that the uptick is just a blip and not the beginning of a new trend.

Signed health attestations

We agreed that our practice of obtaining a signed health attestation at each event shall remain in place. Reminding dancers of our request to not attend events if they have tested positive or if they exhibit symptoms continues to be an important practice. It should be noted that there was some pushback on this by one committee member who felt that our club members don't need to be reminded week after week. And there continues to be some confusion related to this practice. Ron is working on a new proposal for the committee to consider that would eliminate the health attestation form.

We are making two recommendations to the board, as follows:

Recommendation #1

Water can once again be provided by the club, with the water jug, cups, and markers being set out once the board approves. Additionally, dancers shall be permitted to bring individually wrapped snacks for sharing, with dancers being reminded that consuming snacks can be done as long as masks are lowered just long enough to do so.

Rationale: Individually wrapped snacks, in and of themselves, pose little risk to the dancers. With regard to consumption, the risk is no more pronounced than that of lowering a mask to consume liquids. Additionally, most of us seem comfortable these days with removing masks while eating a meal at a restaurant.

Note: Ron agreed to take on the responsibility of setting up the water jug if recommendation #1 passes. We also noted that there are some club members who feel, unrelated to COVID concerns, that snacks shouldn't be provided. This committee felt that our responsibility was to discuss whether or not snacks CAN be provided, not whether they SHOULD be provided. The board can have a separate discussion to consider whether or not snacks SHOULD be provided.

Recommendation #2

An email shall go out to the membership with updates regarding our protocols. A proposed email draft is below for the board's approval.

Rationale: We need to keep our club members informed with regard to any changes that have been approved by the board. We should also explain why the

masking mandate will remain in place since this is a particularly contentious issue for some dancers who have opted not to return to our dance floor. That explanation is not likely to change any minds but can at least help dancers understand that there are legitimate reasons for the mandate.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron R

Proposed email draft for club members:

Hi fellow Independence Squares club members.

On behalf of the club's Return To Dancing Committee and board of directors, I am reaching out to you to give you an update regarding our COVID-19 protocols.

The RTD committee recently reviewed our current protocols and made several recommendations to the board. The board approved the following, effective with our next Tuesday evening workshop:

- *Our requirement of "up-to-date" vaccination status, including a single booster shot as recommended by the CDC, will remain in effect for the time being.*
- *A properly worn face mask will continue to be required at our events, again, for the time being. We understand that the CDC has revised its recommendations as they relate to this topic and our goal is to eliminate this requirement as soon as we can. However, because we are involved in an activity with close personal contact, and because we are a population with somewhat higher risk factors, we felt it prudent to continue with this protocol. Thank you to our dancers who have continued to dance with us in spite of the uncomfortableness of wearing a mask while doing so. Thank you also to those of you who are holding off patiently until our mask mandate is gone before rejoining us.*
- *We will resume the practice of putting out the water jug and cups at our events. Additionally, dancers may resume the practice of bringing shared snacks, as long as they are individually wrapped. We request that dancers who consume these snacks please lower their face masks just long enough to consume the snack and then replace the mask.*
- *A signed health attestation will still be required at each event.*

The RTD committee and the board are committed to creating the safest dance environment as possible. We understand that our club is not moving quite as quickly as

some other clubs in terms of getting back to normal. We are monitoring the situation on a weekly basis, and we continually discuss the safety of our dancers as it relates to the current situation.

If you have concerns, comments, or questions, please feel free to contact me, or any board member. We appreciate any suggestions that you have as we continue to navigate this difficult time.

On behalf of the RTD committee and the board of directors of Independence Squares, I thank you for your continued support and patience. If you have been joining us on Tuesday nights, thank you so much. If you still have concerns and are preferring to stay home for now, we look forward to having you on our dance floor just as soon as you are comfortable doing so. If you've stayed away because you fear that you've forgotten how to dance, have no fear! Come join us. Betsy and Mark are doing an amazing job of getting us comfortable on the dance floor again and we'd LOVE to see you again. We're having an amazing time and it would be wonderful to share that with you.

Ron R

****Caller Liaison Report**

Independence Squares Board of Directors Meeting – April 2022

The information below is accurate as of Tuesday, April 9, 2022, 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/Notes for Board

No additional contracts or promises have been made to any caller regarding the holding of workshops or classes, virtual or live, other than those listed below.

Dances Through April 2024

Callers have been contracted and confirmed for the following dances taking place April 19, 2022 through April 2024.

