Loons 2024 Annual Meeting: Thursday, April 4th 6:00pm

Meeting Notes by Matt Tillotson

Helmut called the meeting to order at 6:04pm with a LOON Call. Deb then started the meeting off with introductions. We had 31 people in attendance, representing 15 currently active teams and one visitor/potential new club member.

The club officers were introduced:

Helmut Porcher - President
Mark Seaburg - Vice President
Deb Liang - Treasurer
Matt Tillotson - Secretary/Membership Coordinator

Our webmaster is Bob Wavrin - the webmaster role is not an officer position, but it is essential!

The current officers are willing to continue for 2024. The floor was opened for volunteers or nominations. There were no volunteers or nominations. As mentioned before, to keep the club running, we do need to have other folks be willing to take on leadership roles.

Gary L. had a question about the treasurer role and which bank the official club account was in. The club has never actually had its own dedicated account. Currently the club account is tied to Deb Liang's personal account at Affinity Plus Credit Union, but in future, transferring this to any new bank and account would be relatively easy.

There were no more questions about officers. Chris G. made a motion to re-elect all officers by voice vote. Gary L. seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Financial Report: Continuing the recent trend, we spent $194 more dollars than we took in. The club took in more money in 2023 than previous years, but that was mostly due to Jersey sales – which did not add to our club balance. We currently have 24 active club teams. Due to the cost of webhosting, LAB membership, and insurance (our only real expenses) we would need approx. 30 teams with a $25 per team, for the club to be financially neutral.

2023 TCTC Income/Expenses Summary		1/1/2023 through 12/31/2023
Membership Income		
24 Teams at $25 per team	$625.00	(1 team paid for 2022 & 2023)
Jersey Transactions		
Sold 1 Jersey	$72.00	(1 Jersey remaining to sell)
	$697.00	
Expenses		
2023 TCTC Website Expenses	$279.76	
American Specialty Insurance	$536.80	
LAB 2023 Renewal	$75.00	
	$891.56	
Account balance 3/21/24	**$1415.66**	(Includes one 2024 renewal)

Gary L. was interested in why insurance was higher in 2023 than in 2024… Because of the timing of when we get insurance, we have to estimate how many club members we will have every year, and for 2024 we have dropped to a lower insurance level than we estimated in 2023. Over the last decade the club membership has dropped from 60 teams to the current 24 we now have.

John M. raised the idea of how we raise funds. Helmut suggested we host MTR to raise money. The last MTR that TCTC hosted was in 2009. This idea did not get a lot of attention from those in attendance.

Dennis G. asked if it was OK to promote TCTC in social media posts and online forums, anywhere. Should the club look at getting a club specific Tic Tok channel, other social media promotions? YES, any and all social media avenues are a good idea. Last year Helmut P. printed fliers for club members to drop off at any and all bike shops.

Steve V. did point out that, in his experience, random advertising has been of little benefit. Tandem cyclists are a targeted group and finding them is not an easy task.

One option that was proposed was to see if we could get TCBC to cross promote, putting links to our website and rides on their site if we would do the same for them. Historically they have not allowed this, but Mark S. will contact a couple TCBC board members he knows to see if that is still the case.

There is only one shop we know of that has tandems in stock to sell which is Steve V's shop: **https://www.twincitiestandems.com/** Dennis G. said he saw 4 tandems for sale in Stillwater.

Bob W. suggested that finding new club members might be difficult due to new tandem riders and younger people, in general, being averse to the commitment of joining a club. Many just want to socially ride with others. Gary L. suggested it may be due to the reputation of club rides being hammer fest rides and not social riding clubs.

John M. suggested we get on the news in a social interest post. It was noted that one of the anchors on channel 4 news is a tandem owner and rider. Our target should be 11 new club members to bring us to financial solvency and club health. Does anyone have connections or ideas on how to get a local news organization to do a human-interest story on tandem riding?

Another option could be to have TCTC become a part of TCBC (Twin Cities Bicycle Club), or to attempt a cross promotional agreement with TCBC. It was noted that they, TCBC, are more pedantic and rule heavy than TCTC. John M. did express that he was nearly kicked out of TCBC for not following some of their strict rules. TCBC rates are $45 for a couple and $25 for individuals. Two TCBC board members are former TCTC club members.

It was pointed out that more than financial solvency, additional club members would add healthy vitality for the long-term future of the club. Then we had a discussion on club expenses, and if we actually need insurance as a club. Several ride leaders did express the fear of lawsuit or liability if the club did not have insurance, and they indicated they would not host club rides if they did not have that umbrella of liability coverage from the club. It was also noted how important it is to have a diversity of starting locations. Nobody wants to drive two hours for a one-hour ride. That said, it is up to those willing to host rides to set the rides they want to ride, in the locations they want to ride in. For a more diverse set of rides, we will need a larger and more diverse set of ride hosts willing to share their favorite routes with club members.

It was proposed that the club allow Steve V. to include a one-year club membership with every tandem he sells to anyone who is not a current or former TCTC member. Hellen Mattsen made a formal proposal for this, Martha W. seconded… Motion passed unanimously.

Having a club Periscope (model of adjustable tandem) or other tandem to loan out for school activities was also suggested as a way to increase interest in tandem riding.

Another way to increase rides, informally, is to allow club members to directly connect with each other. On that vein, we had a sign up to be included in a list of tandem riders with contact info shared to all members who want to be included. This list will include only email address and phone, so members can connect directly with those near them for impromptu rides. These rides are not club sanctioned and are not covered by club insurance. These are informal "Friendlies" as we call them.

It was also suggested that the cost of club membership be increased to cover out actual costs. The club officers agreed to consider this for 2025.

We then had a lively discussion on which days of the week people preferred to ride… It was suggested, and the board agreed to create and send out a survey for the club on which days work best for everybody. Poll should include time of day, day of week, length of ride, food preference (no food ride, ice cream, lunch, dinner). Ultimately the ride specifics are up to the hosts, and their riding desires, but the survey might help those who are unsure when they want their ride to start. John did indicate that from his experience Sundays had the best ride participation.

Last year, air quality was an issue for rides. Hopefully this year will be better.

Other, outside TCTC ride options including Tour of Pepin and the River Ramble may also be good options for current club members to network with other potential club members.

Most current ride hosts, like John/Helen, Helmut/Joan, are willing to assist new hosts in the logistics of hosting a ride.

MTR will be in Iowa in 2024. In 2025 it will be in Indiana, and in 2026 it will be in Michigan.

Jerseys are still available. We need a minimum of 4 to place another order. They are $72 for each jersey, and we had enough interest at the meeting to ensure placing a new order.

Meeting was adjourned and cookies and socializing commenced.