

SRR Board Meeting – November 7, 2011

Runner safety issue (Heather):

Heather has heard from several club members, voicing their concern about runner safety at the weekly runs, specifically runners not wearing reflective gear. She shared an email from Stuart Kaufman that outlined a recent incident that demonstrates a need for immediate action. We decided on the following:

- Gwen has offered to quietly speak with the individual described in Stuart's email.
- Heather will order 50-60 new reflective vests and distribute them at the weekly runs as soon as they come in.
- For now, we will send an email out to the club asking everyone to wear their reflective gear and also ask club members to encourage others to do the same. We hope that peer pressure will cause the most frequent offenders to change their way and that we will not have to resort to stronger tactics. Heather agreed to talk with Dan Solomon to see what the club's options are if someone refuses to wear reflective gear.

Summer Steamer discussion (all):

We had a lengthy and spirited debate about the future of the Summer Steamer. Heather shared a spreadsheet that gave an overview of participation, income and expense numbers for all club races. The Steamer has struggled both in participation and income in recent years, and support for the race this past summer was likened by some as "pulling teeth." There were complaints about information flow between the board and the race committee. The race committee also felt that the date of the race was selected by the board against the committee's objections. There were also problems regarding the outdoor event space (Somerville police shut it down because an individual was caught walking on the sidewalk with alcohol) and communication with local and state police.

Heather had emailed the club and received a wide variety of responses, ranging from full support to requests to discontinue the race. Suggestions for changes included:

- Partner with a local charity, like a food bank, and put the emphasis of the race on giving back, not income or size.
- Move to August or the fall.
- Create a "King of the Hill" theme for marketing
- Involve local high school(s)
- Invite local clubs and make it a local championship (Somerville, Cambridge, Medford)
- Partner with Shape Up Somerville (downside is being dependent on the city and the likelihood that the city would require official background checks of volunteers)

We outlined the pros and cons of the race:

Pros

- Long history, first SRR race
- Unusual distance

- Kids race was well received this year
- Considered “gritty” (which many view as both a plus and minus)

Cons

- Jim pointed out that the current venue (Casey’s) cannot hold more than the race’s current size. Unless we can truly confirm an outside venue, we are stuck at the current size.
- The date has proven problematic. This year, we were unable to partner with SommerStreets because of competition with a USATF race and we could not push the race into September, as was suggested by the committee, because the city would not issue a permit beyond August 31 because of pending construction.
- With the addition of the 26x1, we now have three races (26x1, Steamer and 24 Hour) within a two month period. Runner and volunteer fatigue.

We agreed that we needed more information to continue the discussion. On behalf of the Steamer race committee, Jim Sweeney agreed to prepare responses to the following for the December board meeting:

- Explore the possibility of an August date with the city
- Outline what support the race committee would need from the club, specifically number of volunteers and for what roles
- Explore whether there are alternate venues that mitigate the limits on the size of the race
- Recommend metrics for what would be a successful Summer Steamer race
- Discuss among the race committee who wishes to remain involved in the race and whether new committee members need to be recruited
- Discuss ways in which both the board and committee can improve the communication flow