**Squamish Windsports Society**

**Minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting**

Held on November 17th, 2016 at West Vancouver Yacht Club

Directors Present:

Anthony Leoni (President), Joshua Viner (Treasurer), Susan Inkpen (Secretary), Chris Roulette (Community Liason), Rebecca Aldous (Communication), and Jaime Martin (Consultant).

Quarum was attained.

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the president at 7:15 PM.

2. President's Report (Anthony Leoni)

The Squamish Windsports Society (SWS) is a not for profit society which is funded by dues from our membership. The purpose of our existence is to promote windsports in Howe Sound. To further that purpose, we are very fortunate to sub-licence the lands belonging to the Provincial Crown and known as the Squamish Spit (0.79 hectares from the turnaround to the southern end of the spit). The District of Squamish licences the land from the Crown Provincial and in turn they licence it to us. Our current licence will need to be renegotiated by the end of the 2017 year with the District of Squamish. In effect, access to the Spit is a privilege not a right and as such advocation of the Spit for windsport use will be a major issue over the following years.

The Squamish Spit is next to the Squamish Estuary Wildlife Management Area, which is a Provincially designated enviromental protection zone. Part of the purpose of the SWS is to act as good stewards of the lands and waters, to protect this environmenally sensitive zone. We take this stewardship very seriously and are committed to working with governments and stakeholders to protect this valuable resource. Many of our rules and regulations are founded on protecting the Wildlife Management Area.

Unfortuntely there are some in stakeholder groups who are opposed to our presence at the Spit and who will use any perceived breach by any windsports member to lobby the governments to not allow us to continue at the Spit. For example, this year an old kicker floated to into the estuary and a stakeholder complained directly to the Province. As soon as we heard from the Province, Denham Trollip and Geoffrey Waterson removed the debris and I think the governments appreciated how quickly we responded. We will have to continue acting as good stewards to maintain our relationships. We must always remember that our access to the Spit is a priviledge not a right and can be taken away by the government with a stroke of the pen.

The heart of the SWS is our staff at the Spit. On behalf of all members, I would like to thank our staff for their contributions to the Spit this year, in particular, our Club Manager Denham Trollip and Assistant Club Manager Andrea Belovska, and Busness Manager Alex Waterson. Our staff have shown amazing initiaive in making the Spit a better place. Denham's improvements to the Spit have been instrumental in easing conjection and increasing efficient use of space. Both Denham and Andrea are always friendly and helpful to our members and guest and are primary contributors to the sense of community at the Spit.

We would like to thank all members for cooperating with the improved site use procedures as they benefit all users.

The 2017 Board will have to continue to grow the membership in a responsible way and will also have to consider several important issues:

 - Promote alternative energery as a way to provide power for our operations

 - Monitor the Woodfiber/Fortis project insofar as it affects windsports in Squamish

 - Work on ensuring that the Squamish Oceanfront project is developed in a way that is beneficial to windsport users

 - Continue to advocate for the preservation of the Spit as a windsport facility

Last season we held an open board meeting at the Spit to allow members to voice their views on improvements for SWS.

For 2017, my goal if I am re-elected President is to build on the theme of infrastructure. This includes improving the site as much as we are allowed to:

 - Work on parking procedures to hopefuly enlarge the useable size of the honey hole.

 - Work toward an attractive bathroom solution, likely a semi-permanent cedar structure on a trailer.

 - Also do some gravel work to make the Spit surface more friendly to feet.

 - Explore sponsorship funding in order to achieve these improvements while keeping membership dues low.

In closing, I would like to give a special thanks to our 2016 Board members who are retiring this year:

 - Chris Glazier, for his 10 year contribution as Treasurer

 - Simon Kent, our former President

 - Don Campbell, with a wealth of knowledge, has contributed since dinosaur time

 - Woody Adal, a well loved member of the Spit with his contributions

3. Treasurer’s Report (Joshua Viner)

With great help from Alex Waterson, The SWS has improved financial processes so that we are more transparent and auditable.

Major maintenace costs include adding gravel to the Spit in a meaningful way, $20,000/year.

Currently we have a reserve of $50,000 is a good spot to be as a contingency fund.

4. Communications Liaison (Rebecca Aldous)

Building an advertisement with Tourism Squamish to better communicate rules and regulations of the Spit. My goal is to have it posted at visitor information centers throughout the city.

This year, Denham and the SWS staff did a great job of providing wind and weather updates as well as other pertinent information through facebook.

Moving forward I would like to get the SWS better known in terms of oceanfront representation.

