



Providing exceptional experiences in nature through environmental education.

**Board Meeting
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Minutes from February 23, 2023
8:00 a.m. Meeting**

MINUTES

Board Members Attending: Kari Anderson, Stephanie Bartholomew, Sara Beckstrand, Amy Bloomquist, Carol Bouw, Megan Buonaiuto, Chad Dayton, Stephen Dygos, Adam Ehrmantraut, Andy Freeman, Ron Goldser, Alan Johnston, Erin Olson, Michael-jon Pease, Sue Powell, Jim Putman, Natasha Rambacchus, Angela Richardson, Ann Schwichtenberg, Shehla Tauscher, Jim Wagner, Sheila Williams Ridge

Not Attending: Peter Garretson, Allan Klein

Staff Attending: Pete Cleary, Sean Gokey, Signe Hushagen, Jason Sanders, Amy Warzybok, Brenda Teats

Staff Not Attending: Don Oberdorfer, Sheri Zigan

Guests Attending: Heather Durenberger, Mo Fahnestock

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 am

II. President Report

- Sara Beckstrand welcomed the group and thanked everyone for taking time today to join today, especially given the change to a virtual meeting on short notice.

III. Action Items

- **Minutes and Financials from December 12, 2022**

The Board was asked to accept the minutes from the December 12, 2022 meeting with the correction noted by Brenda Teats. Andy Freeman moved to accept the minutes from the December meeting, Amy Bloomquist seconded the motion. The minutes from the December meeting with the correction were unanimously accepted.

The Board was asked to accept the December financial report. The Finance Committee brought the financials forward for approval. Ann Schwichtenberg seconded the motion. The financials were unanimously accepted.

- Brenda Teats brought forward a correction to the minutes from December 12th. She noted on page 5 there was a bullet noting a question about the capital portion of the campaign and Jason's response. The minutes stated that the original estimate for the capital investment needed for the renovations to the house at Shepard Farm had gone from a quarter of a million to \$2.5 million. The minutes should be revised to state that the budgeted cost for the renovation was \$1.2 million, and the projected cost has increased to \$2.5 million.
- Stephen Dygos presented on the financials.
- The Finance Committee welcomed Terese Radford, who works with nonprofit finance. She will be a good addition to the group.
- In the financials, it should be noted that there is some variability in internal revenue - this is because it's hard to predict when checks need to be written month to month and year over year. These fluctuations even out throughout the year.
- Investments are in line with what was expected based on allocations in Dodge's portfolio.
- The Finance Committee plans to inquire with UBS about the cash in Dodge's investments - short term bonds and cash are earning more right now, and Dodge is earning 4.6% on cash currently, which is very good.

IV. Focused Discussion

- Mo Fahnestock welcomed everyone to the Board Retreat.
- This meeting was planned to be in person, a lot of work has been done since Tuesday to adjust to a Zoom format due to the weather.
- The goal of the retreat is to capture the wisdom and knowledge in the room about Dodge.
- Three main retreat objectives:
 - Review and approve Vision, Mission, Values, and Tagline
 - Board ratifies direction of strategy framework and strategic priorities
 - Board sets its focus for 2023 and the role they play to complete the comprehensive campaign by Night for Nature
- The theme is "What Makes Dodge Exceptional?"

Mission, Vision, and Values Discussion – *The Board was asked to accept the proposed Mission, Vision, and Values for Dodge Nature Center and Preschool. Michael-jon Pease moved to accept the Mission, Vision, and Values; Ann Schwichtenberg seconded the motion. The proposed Mission, Vision, and Values were unanimously accepted.*

- Proposed Mission: Providing exceptional experiences in nature through environmental education.

- Proposed Vision: We envision a future where everyone inspired by Dodge intentionally cares for nature.
- Proposed Values:
 - Dodge Nature Center and Preschool:
 - Provides joyful, inclusive, and collaborative experiences
 - Nurtures relationships with people and the environment
 - Acts as responsible stewards of the natural world
 - Inspires curiosity and wonder
- When considering the Mission, Vision, and Values, it is important to remember the role of the Board and the Staff. The Board should stay high level, while the staff works on the operational level.
- The Vision is Board and staff created, and should answer the question “Where are we going?”
- The Mission is Board and staff created, and should answer the question “What we do?”
- The Strategy is Board and staff created, this is about doing the right things, Dodge’s game plan.
- Operations is staff created and implemented; progress is shared with the Board. This answers the question of “How we do it?”
- Jason Sanders commented that the new Strategic Plan has been well thought through and there is a clear plan to accomplish it.
- Staff and Directors have had input to get to the current proposals.
- Adam Ehrmantraut asked about the values; he thinks about them in terms of one word to capture the meaning, and he is wondering about the first point, how do we frame this one? Jason said he felt this was the relationships and experiences piece.
- Mo pointed out that there have been discussions about how collaborative Dodge is with other organizations and schools, this is a part of the value of Dodge and how Dodge is talked about.
- Ron Goldser asked if this is an inward facing statement, an outward facing statement, or both? Does this set of statements facilitate reaching out to people who don’t currently know about or utilize Dodge? Sara said that this is both inward and outward, but it doesn’t replace the need for a brand and marketing. Jason said he feels this is both; how Dodge decides who to partner with and how those partnerships reflect Dodge.

