

**WEST POINT INN ASSOCIATION**  
FALL MEMBERS' MEETING Sunday, October 20, 2019, 11:00 AM  
West Point Inn  
Members' Lounge  
100 Old Railroad Grade Fire Rd  
Mill Valley, CA 94941

**MINUTES**

Meeting called to order at **11:07** am by President Chris Marcuse

Board Attendees: Bonnie Jones, Don Keeley, Wayne Koide, Jim Parton, Patti Schmidt, Johanna Sistik, Bob Newcomer, Mark Northcross

Board Members Absent: None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- **Minutes of April 14, 2019 Fall Members' Meeting**

Copies are provided to members in attendance. Approval deferred due to lack of quorum (20% of membership, i.e. 120 members)

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

- **Election Results**

Elected for terms beginning January 2020: Nancy Fox, Pete Martin, Claire Wellnitz  
New members (Nancy Fox, Pete Martin & Claire Wellnitz) welcomed. Thanks given to the three Board members (Patti Schmidt, Bob Newcomer & Mark Northcross) whose terms expire at the end of 2019.

- **Major Projects Completed**

- **Deck**

The deck was leaking. Led by Ross Asselstine, crew from Structural Integrity (Evo Gregorian) lifted up the deck, replaced structure underneath, added waterproofing, and replaced the boards. Deck is expected to last 30 to 50 years.

The stairs will be done soon. Damage and rot were discovered during the deck work.

- **Reservations**

Due to a major data breach, the company that hosted the Inn's reservation system gave 60 days notice that they were going out of business. We have found a replacement, InnRoad. Similar user interface but will take one to their site. We understand that it is more user friendly. Expecting to go live within a day. Members are requested to report any issues they encounter.

- **Notice Board**

It is almost brand new. Ross designed. A ton of work was done by Michael Jefferies and his son putting it together during the heat wave. Thanks also made to the California Alpine Club and their foundation for the donation that made that

possible.

- **Challenges Going Forward**

- **Fire Safety**

This is our biggest concern. The Board created a Fire Hardening Committee (Pete Martin, Scott Halsted, Urban Carmel, Ross Asselstine, Chris Marcuse). Did a walk around in the spring with FireSafe Marin and Marin County Fire. They showed us our vulnerabilities and gave advice regarding what was required to be done and what they recommended. Three main categories:

- Internal fire: we are 95% completed on what they recommended, including removal of most propane tanks (hook in to propane pipes for Pancake Breakfasts); improving screening; upgrading gutters; almost fire grade hoses with nozzles (on the gardening hoses – in addition to existing fire hoses)

- Small grass fire nearby: we have done screening, vegetation management. We will soon be looking at additional tree maintenance with a professional crew.

- Conflagration (wine country-type fire): It is a 50-50 shot to survive even with maximum hardening, which might cost up to \$1 million. Therefore, we are doing design and measurements that would enable us to rebuild if necessary.

- **Insurance (report by Mark Northcross)**

This is the most serious risk to the Inn since the 1940s, when the Water District proposed closing the Inn.

There is an at least 50% chance that 25% of California homeowners (in the Wildland Urban Interface [“WUI”]) will lose their fire insurance during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of 2020. The Inn is looking at the very real possibility that we will not be able to fulfill the terms of our lease with the Water District (which requires that we carry fire insurance). The State has a fire insurance of last resort, FAIR, which is funded by mandated fees from all insurance carriers admitted in the state. We have insurance with Zurich at present. Admitted carriers’ combined losses from the fires of 2017 & 2018 exceeded their combined profits for the past 25 years. The word is that their actuaries are telling them to leave the state ASAP because things are only going to get worse. Because FAIR is paid by admitted carriers, if they leave, the FAIR program would collapse.

Our policy with Zurich expires in June. We have a high probability of not being renewed.

If we can’t get insurance and are thus in default on our lease, what do we do for the Inn? What are our “talking point” with the Water District? Do we attempt hardening the Inn? Do we set up an endowment to fund rebuilding? Etc. Mark recommends deadline for us as a community to come together with a long term decision by the membership meeting next April.

The information we have is that non-admitted carriers (like Zurich) may stay in the market but at premium levels 3, 5, 10 or more times current premiums. The prediction is that, for WUI properties, there will be no fire insurance available at all some time in 2020. This is an issue that the Water District will also face for its property.

Question about external sprinklers. The Fire Hardening Committee is putting together a paper on all these issues, including sprinklers, for members to consider. Fire Department’s response is that those types of system don’t work. Also we have

pretty limited water supplies up here.

- **Water Upgrades**

The Board expresses appreciation to all who donated to the fundraising campaign to increase our water supply.

We had expected to partner more with the Water District, but they have had other priorities this year involving their rate increase. They are now able to provide guidance and help. There are two paths going forward. One is changing the spring box; the other is possibly drilling into the side of the mountain for water access. Member George Reid, a hydrogeologist, is assisting on that issue. The construction period for 2019 ended the previous week, so any construction ultimately approved and permitted will have to occur in 2020.

The Water District has agreed to help with a short-term fix of raising the sides of the existing spring box to reduce sediment in the water.

In the event of a fire, the Inn is limited to 20,000 gallons in the redwood tank. Hooking up to city water is not feasible. There has been, as part of fire hardening, the possibility of adding another water tank. The Inn might be required to bear the full cost.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

As of one week before the meeting, bank balance is \$205,000. The deck cost was about \$35,000. Stair repair is estimated at \$5-10,000. Conservative estimate is that, at the end of the year, we will have about \$160,000 in the bank. End of last year was \$150,000.

