

NESEA Board Conference Call - Notes

March 12, 2015

Participating

Les Bluestone
Michael Bruss
Caitriona Cooke
Martine Dion
Paul Eldrenkamp
Phil Kaplan
Jennifer Marrapese
Fortunat Mueller
Andy Padian
Rick Renner
Ben Southworth
Lisa Tallet

Not Participating

Rob Meyers
John Skipper

Call convened at 9:00 AM.

Jennifer: Provided a very rough estimate of BE15 results, noting that revenue numbers are more realistic than expense numbers. Income was approximately \$670,000. Registration income was \$330,000+-; exhibits \$209,000+-; grants \$15,000+-; and sponsorships \$123,000+-. This is a little better than the \$666,000 from last year, but the budget was \$700,000. It looks like we will net \$65,000 - \$70,000, and the budgeted net was \$108,000. Net is lower than budgeted, but other programs are doing better than projected.

Marketing for BE15 was compromised by issues with the website and the database. It seems that weather was also a factor, indicated by lower than usual on-site registrations. The concurrent NZE Summit may have hurt more than it helped, and it did not generate additional revenue.

Martine: The Plenary was fantastic, and the sessions she attended were great; this conference was in the top five of those she has attended.

Lisa: Echoed Martine's comments re Plenary and sessions. This was her first conference, and she was impressed by all the activity.

Caitriona: Thought the NZE Coalition was lacking good technical content. Plenary was spectacular, and the sessions were great. Trade show needs work.

Jennifer: Trade Show will get more attention next year. Recommended Marc Rosenbaum's post-conference blog post.

Michael: Enjoyed sessions that prompted further thinking, especially outside our specific professional focus. Met two exhibitors who are interested in BENYC. More architects should attend the conference.

Phil: Staff worked very hard. Just about every session was worthwhile. Liked not having tracks.

Jennifer: The staff was working at such a high level, that she was able to do more networking.

Les: Anxious to see the feedback on the exhibitor surveys. We should try to make the Trade Show space feel more concentrated.

Jennifer: During the conference, she met with Eric Zimmerman of TripZero, a travel booking company whose goal is to provide free and effective carbon offsets for travel and lodging. TripZero has a lot of experience providing this service to conferences. The purpose of the meeting was to explore how TripZero's experience can help NESEA by negotiating better deals (and perhaps, more options); providing a booking portal; explore other venue possibilities; and free up a lot of staff time (particularly for Mary).

Michael: One exhibitor remarked that the Seaport venue did not seem particularly green.

Jennifer: Actually, the Seaport organization does a lot; we need to do a better job of telling that story.

Andy: Has seen a lot of changes for the better, and all his interviews with exhibitors were positive. One mentioned that traffic seemed to be less, and he objected to some visitors with Trade Show passes selling instead of looking. Andy found one of the Wednesday NZE Coalition sessions to be good; it had sufficient technical information. Some of the introductory NESEA sessions were way too introductory.

Phil: His company was an exhibitor. He, too, found that some with Trade Show passes were there to "sell", but he had many rich conversations with them, so this was not a negative experience.

Rick: That the conference did not reach its goals does not reflect on the staff. Should we have a vote of confidence for the staff?

Jennifer: She will forward positive feedback to the staff.

Andy: Should members of the Board contribute to fund a party?

Jennifer: If Board members wish to contribute, that is fine, but she will be sure that the staff is properly thanked.

Michael: Will write a note to the staff expressing Board's appreciation.

Ben: BE15 was a great conference. What percentage of overall NESEA budget is the BE15 \$34,000+- shortfall?

Jennifer: Overall budget is \$1,300,000, and she believes that the shortfall is recoverable. Matt “knocked it out of the park”.

Caitriona: Will communicate this to Matt. Staff had a great attitude and acted as if it were fun.

Michael: Welcomed Ben to the Board.

Jennifer: Regarding the website and Energy Circle, Stephen is meeting with each staff member to develop a comprehensive list of needs and comments on the website. This list will differentiate between what falls within Energy Circle’s original scope; what might be eliminated from this scope; and what, going forward, might be performed by a third party. Steven will look for ways that Energy Circle can make up for the problems with their work. Paul Eldrenkamp is attending meetings with Energy Circle as a mediator. Also on the table is a possible marketing relationship with Energy Circle.

During registration for BE15, Beth started cleaning up records to address and correct data migration issues.

There will be more to report at the April Board meeting.

Rick: Regarding 50 Miles Street, Bruce Coldham and Jennifer petitioned the Town of Greenfield to raise the assessed value of the building so that we could proceed with the first phase of the work without triggering the requirement for full accessibility. The effort was successful, so it is possible to proceed with the scope of work designed by Maclay Architects and priced by Wright Builders.

Ben: Why not do what is necessary for full compliance?

Michael: This work will position us for full compliance. This scope makes best use of the funds available from an equity loan on the building. We decided at the outset that there would be no capital campaign.

Vote: Rick moved that the Board approve proceeding with the work designed by Maclay Architects and priced by Wright Builders. Fortunat seconded the motion.

Andy: In the future when the Board is asked to approve expenditures of this magnitude, it would be helpful to have a concise summary.

Rick: Agreed that it was a good request and will try to append a 50 Miles Street summary to the notes.

Michael: Noted that the entire expenditure is around \$120,000.

The motion re 50 Miles Street passed unanimously.

Rick: The 50 Miles Street Committee will meet in the next week or so to determine next steps and assign responsibilities, with the goal of minimizing the

burden on Jennifer and the staff. Bruce Coldham will be the clerk/liaison to the committee during construction.

Vote: Motion to adjourn seconded and approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Phone call adjourned at approximately 10:00 AM.

Notes prepared by Rick Renner