Strategy Discussion

- What makes Dodge unique?
 - Standards based EE for schools
 - Relationships with Schools
 - Nature based preschool
 - Farm facilities and education
 - Quality of our staff
 - Accessible sanctuary in urban area
 - Nourishing Your Need for Nature
 - Relational community builders
 - Inclusive outreach

- Intentional care of nature (emerging)
- Shepard farm emerging adult programming (emerging)
- Exceptional experiences (emerging)
- Jason added that this is a big time for Dodge - you don't often get the chance to create a nature center, and that is what is happening at Shepard Farm right now.
- Michael-jon pointed out that the relationship building and encouraging people to care for nature gives Dodge an opportunity to stay connected.

Four Emerging Strategy Pillars: Building upon the success of Dodge's Comprehensive Campaign

The Board was asked to ratify the overall direction of the four pillars presented. A thumbs up/thumbs down informal vote was taken, and the direction the pillars are headed in was unanimously approved.

When considering the pillars and underlying strategies, as the questions:

1. What aligns with our new vision and mission? (what did you like?)
2. Are there any strategies that seem to be missing? (Any blind spots?)

Jason Sanders introduced the four pillars - Each pillar has what it is, what we mean by it, and the operational piece of it

- Sustainability
 - We take care of our resources today and into the future
 - Successfully complete the comprehensive campaign
 - Diversified revenue streams
 - Andy Freeman asked where the percentages are today? Earned income a little more than $\frac{1}{3}$, endowment is a little less than $\frac{1}{3}$, and contributions are about $\frac{1}{3}$.
 - Restoration and land use plans
- Access
 - We work to reduce and remove barriers so that everybody has access to the nourishing power of nature through environmental education
 - Growing into Shepard Farm in Cottage Grove
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Legacy
 - We deliver exceptional experiences across all Dodge Nature Center and Preschool properties and programs
 - Master plan to grow and manage multiple properties
 - Define and deliver exceptional experiences
 - Brand and reputation management
- Relationships
 - We will leverage our strengths of building relationships that reflect our values, meet our mission, and inspire the intentional care for nature.
 - Explore connection between environmental education and intentionally caring for nature
 - Exceptional work place

- Partnerships with schools, parents, students, vendors, volunteers, and community partners

Report back from Breakout Session 1 - Strategy Pillars

- Group 1
 - Everyone agreed that the pillars aligned with the Mission, Vision, and Values.
 - There is a lot of crossover between the pillars, they are open so things can fit in many areas.
 - Getting more details would be good. Determining things like are the Sustainability and Access pillars strictly about the properties, or something larger?
 - Thinking about the Access pillar, we should consider virtual access as well as physical.
 - It is important to think about all the ways that there could be barriers to accessing Dodge - transportation, financial, etc.
 - In the Access pillar, the group proposed that instead of “we work to reduce”, use we should say “we will reduce”.
- Group 2
 - The group felt there is strong alignment between the Mission and Vision and the four pillars; they also appreciate how they align with the comprehensive campaign.
 - The group felt the Legacy pillar aligns with the vision for the future of Dodge.
 - The pillars are broadly defined so it doesn't seem like anything is missing, but it will be interesting to see what comes next in terms of operations.
 - The group asked the question “What is the legacy we want to create and leave, what do we mean when we say legacy?”
 - The group also thought about what barriers there are to access nature - what are the benchmarks, are we achieving them, and what barriers still exist?
- Group 3
 - The group talked about how much detail needs to be in the plan to outline where the operations should go when considering the separation between strategy and operations.
 - They loved the interconnectedness and synergy between the pillars and with the Mission, Vision, and Values.
 - Looking at this from many angles - as a visitor, as a parent, as a board member
 - No blind spots, but comment about making sure that DEI doesn't get siloed but that it is integrated across all pillars and operations
- Group 4
 - The group thought the pillars were concise.
 - They liked the tie in between the strategic plan and the comprehensive campaign.
 - When talking about access - defining how to serve more and more of - the group wondered who are we talking about.
 - The group brought up energy efficiency and resource management.
- Group 5

- Thinking back to when the preschool launched and now launching Shepard Farm, it feels like this is a lot, but it is how Dodge does things.
- This group wondered if there is an opportunity for the DEI taskforce to build up or add to the work around access.
- The group spend time thinking about the boards job in looking at risk – SWAT.
- The asked the question “How are we set up as board members to support this work?”
- Andy Freeman asked if Legacy is the right word - legacy is defined by the past, but the things listed under it are all future focused. Ann Schwichtenberg said she loved the pillar because there are so many people who have been invested in Dodge for so long, and she felt it said that Dodge will continue on the foundation that has already been built - these are the things we’ve already done and we will continue to do. It was suggested that adding the word “continue” below in the descriptions would help clarify. Another consideration would be to use the phrase “Building on the legacy” - the decisions we make today are tomorrow’s legacy.
- Amy Bloomquist pointed out that in the Access pillar, she thinks that including the word “identify” is important because we don’t necessarily know all the barriers. This ties into the Relationship pillar as well.
- Now that the Board has given general approval, staff are going to dig into these pillars to start to define the work, the game plan. The taskforce will be looking at goals, metrics, and milestones.

