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# **Strategic Planning Workshop 2012/13**

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## Introduction

Members of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director of the Recreation Facility Association of Nova Scotia participated in their sixteenth Strategic Planning Workshop on September 28 and 29, 2012 at Digby Pines.

A list of participants is contained in Appendix A

Kevin Marlin once again facilitated the session to assist participants in conducting a review of RFANS, it's governance, operations and programs to determine the direction for the upcoming year.

Our theme this year was "Your Workshop – Your Way".

This year's workshop was to offer maximum flexibility to the participants in determining the topics of focus and the direction of dialogue leading to determination of RFANS' priorities for the upcoming year.

Planning for the weekend workshop identified Board Governance Effectiveness, Re-branding RFANS, Youth Engagement and a Process Review / Refinement were priorities for consideration however the workshop format was to allow for validation of these priorities and the introduction of additional priorities.

As an introductory exercise each participant was asked to share a single word that describes the RFANS' Board; a single word that describes RFANS as an organization and a question they would like answered this week-end.

BOARD – support; networking; evolving; co-ordinate; team work; helpers; assist; engagement; responsibility.

RFANS – dynamic; change; educators; unite; educational; necessary; promote; education; imagination

QUESTIONS –

- Where will RFANS be in 5, 10, 20 years?
- What is our role?
- What area of the recreation facility industry needs the most focus?
- Does the Board have united goals / purpose / direction?
- What changes can somebody, that has been around for some time, expect to see coming from this weekend?
- What are the board members' best practices in engaging members to become involved?
- Where are we going?
- How do we measure our success?
- What is my role as a team member?

Two Board Assessment Questionnaires were provided to the participants for completion to be analyzed that evening in an effort to determine the overall health of the Board as a governance body.

The results were shared the following morning and were very positive overall with no indication of significant weak areas or gaps.

It was agreed that Board education should be a standing agenda item and a resource book recommendation was provided.

An “Imagine RFANS” exercise provided a forum for free thinking and brainstorming resulting in a mosaic of themes and ideas, as follows:

A new slogan, “Your Progressive Recreation Destination”.

Effective advocacy to government.

Target all facilities and communities through courses and training.

Offer a Facility Development Workshop” that provides a Jam Session type environment encouraging meaningful experiential sharing.

Ensure that “membership has its’ privileges” member vrs non-member benefits.

Develop an IREP type program not related to rinks – such as, Turf Replacement or Trail Development.

Expand networking opportunities and mentoring opportunities in a virtual environment.

Improve data base, create an “Access RFANS” link as a clearing house or junction box for information and expertise.

Establish and build strong relationships with like minded organizations – share each others links and web-sites.

RSF – Recreation Support Facilities – a wikipedia of facility support.

Support and promote networking.

Why do we only have geographic representation on the Board? Why not have representation by facility type?

Catherine provided a brief program review as well as a provincial update on behalf of retiring member, Dave Molloy.

While many questions raised earlier in the session revolved around the role of RFANS, the value of RFANS and the future of RFANS, following the free flowing dialogue and sharing there was a renewed consensus as to the significance and importance of RFANS to their membership, to recreational facilities through-out NS and beyond, to recreation and to healthy living.

There was an expressed pride in the difference RFANS makes and a recognition that recreation facilities and communities need to know Who We Are; What We Do, Why We Exist and How To Contact Us to Become involved.

The three areas for focus for the remainder of the workshop were determined to be 1) Traditional Marketing, 2) Process Mapping, and 3) Website and Social Media.

The following plans were developed to address these priorities.

**Process Mapping** – work group members were Rodd, Catherine and Larry.

After much discussion, dialogue and debate the results boiled down as follows to ensure an understanding of responsibilities and shared roles for outcomes.

Prioritizing - Board Meeting

Delegate – Board Decision

Follow-Up – Executive Director

Move on or Move Out

Do 5 things well as opposed to 10 things half as \_ ed!

**Traditional Marketing** – work group members were Kate, Joel and Ray.

The following recommendations and goals were established.

Face to face meetings must have a purpose providing a strong attraction and reason for members to attend.

Approach Eastlink Community Television about allowing time and space for community reports, interview with RFANS president, etc.

Ensure we maximize promotional opportunities. Every event should have an RFANS logo to announce that RFANS Presents!! Obtain promotional materials such as posters, stickers, mugs, hats, etc. Ensure there are QR (Quick Reference) bar codes on all materials.

Provide Public Service Announcements to radio and television and tie in with corporate sponsors to cover costs if required.

Revitalize the logo.

Create an inventory of recreation facilities in NS.

It was also suggested that RFANS explore a partnership with MSVU and / or NSCC to utilize their marketing students in developing a more comprehensive marketing strategy.

**Website and Social Media** – work group members were Jennie, Kevin and Luc.

The following goals were established; 1) refinement of the RFANS website, 2) make site more accessible and 3) make site user friendly.

These goals will be accomplished by maintaining the lines of communication with the current web developer.

Recommendations for site improvements include;

- Share RFANS mission and goals
- Provide a Pro-board / discussion forum
- Provide more direct links to all facilities (this will require an accurate database)
- Provide technical support through a Technical Corner – Do's and Don'ts – Qs&As
- Board of Directors information
- A "Contact Us" tab
- Professional development links to programs, training and leadership opportunities
- On line payment options for membership dues, registration fees, etc.
- Maximize advertising, links to Corporate members
- Social media links – Facebook, twiter, etc.
- Provide a photo gallery
- Create an RFANS channel on You Tube
- User friendly includes providing easy access tabs with drop down menu features

Participants agreed that a more aggressive follow-up and follow-through would be provided by the Board ensuring forward movement on these items.

On Saturday we were also joined by Richard Devenne who provided an update of the Class 2 Refrigeration program which RFANS has been providing leadership for. The program is close to being realized and requires a push for participants.

The session closed with a round table evaluation indicating a high level of satisfaction with the week-end workshop.

**Participants**

Ray Gouchie

Joel Dawe

Kate Adhern

Larry Anthony

Rod Dickson

Luc Brisson

Kevin Bennett

Jennie Greencorn

Catherine Kersten