

CMG Board Meeting

May 25, 2012

Hillel House, Camp Shalom, Malibu, CA

Board Members Present:

Mohabee Serrano, Mike Fahy, Phillip Darby, Matt Sunderland, Steve Ibarra, Ben-Andy Hein, Milo Shapiro, Thomas, Al-Binky Hoch, Ed Wahl, Jim Ruboyianes, Dave Clark, Lee Usher, Thomas Nicholson, Chris Magnani, James Badberg, David Senk.

Visitors Present:

Frank Rothacker, Ernest Lacy, Barry Schoenfeld, Patrick Knisley. Joel Peisinger, Lamar, Bob Ames, Ron Klimik, Stephen McDonald, Jason Wittman, Robert L. Bettinger, Craig Madore, Bob Ames, and men who joined the circle during the course of the meeting.

Absent Board Members:

Ed Perez, Norman Skonovd

Summary Of This Meeting

There were no ByLaws added, changed or amended.

One New Operating Procedure was adopted: Form a CMG Circle of Elders.

The meeting devoted much time to discussion of the recent conflict between the corporation and a party outside of the membership. A discussion of revising CMG Membership policy, and becoming inclusive was noted.

A new group, The Circle of Elders, was approved, and the men in this group will serve to nurture, advise, support, and offer wisdom.

Meeting Called to Order: 2:10 PM

Jason Wittman opened with thanks to the Board for keeping the spirit alive. Mike invited the Board and visitors to start with a grounding exercise. A check-in followed the exercise.

Old Business And Reports

Minutes of the Previous CMG Board Meeting (Jan. 14, 2012)--9Y; 1A; 0N.
Minutes Approved as Written.

Notice of Meetings (Informal consensus)

The Secretary will send an invitation to all Elders, CMG Members, and regular visitors, for future Board Meetings.

Treasurer's Report (Dave Clark, Substitute for Ed Perez)

Resolution to Revise Board Budget-- Thomas seconds. 10 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain.

Dave Clark, substitute CMG Treasurer, says the 73rd CMG has not met its attendance figures that were planned. 192 are in attendance, so nearly all but 1/3 of the camp's capacity is filled. When it became evident that the budget for the 73rd Gathering could not be met, Ed Perez worked with the Planners to reduce the budget. There is some money in the corporate treasury reserve, but there is no risk that the corporation will go broke. There are pending expenses, such as insurance and attorney's fees. Bills up to the point of the unexpected attorney fees, were covered by the Treasurer. Mike said that the operations costs of the 73rd CMG were cut from 17K to less than 10K.

Budget cuts were detailed to the Board, A Revised budget was presented by Mike, and there were cuts to ambience and tent rentals, as well as the cafe. Bob Ames says the LEC-LA contributed \$3700 towards the budget shortfall by the 73rd Planning Committee. Mohabee moved that the Board accept the revised budget, with the understanding that the budget can be reconsidered by the Board, in a forthcoming teleconference. The 73rd CMG will provide its final accounting in 90 days, since there are problems with PayPal.

Outreach Director's Report--tabled to next meeting.

Hot Tub Loan was tabled to 2013 ABM, in San Diego.

What is a Gathering? --tabled to a future meeting.

Leadership Development--tabled to a future meeting.

Special Reports

Summary of the Spring Conflict (Mike Fahy)

The Board, in January, noted that one person had a CMG database in his possession for two years. We had to address this. This led to a confrontation like no other in CMG History. We looked at possible remedies. Expulsion was explored but not taken. We instead adopted a process of meeting in Los Angeles. The Board adopted a resolution that we suspend the privileges with regard to the mailing lists, to two years, to the party involved. No other actions were taken.

We also noted that communication was greatly needed, and that the Board was in the "background," and thus unknown up to the point of the conflict. We suddenly became "foreground," in L. A., with much questioning and further drama.

Early on in the reconciliation process, there was a suggestion that we listen to the men statewide, to get feedback. Mike says the feedback sessions he attended were all valuable and they were all different. Time was limited in the forums. Details were

given at some meetings. Some provided the future goals. The San Diego forum had men who had not been to the CMG at all, but wanted to gather info about the CMG. The forum in San Francisco last Saturday produced suggestions, questions, and other topics were brought up. The forums have become highly valuable.

Minutes Taken at the Forums

Gregg asked if anyone took minutes of the forums. People were commenting about the structure of the CMG and its Board, and this feedback might be forgotten. Mike says that this is a new process; does not view this as a mistake, so we don't have a "routine." Mike says he took notes, and will share them with the Board at a later time. Another comment is that there is no perceived organization from the outside. Jim thinks that taking notes might not have been a good idea, since this was an "open heart" kind of forum, in which the taking notes might impede the action in the meeting. Bob Ames says he disagrees with Jim, since he attended the SD meeting, and now has to recall what he shared. Jason thinks that the forums are good, and that a circle will be formed this evening. David suggested that Mike write a brief report, and publish this on Enotify. Ed Wahl says there was discussion at LA, about re-evaluating the need to hold forums in LA. Milo thinks that we not use Enotify; offer a "CMG Business" Enotify, instead of using the announcement list. James Badberg thinks this could be done. Craig thinks this matter needs to be publicized. Mike concluded that these forums will continue, along with forums in the Desert Cities and Sacramento.