Saturday, May 14, 2022 – Community Fun Dance – Marilyn (Zip) Warmerdam 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm Merz Hall The Lutheran Church.

Saturday, December 3, 2022 – Glitter Ball Mainstream through C1 – Dayle Hodge
4:00 pm – 8:00 pm The Merion Meeting House

Saturday, August 13, 2022 – All-level dance Mainstream through C1 – Dayle
Hodge 1:00 pm – 5:00 Unitarian Universalist Society of Mill Creek in Newark, Delaware

March 2023 Fly-In: Callers: Sandie Bryant, Dayle Hodge, Eric Henerlau March
24-26, 2023

April 2024 Fly-In: Callers: Darren Gallina, Betsy Gotta, Bill Harrison April 5-7, 2024

FYI Notes

The August 13, 2022 dance was arranged by Independence Squares. Co-sponsorship is being sought with the DC Lambda Squares and we are awaiting a response from their new board that was recently elected.

Items of Concern for the Caller Liaison

- 1) Based on the safety protocols that are now in place (proof of vaccination has been extended to require a booster when eligible), each caller is notified of this when they are hired.
- 2) The caller liaison committee would like to hire the callers for the sessions beginning in September/October 2022. The callers can be contracted now prior to the particular levels being set for the fall by the board. The callers are aware that the programs to be offered have not yet been finalized.

*****Mainstream New Class & Blitz proposal April 7 2022**

1. Timeframe: 4 weeks of mainstream classes to give new dancers an idea of how square dance works. These 4 sessions would be as per regular teaching order. Followed by a weekend blitz, for a Friday night, all day (not night) Saturday, and Sunday morning. Followed by 10-12 weeks of mainstream class, which would review and strengthen what was taught in blitz.

2. The first 4 weeks could be in September-October, before our regular Tuesday nights usually start. These Tuesday nights (Sept.13-Oct 4) would be totally

devoted to the mainstream class, and our members would be encouraged to angel. The blitz weekend could be Oct.7-9. Thereafter, the mainstream class would fit into the regular Tuesday night rotation. The mainstream class could be done by the end of November, or certainly Christmas break.

3. Caller-- could be the same caller for entire program, or one caller for Tuesday nights and another for the weekend. Need to be flexible contingent on caller availability. There are pros and cons for either approach-- all one caller, or combination.

4. As a lead-in to the September class, we should seriously consider Fun Dances in the summer. Frequency to be determined. We would also have a definite target date for interested people to know when they could start class.

5. The Church of the Holy Communion has the Red Cross room available on Friday-Saturday-Sunday dates. They have reserved that space for the weekend of Oct 7-9, at a cost of \$300 for the entire weekend.

6. Until we have a caller contract, we cannot know exactly what the budget will be. Assuming we pay for the Tuesdays in September and October preceding regular Tuesday nights at the same rate (\$125?) and we would pay for the weekend blitz comparable to a fly-in (\$1000), the caller fees would be approximately \$1500. With expenditures for advertising and miscellaneous of another \$100, the total would be approximately \$1900. Would there be any kind of funding from All Join Hands?

7. In order to confirm with the Church and pursue contracting a caller, the Board should make a decision about a new mainstream class as soon as possible.

8. The Board should also consider our alternatives if we have little or no interest in a class. How do we want to word a contract? What would be the criteria for doing the class or canceling it?

Hi Steve,

Thanks for all of the pre-thought regarding club dances.

I'm a bit leery about having a monthly club dance since we are already losing money week-over-week at our Tuesday workshops. I do love the idea of

monthly dances but would like to see us ease back into them. Perhaps two or three big dances in addition to our Glitter Ball and Delaware dance. I'm certainly interested to hear what others think.

A survey is easy enough to do, but I'm not sure that it would be very helpful. Nothing lost by doing one though.

Hugs,
Ron

Hello board and Mike,

I was thinking about club dances last weekend. Here is what I came up with, which overlaps with Steve's ideas.

We should have occasional Saturday afternoon dances, maybe two in the fall and three in the spring. Here is a suggested schedule:

1:00-3:00 Advanced & Challenge alternating tips, based on the level of the hall
3:00-3:30 Break/social
3:30-5:30 Mainstream & Plus alternating tips. Class level when we have an active class.
6:00 Dutch treat dinner nearby optional

When I went to my first Saturday dance after finishing the mainstream class, I was disappointed to be sitting much of the afternoon watching the other programs dance. If we are going to retain new dancers, I think we have to address this.

