

Regular Session Board Meeting Minutes for July 22, 2020

STAR ISLAND CORPORATION Regular Session of the Board of Directors

MEETING MINUTES

July 22, 2020 at 7:00 pm

Via Zoom

Members in Attendance:

Kyle Belmont
Patricia Coleman (ISAUU President)
Tom Coleman (Vice President of the Board)
Erik Cordes
Nick Dembsey (President of the Board)
Debbie Duval
Tom Kennedy
Jeff Loewer (Treasurer)
Keri Mattaliano (SIUCC President)
Mary Trudeau (Clerk)
Arlyn Weeks
Louise Williams

Absent:

Leon Dunkley

Other:

Joe Watts (CEO)
Celeste Magliocchetti (Pel Liaison)

Opening Words:

Keri Mattaliano spoke to the Board with reflections on breathing and breath, in response to her thoughts after hearing of Eric Garner's struggle for breath in the moments before his death, and her reflection that these thoughts, sadly, are also directly relevant to the murder of George Floyd. She read a poem written by Ross Gay for Eric Garner.

A Small Needful Fact, written by Ross Gay

Is that Eric Garner worked
for some time for the Parks and Rec.
Horticultural Department, which means,
perhaps, that with his very large hands,
perhaps, in all likelihood,

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he put gently into the earth
some plants which, most likely,
some of them, in all likelihood,
continue to grow, continue
to do what such plants do, like house
and feed small and necessary creatures,
like being pleasant to touch and smell,
like converting sunlight
into food, like making it easier
for us to breathe.

Check In – After a brief Board member check in, sharing milestones, the meeting was convened.

Call to Order – Nick Dembsey called the meeting to order at approximately 7:10 pm.

Executive Session

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

VOTED to enter Executive Session to discuss the CEO evaluations.

The Board returned to regular Session at approximately 7:25 pm

Verbal Reports:

CEO Report

Joe briefly reported on a data security breach through our outside database provider, Blackbaud. Joe had few details, as he had only received preliminary information, but was confident that credit card and bank information had not been affected. He noted that more information would be forthcoming.

Joe noted that he has been in discussions with the Isles of Shoals Steamship Company, and has received inquiries on day visitor access to the island. Joe stated that at this point, day visits are not allowed, and the island remains closed to all but staff, contractors, and a limited number of skilled volunteers.

Community meetings have been held with several of the larger conferences, and Joe felt these communications were positive and meaningful. He noted that Star Arts, All Star I, All Star II, and International Affairs had held virtual community meetings with him so far, and that he expects more meetings will happen with some of the August conferences as well.

Joe was pleased to report that the chapel steeple work has been completed, and is once again a beacon for our community.

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Joe offered a brief report on the history of our Beloved Community Project (BCP), created in 2017, with the guidance of then Island Minister Chris Holton Jablonski and Rev. Dr. Leon Dunkley. One item highlighted was the BCP conference which took place in 2018 and led to the publication of the book *It Is Time Now – Offerings from the Star Island Beloved Community Project*. Joe also commented briefly on anti-racism trainings that have taken place on and off island, as well as work with selected conferences on anti-racists/anti-oppression programming. Joe reminded the group that in October of last year, a group of board members, senior staff members, and Pelicans came together to brainstorm next steps for the BCP, and one key recommendation was the formation of task force (which was convened at the end of last year). Joe noted that this task force has been meeting for several months, and has recently offered a few key recommendations, including focusing on education/anti-oppression and welcoming/inclusivity “tracks” as well as hiring a professional consulting firm to provide key recommendations for us as we move forward with this important work. He noted that there has been a heightened awakening, and increasing pressure for action, stemming from the murder of George Floyd. Joe noted that the task force has created a draft statement of purpose document and encouraged Board members to reach out to him or the task force with comments or questions.

Treasurer’s Report

Jeff reported that the staff is managing well to the revised budget. He noted that the Finance Committee has met with Joe, and is supporting his development of a 5 Year Plan, with a focus on 2021.

Pel Report:

In Celeste’s absence, Kyle Belmont read a statement on the differences between equity and inclusion, and their relationship to social justice.

Based on a motion duly made and seconded, the Board

VOTED unanimously to approve the CEO, Finance and Pel reports

Summer Retreat:

Nick proposed a virtual, summer retreat with a Saturday night session, two sessions on Sunday, and one session on Monday. The virtual retreat and meeting will occur on August 29 through 31.

Discussion Items:

Nick asked the Board to imagine “What If” questions, and to discuss long term planning issues. The discussion was wide ranging and included the following topics (in no particular order):

Implications of Covid infections on future programming and hospitality;

Implications of climate change and sea level rises in our ability to host conferences;

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Use of virtual technology to enhance and expand our programming, strengthening the traditions of the UCC and UU communities;

Evaluate possibility of SIC taking more ownership of aspects of conference programming;

Use of virtual technology to increase attendance at the Annual Meeting;

Programming to increase the “educational” component of our mission;

Increase the comfort level and hospitality in our conference center;

Development of fields of excellence in our food service; hospitality; and programming;

Evaluation of the potential of Appledore Island in furthering our mission;

Synergistic relationships with Appledore that benefit both entities;

Reconsideration of how, and with whom, we invest our monies;

Evaluation of our colonial history and existing monuments;

Evaluate, in a comprehensive way, our bylaws, and be willing to make significant changes as needed;

Review and adapt our governance model through the lens of both current best practices in nonprofit management and Beloved Community;

Evaluate collaboration with conferences, maintain a seat at the table with conference leadership.

Strategic Plan Update:

Nick posited that a shorter, more succinct, Strategic Plan might be more effective for the current climate. He asked the Board to consider whether a one or two year plan might be more appropriate than a longer-termed Strategic Plan. Jeff noted that while a short-term plan might be useful, our existing Strategic Plan is still largely valid, and Tom Kennedy suggested we could supplement our existing plan statement of priority goals for the year ahead. Louise noted that this is a different world than existed five years ago, and that a shorter-term plan could be useful in plotting a new course. She noted that we could do something distinct from the current plan focusing on three areas: COVID-19, things that are going well that we need to keep doing, and structural/governance issues. Debbie commented that any plan should reflect “What are we doing now, and what is going on in our world?” Jeff agreed that it is important to have action items to address the current scenario, and that any responses should reflect an action plan.

Joe commented that a strategic plan can take many forms, and that many options exist. Erik noted that the current plan still has lots of work, within the various goals, to be done. Tricia felt

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a new strategic plan to reflect urgent actions might be better in the short-term. Joe noted that Covid-19; racial justice; and reviewing our governance structures are urgent issues we should consider in our next Strategic Plan or supplemental statement.

Nick summarized the discussions, suggesting that the consensus appears to reflect the utility of a new, two-year Strategic Plan. He noted that the Board can discuss, in August, whether to maintain or modify the existing plan. Jeff offered that he is uncomfortable setting a specific time frame on the plan, at this point. He noted that the world is changing quickly, and that we need to be able to pivot. It was also noted that another option might be a supplemental statement of priority goals (vs. a new strategic plan). It was agreed to revisit the topic at the August retreat.

Meeting Reflections:

Nick thanked the Board for their time, and willingness to engage in difficult conversations. Joe noted that we are doing challenging work in a changing world, and we are doing it as a collaborative team

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 pm.

Meeting Adjourned.

Submitted by:

Mary Trudeau, Clerk