Membership and Participation in the CMG

This concern was triggered by the individual in question and his attorney. Mike says that a communication between the lawyers came up about "improper termination of membership." Our core definition of "membership" was limited, according to the CMG lawyer. This raised the issue, which was broadcast by electronic means. The 2012 ABM attempted to make two distinct memberships, one for non-voters, and a "voting" membership.

Currently our bylaws obligate a candidate to several processes: 25 hours or more of service to CMG, annual dues, and attendance at the current year's ABM, Dave Clark commented that many non-profits charge dues only, but this could be an impossible task to administrate. The revision that was made to the CMG ByLaws included everyone on the E-Notify list, but this was not accepted by the CMG lawyer. Dave said that we will hold forums this year that will discuss Membership.

Lamar suggests that those men who have a working knowledge of issues could be Members. Jason says that we need to think things through carefully. Bob Ames thinks that we could bring it to the street level. Bob says the bylaws exclude him from Membership, even though he holds pool parties. Jimmy thinks ABM

attendance might be daunting; we could broaden it to any meeting. The person must have a stake in the organization. Craig thinks our membership policy is not communicated clearly. Mike says this is a long conversation, complex and not conclusive in one meeting. Men throughout the state need to be involved. Meetings will be held, to specifically focus on this issue. Jason asks for feedback about the Gathering. David asks if we can publish info--Milo thinks this might not be productive. Craig says there's an issue of non-integrity within the Board and the community, and this needs to be addressed soon. Jim thinks we might consider a "certification" process. If one wants to be a CMG Member, there could be a process of doing this. A rite of passage could be considered, which might be a powerful, yet conducive experience to be considered. Frank Rothacker recalled that there was once a rite of passage: being a CMG past-planner. The one dollar dues came from this older process.

Based upon the emails that circulated during the past months, there is a perception that the past events caused many men to question the integrity of the Board. If we don't take on the actual issues, the effects will linger, according to Craig. The conflict this spring yielded this effect.

Mike says that Craig's issue of "patronizing" isn't accurate. Robert B. supports what Craig says, that the Board's integrity has been questioned. It's very important that many more people than those on the Board need to be involved. He suggests that we have several methods which involve many points of view, in the next 6-9 months. It's important for the integrity of the Board, and for the CMG.

Question of Transparency

Lamar says many of us have been supervisors, managers, etc., with privileged knowledge. Sharing this knowledge could be harmful to the integrity of the work of such an individual. In this instance, the Board is a holder of privileged info., and is not required to share (nor is it legal for it to be necessary). Perception from the outside is indeed clouded by the lack of information. Lamar says he's relying on the integrity of the current Board.

Matthew Sunderland came into this controversy at a unique time; he was elected by the LEC-DC as Board Rep. at that time. His impression of the first teleconference, was that of extraordinary integrity. History and commitment were what impressed Matt when he joined the Board. He further acknowledged that the perception of the Board might be thwarted, but we don't have a "war chest" to fight. We need a new process. We've been working behind the scenes quite actively. Mike organized many community forums in Los Angeles. We might be more effective in communication. Let's talk about competence, effectiveness, and not integrity. Craig countered that the decisions were not in keeping with the purpose of the organization.

Ben-Andy then gave a demonstration of our processes. He asked Phil Darby, Milo Shapiro, and Jim Ruboyianes to stand up. Robert Burnham is selected to be the "ruse." Robert knows these men. Robert had no part in electing Phil, to be Board Rep. Phil says he came into that position with the 75th CMG, offering to serve, which was accepted by the other Planning Committee Members. Robert then told the Board that he had no part in electing Milo, as the LEC-SD Board Rep., but did help confirm Jim as Webmaster, at the Board elections. Ben-Andy withdrew further comment.

Mike proposed that if anyone thinks the Board has trust issues, they are invited to come to the forums which will be scheduled in the future.

Patrick isn't sure of the purpose of this part of the meeting. He says being on the Board isn't a thanked position. Human nature also pays in, with people blaming the Board, which they may have elected. He thinks there is no trust issue with the Board. It's a mistake to assume that new processes that are engaged will work flawlessly. People have been selected to resolve the issues at hand, and we need to include all regions of the state to further discuss this. It's easy for one to become disillusioned by the Board's actions. Arguing is not productive to the furtherance of the meeting.

Mike invites everyone to the Community Forum, scheduled to occur after the 73rd CMG Opening Ceremony.

New Business

Forming a CMG Elder Circle (Mike Fahy)

Mike passed a document to all in attendance, which described the goals, the definitions, the qualifications, and the possible formation processes that Elder CMG men could take, to form a Circle of Elders. The motion was seconded, and discussion about this began. *This proposal was adopted, with several revisions, Sunday, May 27.*

Discussion Notes

Bob Ames thinks this is long overdue. He thinks there's a lack of "father figures" in men's lives. Everyone has a "mentor" opportunity to listen to and mentor young men. There has been an exclusionary aspect in many organizations, and elders could help resolve this for the CMG. We can teach young men coming into the CMG and leadership that there has been a process in place. We could instill wisdom and world gay history. We have pioneers. This could involve the elders who have become complacent.

