

# **The Flying Brick**

## **Volunteer Meeting Minutes**

### **March 4, 2010**

**(Facilitators: Alison & Hermelinda, Stack Taker: Kendel)**

## **Agenda**

### Welcome/History for new folks

You can find the history of the Flying Brick on both the Facebook and the Myspace profiles.

### Intros

Christie, Kontra, Salem, Kendel, Hermelinda, Ali, Alison, Nathan, Sara, Tim, Alex, Mara

### “What’s Consensus & Facilitation?” And “Why do we do it?”

Alison explained the basics of consensus and facilitation and the group discussed why it’s the process we’ve chosen to use for decision making at the Flying Brick. As a group we are going to strive to use consensus and facilitation whenever possible in an attempt to be as transparent and non-hierarchical as possible. For a good primer on Consensus and Facilitation you can visit a guide here:

<http://www.nonviolencetraining.org/Training/facilitation.htm>

### Summary of Working Groups

As of the meeting there were four working groups. We discussed what the working groups were and what they’ve done since the last all-volunteer meeting in January.

#### Working Groups

##### *Events & Workshops*

This working group has successfully met numerous times and arranged a number of events including an alternative Black History Month event and a benefit for Haiti showing *The Agronomist*. Currently a March 17<sup>th</sup> film screening of *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* is being organized as well as consensus and facilitation workshops.

### *Long Term Planning & Newsletter*

This group has met and successfully produced the first Flying Brick Newsletter for March. Keep your eyes open to find copies around town or stop by the Flying Brick to check it out.

Meetings for the April newsletter will begin soon. While the group has focused on the newsletter, little energy has been spent on long term planning (which will be addressed later in the minutes).

### *Fundraising*

A fundraising meeting was organized but only the person who bottom-lined the meeting was present.

### *Promotions*

A promotions meeting was organized but only the person who bottom-lined the meeting was present.

### *Open-Hours*

While not a formal working group we discussed the current state of open-hours at the Flying Brick. Mondays have slowed but provide a good time for working groups to meet. Thursdays are busy days for check outs. March open-hours sign up went out prior to March and all the slots have been successfully filled for the month. The goal for April is to have open-hours sign-up available on a physical form in the library.

## Main Focus of the Meeting

After we discussed the working groups, we discussed the main focus of this meeting. A number of concerns have been raised by various members of the group about retention of potential volunteers and the difficulty of plugging people into work at the Flying Brick. We discussed why it was important to address the concerns and we brainstormed to identify the root of the problem.

With a desire to be as inclusive and accessible to people as possible the group identified a number of concerns during the brainstorming process.

The following is a list of those concerns:

- \*Working group organization and structure
- \*Organizing without a solid foundation for the organization
- \*New people with little to no experience with organizing being able to plug into work
- \*Newer folks not knowing anyone in the group
- \*The limited focus of who the library is geared towards
- \*The nature of email and list serves
- \*Expectations of current volunteers
- \*Problem of accountability
- \*Mass amounts of emails
- \*Intimidation
- \*Inclusion and approachableness
- \*Organization and organizing being too serious
- \*Not enough time between meetings

After the brainstorm session the group consolidated the list into 3 focused categories in order to make tangible changes to begin problem solving. The concerns were divided into working group organization, “email stuff”, and “people stuff”. During these discussions we briefly discussed the concerns, shared possible solutions, and made proposals to be voted upon. The conversations and the proposals are listed below. Any proposal that passed was unanimously via the consensus process.

### Working Group Organization

#### Possible Solutions

- \*Streamlining working groups
- \*Re-organize the working groups to focus on foundation
- \*Allocate point-persons to contact folks who previously showed interest.
- \*Make sure there are report backs from the working groups.

#### Proposals

- (1) Eliminate long-term planning working group
  - Group was concerned about long-term planning and foundation work being lost by the wayside.
  - Amendment** to proposal made to eliminate long-term planning group and focus the next volunteer meeting on long-term planning. This would include Alison and

Hermelinda conglomerating what they have worked on so far to be made available to the group prior to the meeting in order to be discussed and voted on.

**-The proposal with the amendment passed.**

(2) Eliminate promotions working group.

-We discussed the capacity of the group and of individuals deciding that individuals and *the group as a whole* will be responsible for promoting the Flying Brick and its events until our capacity expands.

**-The proposal passed.**

(3) Merge the fundraising working group with the events/workshops working group.

-We lack the capacity for a separate group for fundraising. Any events or workshops that need money will be addressed by the new merged working group.

**-The proposal passed.**

### “Email Stuff”

#### Possible Solutions

\*Decide on as many things as possible at meetings to avoid cluttering of inboxes.

\*Set regular meeting times.

\*Ensure that point people are allocated for setting up meetings and getting in touch with folks individually.

\*Create a blog where *all* information for the Flying Brick would be available including, but not limited to: news, upcoming events, minutes, meeting dates, volunteer opportunities, etc.

\*Continue to use facebook to update folks about upcoming events and meetings.

#### Proposals

(1) Divide the email list and contact previously interested folks by phone (preferable) or email.

**-The proposal passed.**

-This will be an effort bottom lined by Hermelinda and Alison and carried out by the group to try to re-engage with folks.

(2) Point persons who are bottom lining meetings will *propose and organize a meeting date for a period of 5 days minimum*. Once the date is set by the point person *the date must be made available and known (via email, facebook, and blog) at least 5 days in advance of the actual date of the meeting*.

**-The proposal passed.**

(3) Create a blog for the function discussed previously.

**-The proposal passed.**

-Kontra will bottom line the creation of the blog but it will be accessible for update by all volunteers.

### “People Stuff”

#### Possible Solutions

\*Promote availability of space

\*Promote in new spaces and to new organizations

\*Diversification without tokenizing

\*Sharing resources and developing those resources

\*Efforts to be more friendly and to “buddy up”

\*Create a more welcoming outside environment. Work on the lighting to the entrance, the sandwich board, and signs on the library door.

\*Hang out time with food!

#### Proposals

(1) Organize the *second Friday of every month* to create a cooperative and relaxed event for volunteers, interested volunteers, or any friends of the library.

**-The proposal passed.**

-Hermelinda will bottom line the March 12<sup>th</sup> event.

-The next will be on April 9<sup>th</sup>.

(2) Make obtaining a working computer a priority.

**-The proposal passed.**

-Everyone will keep this in mind but Nathan will bottom line.

#### Resolutions

(Resolutions are informally decided efforts not voted upon but reasoned by the group to be beneficial to achieving whatever goal is at hand. Resolutions are often used until tangible proposals can be made).

- \*Expand resources
- \*Individually promote the space
- \*Be friendly!

### Other Important Stuff

Point Persons for Upcoming Working Group Meetings

Fundraising/Events/Workshops: Kendel

Newsletter: Christie

Next Volunteer Meeting

Sunday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 7pm, The Flying Brick Library

Social Night

Friday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 7pm, The Flying Brick Library

Details to come!