

**Playa del Fuego, Board of Directors
Spring Retreat
March 2-3, 2013**

Attendees. Nine BOD members participated in the 2-day retreat including: David Diller (President), Patty Simonton (Treasurer), Buddy Kilpatrick (Secretary), Nicole Stranko, Oryx Gazella, Mark Nyon, Ed Rosen, Amy Jensen, Mary Shaffer. **Facilitator:** Karen Buehler.

Agenda

Saturday, March 2, 2013

9:00 AM Welcome - Let's Get Started!
PDF Organization Assessment ("ALSD")
(break)
The Big Picture
Shared Vision Statement(s)

12:30 PM 1:00 PM LUNCH

Strategic Direction (Goals)
(break)
Strategy Briefs & Priorities
"Stand Up" Action Planning
Next Steps, Evaluation & Closing

Sunday, March 3, 2013

9:00 AM Recap & Transition from Day #1
9:15 AM Business Meeting

12:30 PM LUNCH & DISCUSSION WITH VET's / LANDLORDS

2:00 PM Next Steps, Evaluation & Closing
3:00 PM END OF RETREAT - CLEAN UP & DEPART

Retreat Design. The management retreat was designed in collaboration with PFD President David Diller, and facilitated by Karen L. Buehler, CPF, President, Vergent Consulting around these goals. The Board's collective thinking, decisions and activities were recorded during the meeting via flip charts, sticky notes, note cards, wall chart and other media. Significant pieces of this record have been captured in this report. Notes and summaries were provided by facilitator Karen L. Buehler, and PDF Secretary, Buddy Kilpatrick.

Purpose: The purpose of this Management Report is to provide:

- A Summary of the Retreat including outcomes, accomplishments and experiential learning for the BOD's reference, organizational management and continuous improvement in their future collective work;

- A management plan to document the BOD's short and longer term goals and vision including issues, alternatives, desired outcomes, decisions and actions from the Retreat;
- A management tool the BOD can use to track their plan and track progress and accomplishments of project and tasks designed to achieve their goals.
- An "Action Plan" that consolidates the total set of goals and actions identified during the Retreat. It also provides a framework for assigning action and tracking results and changes.

Goals: The goals of the retreat were to focus on what needs to be done to:

- Develop our vision and direction (5-10 years) and priority actions (2-3 Years) for the PDF organization, and
- Enable us to effectively make this happen as a Board.

SYNOPSIS - DAY 1: Saturday, March 2 (9:00 am – 6:30 pm)

Opening. Following breakfast in the hotel lobby, President Dave Diller opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, and then introduced Karen Buehler to lead and facilitate the meeting. Each person was given a Retreat Workbook to support the agenda and group work. Karen discussed the plan for the day, including the Agenda, the shared vision and action planning process to be used, and ground rules. In the interest of increasing and improving the Board's skills in working together as a team and building more collaborative relationships for discussion and decision making, she asked the group to work "technology free" (i.e., no computers, cell phones, etc. during group work). With some doubts and one or two exceptions made, the group agreed. The Opening Question for everyone was: "What most interests you or excites you about today's work?"

Organizational Assessment. Karen asked the group to reflect on the PDF organization and its history with the following questions:

- *What have you / the organization accomplished over the past several years?*
- *In light of all you have done, what have you learned (e.g., about serving the community(ies), relating to the public, working as a board member, being a team)?*
- *What are the strengths of this organization? This board?*
- *What are some of the "development areas" we could improve upon?*

Accomplishments of the BOD and the PDF Community.

- Communications, including the "GüD" Grand Unified Document, the revision of the Playa del Fuego website, and organized Planning Committee
- On-site Organization, including improved gate entry, ticket process, and parking. Improved relationship with Vets and creation of Vet Guest Doc.
- Creating a Safe Environment, including a strong medical team and sanctuary
- Maintaining the Ten Principles, PDF is a place for inspiration. PDF is not Burningman. PDF means different things to different people.
- Sound Policy, balancing the requirements of the environment, "not killing the buzz with rules"
- Loyalty, tickets always sell out quickly. Only Regional with two events per year.
- Art Funding, has increased.

