

**KINGSTON YACHT CLUB
STRATEGIC PLANNING TOWN HALL MEETING: APRIL 2, 2011
SUMMARY NOTES**

PURPOSE OF PAPER

This document provides a summary of the Town Hall meeting held on April 2, a brief update on the strategic planning process and an overview of next steps.

THE STRATEGIC PLANNING INITIATIVE

The Board has initiated a long term planning process with the goal of assuring the long term sustainability of the Kingston Yacht Club at its current site. The result of the process will be a long range plan for facilities, services and programs so that they continue to meet the evolving needs of members. The strategic plan is required in order to sustain the viability of the Club in the face of aging infrastructure and changing demographics.

The Board created the Strategic Planning Committee to undertake a thorough assessment of the Club facilities and services and to engage the membership in the development process. The strategic plan will be based on a sound analysis of issues and options and reflect the expressed interests and priorities of members. To date, detailed information has been compiled on the Club property and facilities (property appraisal, gas dock estimate, and equipment assessment), steps to expand water lot, membership and Kingston demographics. In addition, an information session has been held, a survey conducted and a town hall meeting held.

TOWN HALL MEETING

Over 60 people participated in small group discussions on 4 topics: membership, clubhouse, harbour and financing. The purpose was to engage members in the development of a long term plan for the Club by providing input on the kinds of changes that they would like to see.

This document is intended to provide a high level overview of the discussion. It should be noted that a number of specific ideas were put forward and these will be forwarded to committees and task groups for follow up.

Results

There appears to be an emerging majority view that the Club should:

- Focus on expanding and broadening the current membership base recognizing that changes and additions to the current services, activities and facilities are needed to retain current members, attract new members and thereby ensure the long-term viability of the Club;

- Increase the capacity and facilities of the Clubhouse by:
 - Renovating the existing building (the most popular option); or,
 - Building a new clubhouse in another location on the site;
 - Converting the Saints' Rest to a clubhouse use.

- Improve and expand the capacity of the harbour by pursuing opportunities to:
 - Make more effective use of the existing space;
 - Repair and upgrade current facilities;
 - Purchase an additional water lot to the east of the existing basin.

- With respect to business planning and financing:
 - Undertake a thorough cost/benefit analysis of the options;
 - Consider a phased approach to implementation in order to manage financing and mitigate risk;
 - Consider various approaches to financing including use of debentures and, if fees are increased, ensure there are accompanying, tangible benefits to members.

Although the majority of input to date supports substantive development as a means to attain sustainability, there are some members who prefer minimal to no change. A smaller number have expressed interest in pursuing more radical change. Following is an overview of the input provided by members on each of the topics.

1. Membership

The majority of the participants focussed on ways to recruit and retain members with a view to increasing the overall number of members. This included discussion about what kinds of actions, services and facilities are needed for each of the current and potential user groups. There were a few participants who expressed scepticism about the possibility, capacity and/or desirability of growth in the size and range of membership.

One group noted that sailing is the most important common interest for members but non-sailors can be included in a variety of ways. For the most part, members believe that the Club should appeal to a range of member groups with appropriate year round services and facilities. Following is a summary of the strategies put forward during the discussions:

a) Friendliness

- Constant vigilance and specific strategies are needed to make sure new members feel welcome and are integrated into the Club (ambassadors, mentors, open houses, orientations, etc);
- Current members should be encouraged to take responsibility for introducing themselves to and engaging with new members.

b) Memberships categories

- Structure membership categories to attract different user groups, e.g.;

- Adult Learn to Sail (reduce fees with a view to long term retention of participants);
- Social/dining memberships to encourage use by non-sailors.

c) Year round programs, services and activities tailored to specific user groups to maximize club use

Identify and put in place programs/services/facilities that encourage and welcome new members, and help to retain existing members, e.g.:

- Add facilities/activities for children of sailors, i.e. be more ‘family friendly’;
- Introduce some regular activity or activities during the off season, e.g. bridge, speakers series, etc.
- Add social activities geared to seniors & recent retirees; provide a Newcomers group for people who have recently moved to Kingston;
- Add facilities for non-boat owners and family members, who don’t sail, e.g. more green space, salt water pool, add second story to boat sheds, etc.
- Provide activities/services for families with young children;
- Maintain good upkeep of Club Sharks and provide use of Club dinghies for community club members;
- Provide access to Club boats for 16 to 25 year olds;
- Provide opportunities for non-sailors to go out on racing and cruising boats, participate on committees and on the Board, etc.

d) Food Services

- Expand food services e.g. bring back Fancy Fridays, weekly dinners during the off season, dinner theatre, jazz fest, etc.
- Provide access to the public (views vary on the extent to which food services should be available to non-members);
- Upgrade the dining room (chairs, décor, etc.);
- Assess the potential for dining room and food facilities.

e) Marketing/Recruitment

- Increase involvement in the Kingston community, e.g. fund raising activities;
- Increase advertising including a sign at top of Maitland street, brochures; use of social media;
- Provide day passes to the public;
- Engage parents of junior sailors (parent specials, coupons);

f) Other

- Creative fees to attract transient boaters including larger boats;
- Re-visit the maximum 4 visit rule for guests e.g. for defined programs sponsored by members;
- At least once a season, provide an opportunity to get non-boaters out on the water, borrow CORK boats;
- Address parking issue for events;
- New member nights;

