

Minutes of the Leadership Development Committee Meeting - 28 Feb 2008

7:00 – 8:30 pm, Uptown Espresso, California Ave. & Edmunds, W. Seattle

In attendance: Steve Karbowski, chair; Peggy Abby, recording minutes; Beth Grieser, Sharon Henderson, Samantha Updegrave, Ann Martin, Robin Hess, Brian Earl, Bill Schrier

Steve K. submitted the meeting agenda for approval. It was approved with two modifications: Sharon Henderson's report on her visit to the 36th District monthly meeting, and second to table the mission statement discussion until Walter Sive is available.

Action items for both short-term (now through the November election) and longer term goals were considered. Short-term priorities discussed include intergration of new members in time to be helpful for the November election. There are some orientation procedures that have been recommended for the for the board, but none for general members. Orientation for all our new members and existing regular members is critical to our success. A survey could be created for new and current members to assess everyone's talents, experience and interests.

It is important to use our resources wisely and create transparent procedures for everyone's benefit. We have a large and growing membership (almost 800), much enthusiasm to build on and the financial resources to implement our goals. It was suggested and generally agreed upon that we can learn much from other local district organizations.

Sharon H. reported on her visit to the 36th District meeting and gave a good overview of their organization. Chair Peter House coordinates an active board of at least 24 elected members that oversee several committees that seem to function smoothly. A key element of their success is the "NOC" or Neighborhood Organizing Committees. Our district might benefit significantly from using a similar organizational structure.

Sharon also observed that the 36th District Chair appears to inspire their members and PCO's by stressing their importance as a very necessary and valued part of their district and our democracy. They also solicited comments and criticism to assess the things that worked well (and not so well) at their caucuses for planning future caucuses. Developing good feed back methods keeps everyone involved in a transparent and healthy membership.

The 36th District Organization also advertises their opportunities for volunteers on their website and in their newsletter. They also run paid ads in their newsletter for local businesses. For member meetings they have an active front entrance team of four members to greet and offer information, keeping everyone up to date, signed in and answering questions. They also have moved their "Good of the Order" segment of the meeting closer to the beginning of the meeting for better participation. There are many

things we can learn from other district's organizations and the committee members agreed to visit other districts to learn more and report back to the LDC, our E-Board, and membership.

It was noted that we have a greatly expanded membership with approximately 600 new members and we need to integrate them carefully and maintain their enthusiasm. A mentoring program should be started quickly to get volunteers for the coming events and projects before November and after. Many of our newly registered members were signed up more as financial contributors than as intentional participants, but we need to encourage them to become active.

Bill S. raised the issue of planning as a very necessary part of our work and a more expanded yearly published schedule would help everyone to see what lies ahead and to be more aware of what we all will be doing before November and after. More transparency creates more participation and enthusiasm and gives new members as well as regulars the information they need to participate better. We all need more information to feel a sense of belonging and ownership of our goals.

Right now we are operating with enthusiastic members jumping in to help with perceived needs without having tightly defined roles or the authority to develop the role. Better defined positions and roles for volunteers will help us now and in the future. Participating in different projects is more fun when working together than working alone. It was pointed out that doorbelling can be less dangerous and more fun when working at least in pairs. Also if anyone serves in a position too long and alone, there is the danger of becoming prey to "Entitlement Syndrome".

The following specific action items for the committee were suggested for the next month or two:

1. Visiting other districts. Sharon, Beth, Brian, Ann and Steve committed to attend other district meetings in March and April and report back to the committee on their findings.
2. Recruitment development. Peggy and Brian offered to look into establishing a recruitment subcommittee with an eye on recruiting a slate of good candidates to run for E-Board elected positions for our reorganization this December.
3. Developing Standing Rules for our By Laws. Bill (who has already begun this process for the board), Ann, Samantha, volunteered for this initiative (Richard was suggested since he is By-Laws Committee Chair
4. Developing a Membership Survey of new and existing member skill, expertise and interests as well as integrating information gained at the caucus.

Our next meeting was set for Monday, March 24th at 7 pm at Ann Martin's house. Others are encouraged to attend and participate in any of the above tasks/projects. Contact Steve Karbowski (stevekarbo@aol.com) or Peggy Abby (pabby@comcast.net) for more info.