The P&L shows that revenues are a little off from last year mainly because overnight use fees are down slightly from 2018. They are nevertheless running at near record levels. Pancake Breakfasts and membership are both ahead of last year.

On the expense side, insurance is way up (\$8,000 increase – driven primarily by climate change). Rubbish is up because we were underbilled in 2018 and overbilled in 2019. We have now sorted this issue out. Propane cost is down. Payroll is up, primarily due to the increase in minimum wage.

Primary determinant of revenue performance is red flag days.

Overnight use fees are 2<sup>nd</sup> best ever. The downside is that heavier use means more maintenance cost.

Overnight use fees have been rising consistently for 20 years. We saw an uptick during the last recession because the Inn is a bargain compared to alternatives.

## OLD & NEW BUSINESS

No old business discussed.

- **New business**

- **Policy changes**

No longer accepting credit cards for dues or lockers. Can still make reservations with credit cards. For dues and lockers, members can use cash, checks or wampum.

There will be no Saturday Whole Inn Bookings. This is a one year trial. There are a couple of primary reasons. First, we have not seen a lot of use of the Emig Cabin Cabin by the disabled community and there is thought that being the one person who is not part of a Whole Inn Booking was a disincentive. Second, we want to increase access to the Inn for people who work Monday through Friday and can only come up

on weekends. Starts with reservations that are being made starting January 1<sup>st</sup>. we will be looking at impact, if any, on revenue. We anticipate also doing a survey through SurveyMonkey to get feedback. Third, there will be a flat fee for Whole Inn Bookings of \$1,400 for both members and nonmembers. The rationale that a single member could book the whole Inn where all the other guests are nonmembers, who would still get the member rate. Based on a review of data, half to two-thirds of available weekends (i.e. excluding event nights) were Whole Inn Bookings.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

*Building & Grounds:* Ross Asselstine & Urban Carmel  
Nothing beyond what has already been discussed.

*Communications/Website Committee:* Jan Gauthier (report by Chris Marcuse)  
Jan has been working with our webmaster on getting the new reservation system up. It is expected to go live within a day of the meeting.

*Development Committee:* Suzie Adams Koide (report by Chris Marcuse)  
Suzie did a great job on the water project fundraising. We are looking at ideas for fundraising focus for next year. It will probably be fire related.

*Election Committee:* Chris Marcuse & Lin Johanson (report by Chris Marcuse)  
No report beyond election results.

*Event Committee:* Gail Shahan/Fran Rondeau (report by Chris Marcuse)  
We are looking at March to bring back the Chili Cookoff.

*Fire & Safety:* Pete Martin (report by Chris Marcuse)  
Pete has been working with Buildings and Grounds on fire hardening. We will be meeting with a tree contractor in a couple of weeks regarding work needed around the building.

*Garden Committee:* Kathleen Kopp (report by David Durr)  
Garden is doing well. Thanks extended to Don Keeley and the work crew for building a new platform for the composting system. A new tumbler is coming in. Members are encouraged to use the garden.

*Heritage/History Committee/ Historian:* Fred Runner (report by Chris Marcuse)  
We have a committee led by Fran working on a possible Heritage Night in April. Decision will be made at the November Board meeting.

*Housekeeping:* Fran Rondeau/Bonnie Jones (report by Bonnie)  
The pillows are done.

*Water Tank/System:* Bonnie Jones  
The Innkeepers have been doing a good job in keeping the chemicals right.

*Membership:* Gordy & Lynn MacDermott  
Report by Gordy. Still at cap of 600 members. 21 people who have been approved for

membership pending a space becoming available (due to a member's demise, withdrawal or failure to pay dues). People may have a 2 year wait after approval before a space becomes available. We have approximately 80 lifetime members.

*Mountain Organization Liaison:* Olene Sparks (report by Chris Marcuse)

We are working with One Tam on issues.

*Newsletter:* Alison Bricker (report by Chris Marcuse)

No report.

*Old Timer's Liaison:* Marilyn Skaff (report by Chris Marcuse)

Old-Timers Appreciation Party in June. More information will be coming on that.

*Pancake Breakfasts:* Lin Johanson/Gordy MacDermott (report by Chris Marcuse)

The last PCB was cancelled due to fire risk. A couple of hundred people came up anyway. Day use revenue was sky high.

*Personnel:* Lin Johnson/Fran Rondeau (report by Chris Marcuse)

Chris thanks all Innkeepers for their good work. Their work has gone up as usage has risen.

*Policy & Procedures:* Wayne Koide

Please spread the word to other members about the policy changes that were discussed earlier.

*Reservations:* Jennifer Greene (report by Chris Marcuse)

No report beyond what has previously been discussed.

*Work Parties:* Don Keeley

The monthly work parties are important to upkeep. We try to keep them to 40-45 members. Generally they are half members and half nonmembers.

Don is applauded by the members and Board for his great work leading the work parties.

Raffle is conducted.

#### AWARDS

Rusty Spike for contributions to the Inn awarded to Ross Asselstine.

Wall of Fame – presented by Charlie Evans – to acknowledge a member's past contributions to the Inn is awarded to Nancy Skinner.

Meeting adjourned at 12:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Parton

Acting Secretary