- Community Art Projects, Art of Change, FIGMENT

Lessons Learned and Ongoing Challenges of the BOD

- We know that PDF is awesome. First timers continue to come and love their experiences. People wait for tickets. We are shepherds and stewards of the event, but we are not “event planners.”
- We recognized immediately that we are so much more effective when we can see each others’ faces.
- We know that EM does not replace “task management”. Documents take work, but are worth the effort.
- What has been working won’t do any more, and the Committee / People want more responsiveness from the BOD
- The power of social media is both positive and negative (complex)
- “Pains” for the “Good” are gains
- Want: Policy document and stronger financial records. Additional processes to streamline our actions.
- We / BOD function well under pressure / decisions are well made
- Decision making. There are the “big” decisions like land, which we push away. Big decision of Sound was made effectively and efficiently. We know that it’s impossible to please everyone.

Strengths:

- There’s a demand for what we do
- We facilitate what other people really do. They “create” the event; we create the “skeleton” that makes it possible
- We work across / with widely geographically dispersed group in the Northeast
- PDF has amazing volunteers!
- Participants of PDF and the BOD reflect a diversity of skills, backgrounds, ages
- We invite “anyone” (welcome)
- Fiscally – good drive to raise capital for Land, especially for a Nonprofit
- Our history – part of a larger culture
- We’re not the only “regional” and we spawned another “regional”

Development Areas:

- Operational transparency
- Internal and external communications
- Document the “life cycle” and management
- Purpose / focus / task management
- Define and put time limits on required action
- Empower ourselves to act / make decisions
- BOD structure needs to be developed
- Specific areas (committees)
- Review Bylaws and make updates where necessary
- BOD Member Handbook needed
- Build up new corps of volunteers
- Need more volunteers who help with Event infrastructure; small number of people and little retention
- “10 Principles” culture, but imbalance among attendee “wants”

The Big Picture. The Board next shifted its focus to the future and the ‘big picture’ for PDF. Through a visualization exercise and brainstorming, each person created their own vision of a

celebration of PDF's amazing success, 5-10 years in the future. Individuals shared their visions in small groups, and then in the large group. The following themes and common elements emerged:

Figure 2. The Big Picture (Themes and Common Elements)

PDF Foundation – more than running 2 x year events Pavilion Good friends Outdoors Paid staff Sustainable Committed volunteer network – inward and community outreach Leased or owned land; we are caretaker or landlord Organized chaos Community outreach Culture and tradition Sparkles Participatory Joyous, jubilant, raucous, exuberant Maintain and enhance diversity Loud, but respectfully Tight-knit sense of community Recognition program for volunteers	Attendance 2-10,000 10 years on board Excellent relationships with neighbors On site workshop for artists to build and create large scale stuff (e.g., fence, barn) Free food, drink, chocolate covered bacon Dancing with ... Fire Not rain, mosquitoes, bugs Gathering of artists we support over years Pride Technology, communicating in way they wanted, at that time History timeline, museum Sexy Displays of art Something new for community Facility for artists, on display Longer event, once a year
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Shared Vision. Based on their vision(s), the group brainstormed and discussed what they wanted PDF to be, become and be known for (over the next 5-10 years) and grouped these into clusters. A vision statement was drafted by a small group for each cluster and presented to the whole group. The details and intentions of the various statements were discussed and possible consolidation or separation of elements was debated. These are the draft Vision Statements as they were thoughtfully created by the board.

Shared Vision Statements

Statement A: Become a properly functioning organization in all areas including transparency, education and governance. “Get shit done. Do the right thing”.

Statement B: Promote responsible and sustainable use of natural and creative resources.

Statement C(1): Be an experiment in community that embraces diversity and encourages gifting as an alternative to commerce.

Statement C(2): To provide an environment for the formation and growth of communities

Statement D(1): Nurture a community that celebrates and encourages freedom of expression, creativity and the collective sharing of ideas and skills.

Statement D(2): Encourage a “culture of play” that makes us a destination for “creatives” seeking to participate in a more fulfilling community experience.

Statement E(1): Inspire, encourage and support the creation of art, in all its forms, within the PDF community and beyond.

