

VCC Executive Council Meeting
Wednesday, September 21, 2011
White River Jct., VT 05001

Present: Mark Fischer, Christopher Coutant, Rachel Schaal, Lisa Battilana, Linda Miller, Sebastian von Trapp, and Jeremy Stephenson,

President's report

- Annual Meeting – Tentatively scheduled for Saturday, January 28, 2012, at the Cloudland Farm facility. **ACTION:** Lisa will contact Cloudland to check on availability.

- Appeal for new Executive Committee members – Linda and Sebastian will be going off the Board. Christopher is getting close, but may remain as a member at large since we use the *Provisions International* meeting room. Mark is also slated to go off the Board as President but remain as immediate Past President. The best plan for a smooth transition is that Jeremy will move into the position of President.

- 2012 Festival – Mark and Rachel met at Shelburne Farms with Hillary Schwoegler, Andrea van Hoven, Adeline Druart, Gail Albert, from Shelburne Vineyard, for a wrap up session with another meeting to be scheduled in early November. Rachel asked if the rest of the Board would like to be present (we decided we do not need to do so) and asked what is the vision of this Board? We need to decide who is doing what for the next Festival? Rachel will stay on as Coordinator, but the Festival budget needs to include a support position. For 2011 Rachel was the Coordinator with support and information from VBC. VBC still would like to be a presenter (not a sponsor) of the Festival with recognition. In order to maintain that status, they will need to choose what major contribution they will be making towards the Festival such as contacting/setting up sponsors.

We discussed the lack of requests for sponsorships for the 2012 Festival as of yet. It was our understanding that the 2011 Festival sponsors should have been called the day after the Festival thanking them for their participation and signing them up for the 2012 Festival. We need to get the sponsor list from Alyson Hooper and develop our own potential sponsors such as Green Mountain Coffee, vineyards, etc.

Some issues reported this year:

- Crowding
- Confusion about the wine glass purchase as some attendees thought it was included with entrance fee. Also included a long wait that was not really necessary if the attendee did not plan to taste alcohol. Need clear signage with designation of lines for *wine ticket purchase* and *no wine*.
- Rachel thanked the 40 or so senders individually for the emails she received.

- Workshop Ideas – Mark suggested that we spend more time on Vermont cheese and someone more connected with Vermont products. Mark spoke about having one workshop with sensory appreciation with Montse leading the discussion. He felt that having more on the cheesemakers with Ann Saxelby and a video as well as having the cheesemaker present will give a more personalized connection to the consumer.

- Lisa suggested having more booths out in tents, and having the workshops inside or else clearing out the morning session and then have an afternoon session. Perhaps have a higher price for the morning ticket.
- Volunteers – some were lacking especially at the end of the day.
- We need to figure out how to ensure that everyone has purchased a ticket. There were some gatecrashers.
- Castanea Foundation/VIAC Risk Reduction Program – DJ D’Amico and Errol Groves lead on the project. Castanea is interested in funding the kind of programming that VIAC started a few years back and reaching the cheesemakers that were either unable to take part before or just didn’t exist then. They are offering \$25K, but require equal matching funds. VIAC estimates it will cost \$40K to offer this programming to 10 cheesemakers, and VIAC has asked that the VCC and a few individual cheesemakers would cover the balance.
 - Sebastian has been in contact with Karen Lynch to see if RBEG funds might be appropriate for this project. He floated an offer of at least \$7K. She was a bit hesitant due to sponsoring a project with VIAC, but Mark explained that is for the benefit of Vermont cheesemakers.
 - Mark suggested that DJ teach a class on why this program is important. Cathy Donnelly agreed. This would help cement a working relationship between VIAC and VCC.
 - If we can use \$7,500 from RBEG, we discussed needing to have a dialogue on what will happen if we can’t come up with the additional \$7,500. During further discussion, we decided that we could contribute \$7,500 from the general fund if we can use \$7,500 from RBEG. **ACTION:** Mark will have a conversation with Cathy Donnelly to discuss this and have a joint luncheon meeting with VCC and VIAC to discuss the future relationship between the two groups.

