

MRRA meeting minutes - November 13, 2012 at the Boathouse

Attendees (16): Joe Bernard, Bob Sengstaken, Steven Freund, Mary Theresa Freund, Dottie Semonian, Kathy McGowan, Barbara Mack, Jennifer Lown, Barbara Sherman, Jay Feenan, Dennis McCarthy, Barbara Mack, Joe LaFreniere, Chur Masors, Karen Scammell, and Wilma Breiland. Vee Platzer joined the meeting for the Winter Erg discussion.

Meeting Minutes –

September 11 meeting minutes change from Joe L – Change “We also need to use the inside of the docks for launch/return.” To “We should also consider using the inside...” With this change, the minutes were approved.

October 9 meeting minutes were approved.

Joe L requested that meeting agenda and meeting minutes be sent to the membership in a separate email, distinct from other email.

Safety Committee – Karen Scammell

- Growth in club and need discussion on how best to communicate safety to all members – Anyone interested in joining safety committee should contact safety@merrimackrowing.org.
- Start every meeting with a safety message in the future.
- Posting signage at the dock on the course - make more visible
- Give Peter Murray 8-12 key safety items for special sturdy weather-proof posting at the dock
- Safety test with about ten questions will be generated by Bob Lynch on the safety committee based on the UML Bellegarde Boathouse: Safety Policies and Procedures; must pass test to be OK2Row; designed to encourage members to read and understand this document.
- Safety video – will still be required viewing and the safety committee will coordinate viewings prior to monthly meetings early next year – cannot post on website due to copyright issues.
- Joe L indicated that the safety committee will provide rating system for rowers, a self-rating system.
- Joe L proposed putting four rock buoys on the river. There was strong support for this recommendation at the meeting. Joe agreed to submit budget item for the purchase of these buoys for the 2013 Budget in January.

Nominations Schedule and Annual Meeting

- Nominations due – November 23; members can also self-nominate.
- Absentee Ballot will be available on November 27, 14 days prior to Annual Meeting on December 11
- Absentee ballots must be received at MRRA, P.O. Box 1909, Lowell, MA 01853 by Friday, December 7, to be counted at the Annual Meeting.
- It was noted that absentee ballots do not count toward the quorum. Based on current membership of 96, quorum for the annual meeting is 32 (one-third of membership present). So, to encourage member participation and time for fun at the party, there will be a raffle:
 - Two MRRA memberships raffled to attendees – must be present to win
 - Plus, other assorted items
- Annual Meeting – December 11 – to be held at April’s European Restaurant, 75 Princeton Street, North Chelmsford, at 7 pm. Dottie Semonian will be sending out Special meeting notice as details are worked.

Other Business

- Joe L recommended two non-board positions:
 - Launch person – Joe will send definition of position to Equipment committee and will table until January.
 - Racing Captain – Joe will send definition of position to Equipment Committee and table until January.
- Joe L requested that the “MRRA Board consider whether or not long term storage in the boathouse of sculling blades should be restricted to only sculling blades painted in MRRA colors. A suggested rule is as follows:
Long term storage in the boathouse of sculling blades is restricted to only sculling blades painted in MRRA colors.
 - The boat captain could allow an exception, for example for MRRA members who are also participating in another rowing program with different colors, for borrowed blades and other appropriate reasons.”
 - Comments included: Some were in favor – many racing regattas require using club colors – when training for nationals (Jay) or with other clubs such as GMS (Bob S), blades have different colors. (New board action item)

Winter Erg Sessions – Vee Platzer

- No access to the boathouse during winter months due to facilities issues, not just the heating of the building. Consider use of Costello on certain designated days (W & F – early morning and some evenings – T & Th). Have eleven model D ergs that are well cared for. Have 7 sliders, one swingulator for sweep rowers and some bikes.
- Working with UML Rec Center on rates which would go to UML womens crew fundraiser.
- Trying to get program in place by December 1.
- Bob S. asked “Where are club ergs?” Karen indicated that there are three of them and Roland knows where they are. Right now, Paul Wenger and Karen Scammell each have one and the third one is at the boathouse now. If interested in a club erg, contact the equipment committee at equipment@merrimackrowing.org. Kathy M suggested renting out club ergs for a fee.

Boat Wash on Saturday, Nov 10

- Went very well – 25 people participated – Thanks to all who participated!
- Found green/red boatcover – who does it belong to?

Volunteerism – Karen Scammell

- The board is looking at the membership list and tracking when members volunteer for a committee, learn to row, Festival Regatta, TRR, and club activities such as boat wash, etc. and attend club meetings.
- Recommendation for online entry of where folks can volunteer - need to add boathouse cleanup.
- Jay reported very good TRR participation – has kept data for 5 years – 30 out of 132 did not volunteer this year.
- Karen reported that nine have not participated in any measure being traced in 2012.
- Question was raised – What if persons have rack space and have not participated? There was strong agreement that these persons should lose rack space.

- New members need to understand that volunteering is component of membership since we are an all-volunteer club.
- Agreed to discuss at annual meeting and get more feedback from members.

Motion to adjourn at 8:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Wilma Breiland