Statement E(2): Attract and nurture a community that celebrates and encourages a culture of play, freedom of expression, creativity and the collective sharing of ideas and skills.

Working Lunch and Break

Strategic Directions, Strategy Briefs and Priorities. In small groups, board members translated the vision statements into action-oriented goals, with a list of action and their priorities starred. These were presented to the whole group. From these, the BOD developed action plans.

Action Planning. The group wanted to see a list of and consider the overall set of decisions and work that would be needed to accomplish at least the highest priority items generated in strategic directions exercise(s). A single list was created. Individual action items were then grouped into pairs of closely related or similar action items, and discussed in detail. A few were grouped as triplets or stand-alone items. Several items were discussed and decisions made to move forward. Other items were noted as for future action; a few with estimated timed frames for each, and others set aside for discussion on Sunday. A list of priorities is below:

- Develop process for Approval and Publishing of Minutes and Summaries
- Create and share financial documents
- Develop / Publish Board Member Handbook
- Promote Newbie Education
- Evaluate Task Management tools
- Establish Work Flow, Procedures, and Deadlines for BOD tasks
- Define and Utilize Committees
- Revisit, Revise, and Adhere to Bylaws
- Create Institutional Memory
- Collect Safety Plans for Fire, Medical, and other appropriate Dept.
- Environment and Sustainability
- Improve Access to Materials and Supplies during the event
- PDF Grants – Discuss and finalizing funding allocation
- Income: Investment and Grants
- Land and Location
- Event Planning, Policies and Design.
- Council Development.

Closing. The day’s work ended the day about 6:30 pm and the BOD went to dinner as a group. After dinner, Patty gave a demonstration of Trello, an online task management system.

SYNOPSIS - Day 2: Sunday, March 3 (9:00 am – 3:00 pm)

In Attendance: Patty Simonton, Mary Shaffer , Dave Diller, Amy Stentzel-Jensen, Nicole Stranko, Mark Nyon, Buddy Kilpatrick, Ed Rosen, Oryx Gazella. **Facilitator:** Karen Buehler.

Recap and Feedback. A few outstanding Action Planning items from Day 1 were discussed, and decision or assignments made. Karen asked the group for feedback on their work and accomplishments so far.

Agenda. Patty Simonton asked the group agenda items they wanted to address on Sunday, in light of the results of Saturday's work. Among these was "Questions for the VVMC Leaders," who were expected to arrive about 12:30 for lunch and open discussion of questions and issues. The board worked through the items and made decisions; then broke for lunch.

(Notes taken by Buddy Kilpatrick)

Minutes. Minutes of 1/27/13 BOD Conference Call were approved. Dave Diller abstained.

Waiver. Buddy presented the new waiver as drafted by our legal volunteer, Dan DeRight. Oryx recorded the changes we want. There was a discussion of how we get the waiver signed at the events and bringing the coordinators in on it. Additional legal needs were discussed.

Treasurer's Report. Patty presented a "profit/loss" comparison of our expenses. There was a discussion of changes in spending categories, which will be more refined as information for each department is sorted out. A new expense form developed by Patty requires more data from those seeking reimbursement for expenses. It was given to coordinators for the Fall event. She wants more information about who/when/why. She also discussed how the report would be broken out further. This report will be refined for IRS filing, for annual report, and post-burn report. Patty would like a budget from all departments.

Art Grant Discussion. It was said that we need to track art grant spending together with other expenses, carryover and other issues. The numbers exist but are not systematically compiled. We need past records. Dave will contact past treasurers to provide the art grant emails they sent out.

Finance. Patty, Mark, Dave, Buddy volunteered to serve on a Finance Subcommittee. We decided that an endowments report should be completed by the June board meeting. The total amount of money on hand is approximately \$280k, with ~\$230k in the money market account and ~\$50k in checking.

Event Council/CORE. Methods and details need to be figured out for creating the actual rules for the Council. We discussed a variety of well-respected people in the community that we thought would be a good fit for helping set this up. In addition to a general call-out for volunteers, we will contact specific people to see if they are interested. Subcommittee should update on Trello. Timeline: by Spring 2013 burn.