My 2c, Chris

Hi All,

Not sure if it helps or just adds to the questions, but I've attached a summary of the attendance figures for our dances for the years 2017-2019 (I don't have any data after that, though they may be somewhere in our records). Except for the major dances (Glitter Ball, fly-in and the joint events with DC), our dances have consistently lost an average of \$136 per dance. I think that highlights how dependent we have become on the fund-raising efforts at our fly-in, since that is the major source of money to cover these shortfalls. To put into perspective,

we'd need to charge around \$18 per person to break even if the club could no longer subsidize dances.

As for when and what make for good attendance, I don't see any clear patterns in the historical data. I personally dislike mid-afternoon weekend dances (esp double-headers) since they eat up the whole day. However, I also understand that most of us have become more mature than we were when a Saturday night dance was a big social event attracting folks from NYC and DC. I fear those days may have gone the way of the Dodo and gay bars in New Hope. A survey we conducted a few years ago indicated our dancers were fairly split between preferences for afternoon vs evening dances, but it is interesting to note that while we've never had to cancel an evening dance due to poor attendance (though we've come close) we have had to cancel two afternoon dances due to low turnout (not even a full square).

One issue that is likely to surface (again) is whether we should avoid scheduling dances that conflict with other local clubs. (Club Sashay and Liberty Stars both dance 2nd and 4th Saturdays while Rainbow Squares are 1st 3rd and 5th Saturdays). While we should encourage interactions between IS and other local clubs, I do think we need to remember that we are an independent organization and should schedule our events for the benefit of OUR members, including those who aren't comfortable dancing elsewhere. The numbers seem to bear that out since the two dances with highest attendance were on 2nd and 4th Saturdays, respectively, while the two with poorest attendance (including one we had to cancel due to lack of full square) were 3rd and 1st.

As a C1 (aspirational) dancer I would ask that we not forget the higher programs in any plans. We are one of the few clubs that attempt to support 4 full programs while sponsoring classes as well. As such, we face incredible scheduling challenges. I've often heard (and occasionally said myself) that C1 dancers can dance any program, so we really don't have to provide that much C1 floor time. It may be worth remembering, though, that many C1 dancers can also bowl and we'd rather have them come dance their preferred program than hang out in the bowling alley!

In short, there are no perfect answers. A survey may be useful, but in my experience people will answer how they think they should rather than what they actually will do. I agree with Ron that we need to be thoughtful about how to proceed. Summer dances have historically had relatively low attendance, so waiting until fall to restart regular dances might allow a focus on recruitment efforts over the summer without further depleting our finances.

Tim

****501(c)(3) Proposal from Chris

- Background

Independence Squares currently has a 501(c)(4) tax exemption, often used by community sports leagues, business associations and the like. Recently, United Square Dancers of America (USDA) rolled out [a program that enables local clubs to gain 501\(c\)\(3\) charitable exemption](#). Last fall Norma asked Chris to look into this program.

- Key Benefits of 501(c)3 Exemption
 - Contributors can take a tax deduction for donating to Independence Squares
 - Contributors get extra tax benefits by donating appreciated securities, while alive or in their will.
 - Officers and volunteers can deduct mileage, tolls and other expenses while carrying out their duties.
 - Some businesses make donations to 501(c)(3) organizations. For example, Trader Joe's may donate merchandise for a basket at our fly-in.
 - Using an ID issued by the state, IS does not have to pay sales tax on purchases.
- Application Process
 1. [Join the Federation of Delaware Valley Square and Round Dancers \(\\$??\)](#)
 2. Join USDA as an affiliate member (\$25/year) [Application Form](#)
 3. Amend the IS By Laws to conform to IRS requirements for 501(c)(3). Details below.
 4. Submit application with \$100 application fee
- Annual Renewal
 5. 1. Renew Delaware Valley membership
 6. 2. Renew USDA Affiliate Membership (\$25/year)
 7. 3. Submit annual financial statement to USDA
 8. 4. Submit IRS form 990-N to IRS (Mike does this now)
 9. 5. Pay \$50 USDA program fee

*******RETURN TO DANCING COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT**
APRIL 12, 2022

The Return To Dancing committee met on April 11, 2022 in order to review the club's current COVID-19 related protocols. Below are the topics that were discussed along with recommendations for the board's consideration.

Review of weekly trends

We agreed that the recent upward trend in “New Cases Per 100K” and “Positivity Rates” is concerning but that we do not need to shut down dancing at this time. We are still in the “blue” and “yellow” zones which Joe Iser has advised to be safe for dancing. We will continue to monitor the weekly numbers.