5. Community Liaison (Chris Roulette)

In talks with other stakeholder groups, I found that the SWS gets immediate negative attention when it comes to incidences of speeding, and dust dispersal so it is best to minmize those events.

My main goal this year is to extend the dates of the operating season. Currently the Squamish Estuary Wildlife Management Plan dictates the dates of our season.

I also see the possibility of pressure to move the SWS from the Spit to the Oceanfront Development site (Nexan). The Governments regard it as a viable solution to wildlife management. Jaime Martin and I are working hard to educate the Council that it would not be an acceptable alternative.

The governments and stakeholders biggest concern is that we move through a protected wildlife area for our recreation.

Jaime is meeting once a month with the Bethyl group (Oceanfront Development at Nexan). They need to raise the ground by 2-3 meters before infrastructure is built. They are supposed to acquire a park permit first but the group has already started raising roads.

Jaime has resubmitted drawings for park design.

6. Open discussion

Request for signs so drivers move slower on the road.

 - The road belongs to Highways so we have no jurisdiction. Chris Roulette spoke with the Transportation Department and told them we are interested in taking a stronger role to which they are open but it is a slow process.

 - The shuttle system to reduce road traffic worked during Kite clash but affordability is also an issue.

Request for signs to educate all types of users whether they are visitors or site users.

A large part of our role as SWS Board is to apologize to Governments for poor actions by members and maintain our privilege to use the Spit.

There have been Five complaints to the Governments, and every complain is significant to them. It will affect re-negotiation of our sub-licence to operate at the Spit. We encourage fellow members to post complaints to website to show that we are self-governing.

 - Suggestion to make the complaints more prominent on the website. Windmeter and webcam are the most viewed items so perhaps post important messages there.

Josh Viner is considering changing licencing for schools, sponsorship for revenue, increases in staffing cost, plus some gravel work. The two main capital improvements will be gravel and washrooms but otherwise no major expenses expected for 2017.

Request for more regulation during peak times of the season with more staff. Possibility to get volunteers to help staff during busy periods to launch/land kites.

 - The SWS staff's biggest challenge is that distance they have to cover. The staff do their best, and appreciate the support from the schools. The Board and staff will be looking at ways of bridging that for next season, radios or cell communication.

Request to more clearly mark operational hours so people on the water know when the retrieval is closed, through the website and sign like a flag.

 - Coloured flags to mark minutes remaining before staff leave or message on website, warning to those driving up from Vancouver.

 - Staff do make efforts to tell every rider by SeaDoos that they are leaving the Spit.

 - Staff have done a good job of being flexible and accommodating.

Rebecca Aldous, Joshua Viner, Steven Tulk, and Sam Medysky are forming a committee to find ways to improve school operation, communication, and organization at the Spit.

We are looking at possibly moving school buses further down the Spit to improve honey hole wind conditions.

From an accident perspective, setting up a designated school zone at the south end may reduce the risk of rider/boat interaction. This way no boat traffic will be travelling through the kite launch/land area.

We could install tie offs at south end of Spit for boats.

Proposal for satellite station further towards south end to help regulate launch/land area, school boats, and better observation of the bay.

Schools are sub-licenced under the SWS. We are responsible for ensuring that the schools have proper insurance. We also have to ensure that the quality of lessons are high to reduce the risk of incidence and claim.

The Board's goal is to promote clear and transparent communication between schools, members, and Board.

Suggestion box at the Spit for users and visitors.

 - There is a comment link on the website.

Offer a 5 or 10-day punch card as incentive for travellers.

Question as to whether membership fees change?

 - Our goal is to keep the membership fees the same (reduction is unlikely due to operation costs $84,000 plus gravel costs which would run a deficit).

 - Posibillity for membership fee reduction with the idea of sponsorship.

Plan to increase the amount of staff training at the beginning of the season.

7. Election SWS Board of Directors for 2017

As we transition to new group of leadership, we welcome more Squamish locals to the Board who are at the Spit more frequently.

The 2017 SWS Board members are as follows:

President - Anthony Leoni

Vice President - Sam Medysky

Treasurer - Josh Viner

Secretary - Susan Inkpen

Director: Community Liaison - Chris Roulette

Director: Spit and Orientations Liaison - Geoffrey Waterson

Director: Consultant - Jaime Marin

Director: Communications - Rebecca Aldous

Director: Education - Roberto Bruezzese

Directors at Large (roles TBA): Sean Gallagher, Anneke Van de Wijngaard, Nadia Beaupre, and Alyssa Salloum.

Motion to elect slate of individuals for 2017.

CARRIED

Motion to adjournment, 9:30pm.

CARRIED