Summary of Council: The Council will be an intermediary between the Board and Planning Committee, and will consist of BOD members and coordinator members. We decided to set up a group to decide how this will operate. The Board is legally responsible for everything done in PDF's name. The committee will define the process and at ways the organization works as a whole including enhancing relations between the Board and Planning Committee.

Regional Meetings. A \$400 budget was approved for travel for up to 4 attendees to attend the Global Leadership Conference for Burning Man in San Francisco. A report to PDF is required from each attendee. A travel pool for board members to go to other meetings was discussed and tabled.

Vet's Land. In anticipation of VVMC representatives joining us for lunch, we talked about roads and gravel on the VVMC property as well as discussing lack of coverage at the gate.

Land Committee. We talked about criteria for land purchases, and other uses for any land we might find. We decided we have no money for a large mortgage plus improvements. We need to collect records from past searches, and identify our purpose. The members of the land committee will be Amy, Buddy, Oryx, Dave, Lizard. Buddy volunteered to gather land search committee records. We will make a list of what we want.

Board Documentation. Board Network, Trello combination. We need more insurance cost information. April 1 deadline.

Grant process. There were questions of what should be included in definition of art. The discussion did not result in any changes being made.

Vote for members, Directors. There was a general consensus that the Bylaws need to be reviewed, but a process was not established to carry this out. The current board members and officers were approved. We talked about hiring administrative help, such as a bookkeeper, executive director, and/or an administrator. No plans were made to hire anybody.

General process. We noted that we have roadblocks in decision-making. We decided to have both an operational and governance discussion with Devin Thompson, who has volunteered to consult with us on such matters.

Lunch with VVMC Leadership: We agreed to pay for 3 loads of gravel to help fix the roads at the VVFW site.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 PM.

RECOMMENDATIONS (by Karen, the facilitator)

Based on observations and shared experience during the retreat, we offer the following suggestions and tips for areas of continuous improvement, for the BOD's consideration.

Board Meetings and Retreats – effectiveness and efficiency

- Retreat Planning and Preparation – advance agenda (1 week); separate the 'clusters' of people during meetings, keep communication channels more open between all board members.
- Clarity and expectations. Make clear to the BOD the specific goals or tasks for the retreat or meeting, and what they can expect to accomplish. Strategy and planning is a different kind of meeting than board action updates or project status. Also clarify what their work is (e.g., gather, review or understand data; define a problem; evaluate options or alternatives; make

- a decision, etc) and try not to inter-mingle the two.
- Structure. Separate the topics or issues, (e.g., governance, management/policies, tasks and producing “Events”, deal with the people stuff, land).
 - Open each meeting with a group welcome; and close it with a summary and reinforcement of future steps. Reinforce the group awareness of staying on track and on schedule. Follow an agenda and observe set lunch or break times
 - Collaboration. Make a point of respecting each other, especially through stopping and listening to understand each person and what they are saying. Set and follow ground rules. Encourage the group when the work is challenging; compliment them when good stuff happens. Celebrate success!
 - Monitoring and reporting reinforces accountability. It also reminds people that what they are doing, or responsible for, is important to the PDF organization and its future.

Tips to Further Develop and Use the Management Plan for Results

- Clean up the vision statements so that form a collection that hangs together. Make sure each one distinct from the others. Your vision statements will probably be the basis for your major goals or strategic direction. Often they focus on areas like: Events, Membership (or Community), Board Governance and Finance; Operations; Communications, etc. Yes, they will overlap somewhat but focus each one on a clear intention or end result sought.
- Review the action items in the Action Plan, which comes directly from the “Actions” section done during the Retreat. Cluster the actions into the Goals you come up with, and derived from #1. Mark your top 5-7 priorities for next steps.
- Review and update the tasks assigned to each Goal or Priority
- Assign a specific person responsibility (and make sure they accept it!). For every action step or task area, specify and clearly state action or steps and due dates for each.
- You should now have a workable, realistic Management Plan. Use your Plan to manage the BOD’s work toward your goals.
- Monitor via status reports at monthly (?) board meetings (this holds everyone accountable; both the BOD and the person assigned action. Review progress, needs and next steps quarterly.
- Assign one person to keep a “living” action plan update and to track progress.