Treasurer's report

- There is a discrepancy of \$5,800 from expected 2011 income from membership. We were unable to determine why we budgeted \$13,000 for the 2011 Fiscal Year.
- We have not yet received the \$32,100 from Vermont Dairy Promotion. **ACTION:** Rachel will check on this Colleen at the Dept of Ag.
- Expenses for the newsletter and brochure appear to be twice as much as we budgeted for. **ACTION:** We need to investigate the printing cost for the newsletter. Perhaps there was an error on the invoice. Sebastian will get the invoices from last year.
- We also do not see the \$10,000 for the cheese festival sponsorship. **ACTION:** Rachel will check the ledger. If the shift has not been made, then the VCF would be up \$10,000 and VCC will be down \$10,000.

- We discussed re-categorizing the *Education* expenses to *Cheese Event Expense* and moving the \$500 for Robert Aguilera workshop. **Rather than having to re-define the categories, Linda made a motion to have Rachel do the coding of all invoices prior to sending to Chris for payment. Lisa seconded the motion. The motion carried.**
- Neville McNaughton is now working as a consultant at VIAC filling the gap left by Marc Druart as a cheese technician and educator. Mark described the relationship between VIAC and VCC. Because Neville is a consultant, and is from the midwest, the Vermont cheesemakers may have less access to the VIAC services. In other words, we wondered if there might be less networking capabilities in the future.
- We talked about writing another grant in conjunction with VIAC and support from VCC.

Coordinator's report

Accountant follow up – Rachel talked with Meghan from the Vermont Fresh Network and their accountant does not have a special interest in non-profit organizations.

Festival wrap-up

- Budget report – Rachel thinks we will have ~\$70,000 in the checking account following payment of all invoices, however, this may be \$80,000 as listed above in regards to the movement of \$10,000 from the VCC to the VCF budget. Discussed whether or not the Festival can support the coordinator position, and we felt this as the case.
- Planning meetings with Emily Bradbury (PR), Jody Farnham (Seminars), Scuola(website)
- Sponsorship Drive - Mateo Kehler from *Jasper Hill Farm*, Clay Whitney from *Cabot*, Lisa Battilana from *Woodstock Farmers Market* and Allie Marino from *West River*.

ACS wrap-up

2012 Sponsorship – **Mark made a motion and Lisa seconded that we sponsor at the \$6,000 Bronze level. The motion carried.**

The sponsorship breakfast went well, though seeing the Oregon Guild's display and handout gave Rachel ideas about next year if we do it again. She suggested:

- fewer cheeses on the plate (limit per producer?)
- handout
- short video? we have footage from the festival, and/or we could get new footage.

Educational Committee

In addition to the retailer/cheesemaker events (see below) what programming should we schedule for 2011/2012?

VCC/Provisions update

- 68 retailers took part in the six events so far this season.
- retail participants visited ten farms on five days,
- Robert Aguilera's *Cut, Wrap, Store Cheese!* event was overwhelmingly well-received.

- We have funding available to cover another workshop (Robert Aguilera has agreed to do a variation on the theme of cut, wrap, store for cheesemakers this fall) and another series of farm tours.

Cheese Trail Map/Brochure update

35,000 printed

4,000 distributed at the fest (members and visitors)

4,000 distributed since festival

Membership

Paypal account is active, Elisa will help place buttons by the end of September.

Associate Membership will take place ASAP

Cheesemaker we will do a November membership drive.

Survey

Some info can be kept from earlier Survey Monkey for ongoing RBEG reporting

What else do we want to know?

Website

Educational Programs

Marketing

Festival

Next meeting: Next Executive Council Meeting Wednesday, October 19 from 1 to 4 pm. We will hold a meeting in July only if necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Simon Miller, Secretary