2. Clubhouse

While there is nostalgia and emotional attachment to the current Clubhouse, most participants believe that changes are needed to increase the membership's enjoyment of it and to attract new members. Specific needs identified include:

- Space for teens and for young children;
- Better dining facilities and renovation of Partridge Room;
- Improved accessibility;
- Washrooms on upper floors;
- Improvements to the sunset room;
- Addition of shower facilities accessible from inside and outside the Clubhouse;
- Appropriate office space;
- Improved appearance of the north facing exterior wall as well as landscaping;
- Better use of 3rd floor space; and,
- Nostalgia for the old 2nd floor open veranda.

Some groups specifically noted that they are not interested in current 'band aid' approach to maintenance, but don't feel they have sufficient information to determine which would be most cost efficient: shoring up and renovating the existing building or knocking it down and starting over. One group expressed the view that the building should be shored up and brought up to code while longer term plans are being developed. Finally, a few people expressed the view that the current space is sufficient and change isn't required.

3. Harbour

The following proposals are not mutually exclusive. For example, suggestions to improve existing facilities were identified as necessary regardless of whether an additional water lot is obtained. A number of groups expressed the belief that any expansion in mooring space will be filled.

a) Expand and improve mooring facilities

- Address the condition of existing docks and improve access , e.g. steps in Shark basin, repair centre dock, keep gas dock, put in finger docks on break wall;
- Address congestion of current space (some areas do double and triple duty, e.g. dinghies, model boaters, swimmers, dry sail)
- Add more finger docks for easier boat access
- Improve electrical distribution on the site.

b) Look at opportunities to increase space within existing facilities

- Expand to outer borders of current water lot. Expand breakwall using sheet piling;
- Increase space for dinghies;
- Make more efficient use of existing space e.g. by reconfiguring moorings, improving crane access and increasing water depth so more small keel boats can be accommodated on land, etc.;

- Make more efficient use of dry sail area;
- Add a seating area/gazebo/BBQ by flag pole;
- Prohibit cars on the break wall except for loading and provide carts.

c) Purchase a water lot

- Ensure there is a good financial plan for purchase of a water lot and expanding the harbour. Consider doing things in phases;
- Make sure that any expansion addresses the needs of all user groups

d) Other

- No consensus on getting rid of anything, e.g. there is a difference of opinion on the railway;
- Jemmett's landing should be retained and maintained but there should not be a big investment in it;
- The gas dock should be retained and made profitable as it has value in retaining and attracting members;
- The overall appearance of the Club property should be improved including

4. Financing

Groups were asked to comment on possible approaches to financing development and renovation of the grounds and facilities. Views included the following:

- Overwhelming support for debentures from some groups;
- Strong view that , if fees are increased, there should be a concomitant improvement in services so that people can see the value for themselves;
- Some support for a capital campaign.

CONCLUSIONS

The majority of the input from members to date supports significant improvement of the facilities if it is 'done right' and in a way that is financially viable. The goals of the improvements would be:

- Membership recruitment and retention approaches that seek to broaden the membership base;
- An updated clubhouse that can accommodate a broader range of Club activities than is currently possible;
- A harbour that is updated, addresses the needs of all user groups and that can accommodate more boats and larger boats.

The Strategic Planning Committee will recognize and respect the range of perspectives and interests put forward by all members in both the process for the development of the strategic plan and in the plan itself. We believe that a vibrant club is the result when an organization has the flexibility to bring together diverse groups to enjoy the benefits of membership in a sailing club on the downtown Kingston waterfront.

In all of its efforts the Committee will be guided by the principle of ‘doing it right’. Any proposals for change will be based on a thorough business plan with detailed cost/benefit analysis in order that the membership can make an informed decision.

NEXT STEPS

Various activities will be initiated and carried out by the Strategic Planning Committee over the spring and summer. There will be opportunities for members to contribute to the work described below:

1. Membership:

- a. Focus groups to get input from a few specific membership groups including:
youth, parents of young children and associate members;
- b. Follow up on specific ideas to improve recruitment and retention of members.

2. Clubhouse:

- a. Determination of costs to renovate the existing building including:
 - Stabilizing foundation;
 - Raising the roof to add space;
 - Renovating to upgrade dining facilities;
 - Creating space appropriate for young kids, youth, etc.;
 - Adding an elevator;
 - Adding washrooms on 2nd floor, opening up 2nd floor veranda, etc.
- b. Determination of costs and benefits (e.g., more moorings) of removing the existing building and replacing it with:
 - A brand new building either in the current location or on the outer breakwall;
 - A renovated Saint’s Rest;
 - Development of Saint’s Rest and parking lot into condos, i.e. is there a way to do something with someone else’s money?

3. Harbour:

Information gathering and detailed analysis of costs related to:

- a. Repairs and upgrades to harbour;
- b. Reconfiguration of harbour facilities to increase space;
- c. Costs related to purchasing a water lot;
- d. Other e.g. Jemmett’s Landing, gas dock, railway, crane, etc.