Al-Binky says he, Buzz Young, and Bob Ames have talked about this very matter. Honestly, he has become "disenfranchised" even though he's gotten to know others, and has been with Harry Hay and Faeries, NOMAS, and other gay organizations., but has stayed with the CMG, because the CMG provides a place in his heart. Al-Binky says he's 77, "vertical," and objects to being called "not with it." He thinks that young men are "aching" to simply talk with older men. He's had many young men to talk and listen to. As a teacher, he's had experience with students. There have been some remarkable moments, and then there have been disappointments, such as the current conflict. He does not have solutions, but has experience with his families of choice and of origin.

Mike proposes that we begin with this, and opens this up to discussion. Jim questions "interrupt" part of the policy. Mike says this follows the tribal traditions, of allowing elders to have time to express themselves. Thomas thinks "Elder" needs to be defined, the terms of service, and the particulars need to be vetted out. Patrick generally likes the idea, but isn't clear how this will be enacted--is it a policy or bylaw?

Al-Binky says "eldership" does not connote longevity. A 35 year-old could qualify just as one who's 105. Matthew: Don Kilhefner is referred. We can't have a healthy community without elders or even without youth. If we trust this enough for this to happen, it can. The current conflict could have been resolved...

Robert thinks that eldership is "earned" and not simply a criterion. He thinks that elders are recognized in the organization, and is in favor of elder circles. He thinks it needs tweaking. Not sure he wants to see this in motion without reconsideration.

Jason thinks that the last paragraph can be changed. Do we need an initiation ceremony? What do they wear. Milo thinks that this matter needs to be redefined since there are vague parts that could be misunderstood.

Craig thinks that this could be good. Michael thinks that the interruption rule might not be as severe as it might seem--it's simply a "parenting" issue, and not a take-over.

Initiation is also mentioned. Youth and elder initiations could be offered.

Phil offers that it be reworded: The elders' voice will have the right to be heard at all CMG proceedings. Jim thinks this is OK. This proposal ushers in tribal rituals and rites of passage. We need this as gay men. It all ties in. Milo thinks it's a step in the right direction. Thomas Nicholson and Ed Wahl concur. Circles encourage men to begin talking. Bob Ames thinks there's a side benefit: elders may not be as wise as we think they are--questioning can help make change. There may be a "surprise" aspect that we're not thinking of. It stimulates both the young and older men, and will be great.

Mike thinks that we could make a "leap" like the elders who wrote the US Constitution, who were given freedom to set the standards. We can think this through and come up with a proposal in the Summer. Mike says there are some men he has in mind; Buzz Young, Bob Ames, Al-Binky Hoch, are named. Other men are also included. Thomas thinks we could set this up with the men in attendance. There will be a special meeting with this topic alone, on Sunday. Thomas moves this. We could get this done. This will become an Operating Procedure, and not a By Law. This item is tabled to Sunday, May 27.

New Business--Miscellaneous

Ed Perez

Phil Darby proposes a letter of thanks, to Ed Perez, who is in poor health, and can't attend this Board Meeting. A card will be circulated amongst the 73rd CMG attendees, for signatures, and Phil will then send the card to Ed.

Dance a Thons

Lee proposes Dance a Thons ("DATs") as LEC activities. The CMG is in a good position to hold a DAT in the larger cities, to benefit like-minded organizations in the local communities. Steve Ibarra thinks this is a great idea. It will involve young men, in a non-alcoholic setting. Matt thinks this could be a great community service. Milo suggests involving the LECs at the forthcoming LEC Congress . Lee wants to involve both the LECs and the Board. A DAT is further explained. Lee will develop this.

LEC Tee Shirts

Milo says the LEC Congress has agreed to a tee shirt for volunteers to wear, a design of which was sent out to the Board. He told the Board that this will help elicit support of the CMG from the communities it serves. Further info is to be heard at the LEC Congress.

SF Pride CMG Tent

David Senk invited the Board to the SF Pride Festival, for the special CMG tent being offered to Pride attendees. There will be a picnic atmosphere at SF Pride, under the CMG tent. The tent will include sections for a "CMG experience" including puppy piles, photograph exhibits and other activities.

David seeks "CMG Ambassadors" to a group picnic, to discuss what the CMG means to them.

Focus Groups For Change

Focus groups for the CMG will be offered this weekend, as scheduled. "What's working in the CMG?" What's not working? A Post-Opening Ceremony forum will begin 10:00 PM tonight, at Finegood Hall.

Steve Ibarra says the community has been challenged. The ripples of positive energy are appreciated in this difficult time.

Closing The Meeting

We formed a large circle in the room. Chris Magnani shared that it's been a tough year so far, challenging, but these are the times to come together, communicate openly, be patient, think about the journey of the other person, walk in their shoes. We are people who care for each other.

Next Board Meeting

The CMG Board of Directors Meeting will occur Friday, August 31, 2012. An interim teleconference may be held in early July.

Meeting Adjourned 4:58 PM.