Board Focus Setting for 2023

- We’ve heard from the Task Force “What can we (the Board) do to be exceptional in 2023?”
- Think about what we’ve done in 2022, but look ahead to what we can do in 2023.

Report back on ways the Board feels they have contributed:

- Group 1
 - Night for Nature Committee: planned, acquired auction items, etc.
 - Staffing events and helping out
 - Taking a half day for retreats like this
 - Committees
 - Skillsets - people utilizing their skills and background to support Dodge
- Group 2
 - Capital Campaign - participation in Night for Nature, bringing people, introducing people to Dodge
 - Being on the grounds, making sure people feel welcome
 - Professional and personal experiences that they can share with staff
 - Big event support
- Group 3
 - Getting to know Dodge and participating in events
 - Helping to evolve Night for Nature
 - Working with Shepard Farm taskforce, broadening the vision

- Board meetings, they are well run and there is a lot of support for Jason and the team
- Volunteering -Trail greeting, tree planting, etc.
- Bringing new people to Dodge
- Supporting outreach efforts, facilitating relationships
- Group 4
 - DEI taskforce work and DEI training for the Board
 - Support for the Capital Campaign and Night for Nature
 - Kicking off the Strategic Plan and support for Jason
 - Benchmarking
 - Volunteering
 - Bringing people to Dodge, participating in programs
- Group 5
 - Serving on committees
 - Serving on taskforces
 - Board Members always having the Dodge hat on, reaching out to foundations, thinking about connections for Dodge, keeping Dodge front of mind
 - Bringing potential funding sources to Brenda

What is needed now?

- An important piece of finishing off 2023 is completing the Comprehensive Campaign.
- Dodge has a \$5 million goal to reach by December 31, 2023.
- The biggest piece remaining in the Campaign is Planned Gifts.
- Capital Investments are still needed at Shepard Farm.
- Annual fund – Dodge needs more new supporters
- Endowment – This will involve targeted asks
- Looking at the next 6 months, Dodge is asking for Board participation in major events. An upcoming events sheet went out with board packet. These events are designed to engage new prospects as well as to thank existing donors.
- We will be sending out event notifications so people have them on their calendars as well.

Heather sent a Google form for each board member to fill out around commitments for 2023

- Group 1
 - Members of this group struggled getting the document open. The document was resent to different email addresses to fix the problem.
 - Board members plan on coming to Night for Nature and the Town Halls.
- Group 2
 - This group focused on event attendance – there was a lot of excitement around the ones at Shepard Farm especially.
- Group 3
 - Connecting with schools for outreach programs
 - Event attendance
 - Bringing people to events

- Taking on some folks who are current donors to cultivate them.
 - Board buddy program
- Group 4
 - Making connections and bringing people on site
 - Follow up on people they have brought out previously.
 - Sponsorships
- Group 5
 - Making connections and inviting people in to Dodge

Ultimately, the number one thing for 2023 is that we need to raise \$750,000 for capital expenses for renovations at Shepard Farm. This will be the staff's focus, and needs to be the board's focus as well.

What does the board need to be successful?

- What do you need to be successful with your individual commitments?
 - Do we need to increase our Board Meeting frequency to meet our high priority initiatives on the horizon?
 - The Board would like to be more aware of what staff members are doing. Staff reaching out to Board Members as resources.
 - Calendar invites for events are very helpful - better and more visibility of events. If it is possible, create a calendar with all events that people could add to their calendars.
 - Reach out to Jason or Brenda if you have someone within your circle who could be a potential donor but don't know how to make the connections.
 - Sharing invite lists for events so if a Board Member knows someone on the list they can reach out to encourage them to come.
 - Connecting with Dodge on LinkedIn and social media.
 - Adding some board meetings between now and summer - there is work that needs to be done, and that should drive the meeting schedule. Virtual is easier to attend for added meetings.
 - DEI work needs it's own space, this is important work and should have time devoted to it.
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- Jason thanked Mo, Heather, and Sara for their help pivoting the Board Retreat to a virtual meeting.
 - The Board has been asked to fill out a Board Retreat Evaluation Form, please fill this out as soon as possible.
 - The April board meeting will focus on DEI, Strategic Plan, and the first draft of the budget. There will likely be another meeting between now and April.

V. Adjourn

Michael-jon Pease moved to adjourn the meeting; Sheila Williams Ridge seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:17 am.