

Minutes of the January 5, 2022
Meeting of the
Board of Directors of
The New York Cycle Club, Inc.

Held Via Zoom Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Present were: Leora Rosenberg (Club President), Neile Weissman (Public Relations Director), Gerald Ross (VP of Rides), Michael Bernstein (A Rides Coordinator), Colin Taber (B-Rides Coordinator), Allan Friedman (ENY Director), Robert Gilbert (Treasurer), Sheila O'Connor (Content Editor), Edward C. Delk (Secretary), Kym Blanchard (Membership Director), Steve Vaccaro (VP of Programs), Marc Simkin (C Rides Coordinator), Charmaine Dixon (Volunteer Coordinator), Denise Alvarez-Heller (Special Events Coordinator), Natan Elman (Webmaster), and Peter Storey (past President).

Leora, as President, called the meeting to order at 6:16 p.m.

1. Approval of Minutes

On motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the following meetings were approved: October 6, 2021; October 21, 2021; November 3, 2021; and December 1, 2021.

2. Report on Rebranding Initiative

Kym and Sheila provided an update on the kit and logo rebranding initiative. Sheila said she was working on technical (coding) aspects of creating the website ballot for the proposed change in the Club logo, which she said would be presented together (or side-by-side) with the current logo, as required in the By-Laws. The Board discussed the initiative including the expected timing (one to two weeks), a potential dedicated email reminder for members to cast their votes, providing one-week advanced notice of the voting deadline, and other issues. Kym agreed to talk with Alex Klafehn about setting up the online shop where members can purchase the kit.

3. SIG & STS Program

Gerald discussed plans for the Spring 2022 SIG and STS programs. He described having contacted all of ride leaders for the A, B, C and D SIGs, and reported that leaders for the A, B and D SIGs have plans underway. He reviewed his communications with the C ride leader and the Board discussed the C SIG and other programming topics. Sheila reminded Board members to provide content for a website posting she planned for the SIG and STS programs.

4. Diversity & Inclusion Committee

Kym provided an update on recent work by the Diversity & Inclusion Committee focused on making new members feel more welcomed upon joining the Club. She reported having finalized a new welcome letter from the President that references resources and programs on the Club website, such as the ride library and the SIG/STS programs. The Board discussed other ideas, such as organizing a break-out session at monthly Club meetings where new members could chat. Another idea was to establish a “Youth SIG” for members aged 13 to 18, something like Kids Ride Club, which could also have the benefit of providing a potential on-ramp for KRC leadership in the future. Neile described a presentation he created on how to develop joint group rides with local cycling organizations like Major Taylor Iron Riders (MTIR), the Chinese Mountain Club and Black Girls Do Bike.

5. Proposed Update to Group Ride Guidelines Regarding COVID-19

Neile introduced and described his proposal for new COVID-19 guidelines (quoted below) for Club sponsored group rides. Gerald reported that the A, B and D ride leaders supported mandatory vaccination requirements for SIG and STS rides. Another Board member reporting hearing from some Club members a desire for the Board to require people to provide proof of vaccination to participate in group rides. Leora referenced prior email correspondence among Board members on the proposal, which included a range of views.

The Board discussed Neile’s proposal in detail and in the context of the current surge in the “Omicron variant” of the disease. The discussion included arguments against the proposal and arguments in favor of the proposal, as well as a review of the potential consequences of taking the proposed action and taking no action at this time. Neile reminded the Board that the proposal does not require ride leaders to take any particular action but provides flexibility for them to limit participation to vaccinated riders, and that the proposal includes common sense guidance such as not joining a ride if you are feeling ill or recently tested positive for COVID-19. On motion duly made and seconded, the Board passed the proposal.

Sheila agreed to incorporate the new guidelines on the Club website, in ride listings and in the monthly email. Leora directed Neile, Gerald, Jim Zisfein and Alice Easton to meet on a regular basis to discuss any implementation issues and relevant health guidance.

Proposed COVID-19 Guidelines for Group Rides

1. Do not participate in any NYCC ride if you are feeling ill—and certainly if you have recently tested positive for Covid-19.
2. Wear a properly fitted mask when indoors, especially on public transit and when required by local regulations. N95, KN95, KF94 (or equivalent) masks are preferred.

3. Indoor dining is deemed to be high risk.

- Leaders are encouraged to develop rides that do not include indoor dining.

- Ride descriptions must indicate if indoor dining is included during the ride.

- Do not register for a ride that includes indoor dining unless you (a) accept the risk—see link to ride waiver below, or (b) plan to leave the ride early, or (c) are willing to wait outdoors.

4. Leaders may require proof of vaccination and/or current test results. This requirement will be stated in ride listings and emails to participants.

