

American Birkebeiner Ski Foundation
Board of Directors Meeting
April 16, 2012

Members present: Jane Bidwell, Scott Chapin, John Garrett, John Kotar, Dennis Kruse, Dave Nelson, Sue Scheer, Mary Wingfield. Also present: Ned Zuelsdorff, Shellie Milford, Susan Kendrick

Meeting called to order at 4 p.m. by Sue Scheer.

Agenda. Dennis Kruse moved and John Kotar seconded the motion to move the Sponsor presentation to the first item on the agenda. Motion passed.

Minutes of March 26, 2012. Dennis Kruse moved and Jane Bidwell seconded the motion to approve the March 26, 2012, minutes. Motion passed.

Sponsorship Guide Presentation. Ned and Susan projected the pages on a screen and presented their description of the Sponsorship Guide which they have put together. The Guide provides information about the American Birkebeiner, what sponsorship levels are available and the benefits for each level. Detailed information about media and promotional coverage, demographics and VIP benefits are included in the Guide. Ned indicated that every sponsorship they work on is subject to negotiation. The Guide will be used as a tool when working with potential and current sponsors either in person or over the phone.

Susan commented that sponsorships are a business partnership with the goal to develop relationships that promote both sponsor and event. It is important to do research to find out all you can about a business and use this information as a baseline in discussion and negotiation. Board members are encouraged to provide Ned and Susan potential sponsor contact information. Comments from Board members included: be sure that sponsors are well represented on our web site; need to service the sponsors before and after the race. Ned indicated that sponsorship negotiations can take many months.

The Board asked the staff to give a monthly sponsorship status report/update.

Committee Reports.

Dennis Kruse indicated that the **Competition Committee** is discussing starting the elite women first, recruiting elite skiers, prize money for the classic race and every 4th or 5th year switching the larger amount of money to the classic top finishers.

John Garrett reported that the **Trail Committee** is working on determining what to discuss to bring to the Board. The start area has dominated discussion and will continue to be discussed, but other items will take precedence. Under consideration are: extending classic trail (Committee feels this is not a priority); merging skate and classic trail; development of "OO" area for possible world cup trail; improvement of "OO" trail head area; building cabins at Fire Tower and Timber Trail Food Stations. Fire Tower cabin has been approved by Sawyer County Forestry Committee and Ned feels that the County Board will approve it. More discussion took place regarding the "OO" buildings, improvements and potential activities, bringing user groups together to fund a long-term plan.

Executive Director Report.

Ned indicated that registration is opening today. He has had discussion with Grandma's and Twin Cities Marathons about developing an "Upper Midwest Endurance Challenge" combining several levels of races from each event. There could be some shared sponsorship.

Unfinished Business.

Ned gave an update report on the status of Telemark negotiations. Ned received a land and facility use proposal from Telemark owners. He has been working with attorney Joe Hoida developing a formal counter-proposal. Ned explained that there are two owner entities at Telemark: Telemark Properties, owner of the Lodge and land; Telemark Partners who manage the complex. There are potential investors who might become involved. The ABSF counter-proposal should be ready to send in a few days. Discussion took place regarding how long ABSF can wait to formalize an agreement. Ned indicated that the request for Bayfield County land use for a Hwy 63 alternate trailhead has been withdrawn.

New Business.

Scott Chapin introduced the idea of having a fat tire bike race on the Birkie trail after the American Birkebeiner events. He indicated the following: it likely involve both a 48K and 17K event; be very festive with beer food and a band; could attract up to 300 people and businesses are already contacting him for possible sponsorship. In discussion Board members had questions or expressed concerns: will potential sponsors be just for this event or carry over to the Birkie; do we want people riding on the Birkie trail during ski season; if conditions do not allow it, on what trail will the event be held; who will organize the event; concern about Birkie staff being responsible. Scott indicated that he will put together a formal proposal and send it to Board members for review before the May meeting.

Other Business

Sue Scheer said that she will organize a group to brainstorm ideas for the 40th Anniversary celebration.

Ned indicated that an initial budget proposal will be presented at the May meeting. He asked if the Board wanted a two year budget. Consensus is yes.

Dennis Kruse talked about proposing to the Worldloppet organization that we host the 2013 AGM meeting. Consensus is yes, to offer to have it here.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45.

Submitted by Shellie Milford, Jane Bidwell