Review of current COVID-19 safety protocols

Vaccination requirement and 2nd boosters

We agreed that our current “up-to-date” vaccination requirement should remain in place for the time being. With the recent uptick in some of the stats that we are monitoring, we feel that now is not the time to relax this requirement. We also agreed not to require a second booster at this time. It was noted that the CDC has authorized a 2nd booster but has not made it part of their “up-to-date” vaccination definition. Additionally, there are some experts advising that people who are in relatively good health and have recently tested positive for COVID-19, should consider holding off on a 2nd booster until there is a serious new surge. That will allow these folks to get their 2nd booster when they most need it.

Masking requirement

On the day of our meeting, Philadelphia's Health Commissioner announced that effective Monday, April 18, Philadelphia will reinstate an indoor mask requirement. This announcement eliminated the need for us to make any decisions on this topic. However, the next day, Ron called the Philadelphia Department of Health to ask if our callers would need to be masked. A representative confirmed that the reinstatement of an indoor mask requirement does not apply in instances where everyone in attendance has been verified as being up to date in terms of vaccinations. In light of that, an email discussion was held by the RTD committee on 4/12/22 to decide whether to amend our mask requirement at this time. The majority opinion was to keep the mask policy for now.

We are making two recommendations to the board, as follows:

Recommendation #1

Our current policy of asking dancers to refrain from dancing with us if they have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 5 days is to be changed to 10 days.

Rationale: The CDC website's information has changed since we implemented a 5-day look back period. It now states that for 10 days, a person who tested positive for COVID-19 should "Avoid being around people who are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19". Joe Iser was consulted about this and agreed that a 10-day look back period makes sense. Such a policy has been implemented in the educational systems that he advises.

Recommendation #2

The practice of requiring a signed Health Attestation is to be discontinued. Instead, a "Stop Sign" (template attached) is to be displayed prominently on, or near, the Treasurer's table to remind dancers that they are not to attend that event if, within the past 48 hours, they have experienced any of the symptoms that are listed on our current Health Attestation. The notice will also include a request not to attend our event if the dancer has tested positive for COVID-19 during our established look-back period. Additionally, the following brief statement is to be read during announcements by whomever is making announcements at that event:

"Independence Squares requests that you stay home if you experience any of the health conditions listed on our "Stop Sign" at the treasurer's table and that you notify us if you become diagnosed with COVID-19 within 5 days of this event".

We will still require a signed waiver from anyone who has not yet provided one. That form has been revised (template attached) to remove the Health Attestation section and to add a spot for the recording of a 2nd booster if applicable. The form has also been changed in terms of the recording of the various vaccinations in order to make the flow easier for the recorder.

Rationale: The current sign-in process is cumbersome and confusing. Our goal regarding the use of the Health Attestation was to ask attendees to do

a self-check of their health and to not dance with us if they are sick or if they have tested positive for COVID-19. We also had a goal of reminding people to notify us if they subsequently test positive. This new process will achieve those goals with less of a burden on those individuals staffing the treasurer's table. It will also reduce the cost of printing the forms that we currently use.

Additional items for the board, not discussed by the committee

If recommendation #2 passes as proposed, Ron will print out the text of the proposed announcement, and will make sure that copies are available to be read by whomever makes announcements at our events.

An email should be sent to the membership to notify them of updates to our protocols as a result of these recommendations. Ron is willing to draft the email and have it reviewed by Steve before sending to Ted for release.

Some information on our website needs to be changed, as follows:

The current statement regarding refreshments needs to be changed to reflect our recent agreement to allow individually wrapped snacks, with consumption permitted within the dance space. We agreed to allow the lowering of masks only while actively eating or consuming snacks. We also need to remove the suggestion that dancers bring their own water bottles and fill them at the water fountain since we are now putting out the water jug and cups.

If recommendation #2 passes, reference to our "COVID-19" Health Screening form will need to be removed. Also, the current downloadable form will need to be replaced. We can also remove the suggestion that dancers arrive early since the cumbersome sign-in process would now be eliminated.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron R



Independence Squares asks that you NOT attend this event if you have experienced any of the following symptoms in the past 48 hours:

- Fever or chills, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea
- Cough that is new or getting worse
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing that is new or getting worse
- Fatigue (feeling tired all the time)
- Muscle or body aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose that is new and not related to allergies

Additionally, we ask that you NOT attend this event if you have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 10 days.

By entering, you agree to notify Independence Squares if you become diagnosed with COVID-19 within 5 days of this event.