5. Be aware of current CDC guidance and local conditions.

6. As always, leaders have the right to ask any rider to leave the ride when rules are not followed.

6. Board Goals for 2022

Leora invited Board members to present ideas for goals in the New Year. She described her desire for members (especially new members) to have a good experience, have access to good programs and feel welcomed, especially those new members who do not look like most current members. Steve remarked that Covid has hurt the culture of the Club and that we need to work on ways to tie people into the life and work of the Club. He expressed a desire for the Club to maintain some semblance of its pre-Covid programs and events, especially with respect to member participation in monthly Club meetings. Steve shared his concern that in some cases, members are splintering into private ride groups rather than joining (or leading) Club rides.

Charmaine asked whether the Club has a formal ride leader training program. Several Board members confirmed there is no certification process to become a ride leader and that it is left up to Club members to volunteer to lead group rides. It was noted that the A SIG program previously required graduates to agree to lead a certain number of rides but that this requirement was not enforced and has not been continued. A member noted that SIG leaders generally encourage program graduates to go out and lead Club rides but that this has not happened to the degree needed given the high demand for rides and the large number of SIG graduates. Allan noted that the Club has an All-Class ride which should continue, and that the Club used to have a Sunday social ride.

Peter noted that ride coordinators have a natural opportunity to ask ride leaders to broaden their imaginations on destinations and types of rides to encourage more variation in themes, pacing and distance. Allan described a leadership training requirement in the Five Borough Bike Club (5BBC) which specifies that a member must list and lead five rides to be given the privilege of posting and leading new rides. He

said NYCC could consider adopting a similar process and position it as a benefit rather than an onerous requirement. Gerald said he tries to spot people on his rides who look promising and then invites them to co-lead a ride. Charmaine mentioned that MTIR has a “pay it forward” expectation for members who take ride skill training, which requires graduates to teach ride skills to other MTIR members.

Other Board members suggested alternative approaches to encouraging Club members to lead (or co-lead) more group rides. For example, one member suggested that the Club consider changing the incentive program to make leading rides more attractive, such as by lowering the ride lead count required for a free Ride Leader jersey, or by giving ride leaders credits toward receiving a Ride Leader patch. Another member suggested changing the SIG program to require an up-front fee that would be refunded to each SIG graduate who leads (or co-leads) a certain number of Club rides before year-end.

7. Future Role of Escape New York (ENY)

Leora invited Allan to lead a discussion of the future role and structure of Escape New York. He began by suggesting that the Club make ENY a branded offering that explicitly states the event is sponsored by NYCC because, in his experience, many ENY participants and even some event sponsors are not aware that ENY is run by – and benefits charities selected by – New York Cycle Club. He said ENY is essentially an asset and program of a non-profit organization.

Allan reflected on last year’s event as “a lot of work” that can be “frightening”. He suggested that the Board develop an apprenticeship model to train future ENY Directors. He appealed to Board members to provide more support to the event, taking on roles and doing so earlier in the process, as well as keeping ENY in mind and promoting it whenever possible. Colin said the Board should openly discuss any arguments members have made against NYCC continuing this event. He suggested that the Board do more to market ENY – and seek more sponsors – earlier in the year. Colin reflected that the “blueprint” for ENY project management seems to get lost before the next year’s event, and that the Club should invest in establishing a stipend for someone who is given responsibility for professionally managing certain jobs such as marketing and organization. Kym remarked that ENY should include a constant team of professionals who, for a stipend, perform certain ENY tasks year-round, year-in and year-out.

Colin said being a ride coordinator for ENY is an extremely high-pressure and difficult “nearly full-time job”. He noted that it tends to “take over your life” but is gratifying. According to Colin, the role can be frustrating because so many people volunteer to help but don’t follow-through or do as good a job as they could. He agreed that it may help to professionalize certain roles but that this should be done carefully so that it is more “fun” and encourages leaders to celebrate the experience. Peter agreed that there are volunteers who fail to follow-through on their commitment and noted that if the Club decided to pay people to perform certain jobs, that something should be done to

document the organizational structure they establish so that the Club can use that document in the following years. He recommended that eventually things should revert to an all-volunteer format. Kym noted that NYCC is a leisure cycling club and therefore it is hard to execute ENY on a purely volunteer basis.

Steve observed that the New York Metropolitan area seems to have far fewer professionally managed cycling events (such as the old Montauk Century), and that those rides used to include compensated organizational roles. Kym noted that as a newcomer to the ENY ride, it was not clear to her that the event was part of NYCC. She said we should reinforce the branding (“logo lockup”) so that it’s clear to all participants that the event is sponsored by NYCC.

Bob suggested that ENY should employ a mentoring program for all key positions and acknowledged that ENY leadership did not execute the event as a project management exercise as well as it could have been done, despite the record-level participation and record proceeds. He said that, as Treasurer, he would support the idea of hiring someone professionally to help us for two years setting up documentation of the process and then revert to internally managing the process completely after that time. Allan suggested that the Club should use ENY as a leadership training program to identify potential Board members. Bob observed that before deciding to cancel ENY, the Club should consider lowering the programming or support levels to match what other local cycling organizations provide on their sponsored cycling events.

Leora concluded the Board’s discussion by noting that there seemed to be an openness to bringing in a vendor or professional support, and that Allan should consider which roles would be best suited for a stipend and how much it could cost.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.