

RLTC 2021 AGM Minutes

December 5th, 2021

2:00-4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

RLTC President Louise Malhotra called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

1. Approval of Agenda and Minutes of AGM 2020

Approval of Agenda: Moved by Mitch Bouchard. Seconded by Julie Mouris. Approved.

Approval of AGM 2020 Minutes: Moved by Gavin Murphy. Seconded by Gill Kirkwood. Approved.

2. President's Introduction

Louise thanked everyone for coming to the AGM and said it was a great year for the club. Covid made things more challenging for the Board and members and it has meant more is online, including this meeting. Louise is happy with how the Board approached things given the challenges. Louise thanked the Board members. She also thanked the members for their patience and cooperation during this evolving time.

She said our club is special because of the people. That includes our manager Chris Hannant. The Board is very pleased with Chris' performance and kindness towards our tennis community, and there have been rave reviews from members. This is his last year, so while the Board is disappointed and everyone will miss him, we wish him well. The club will be hiring a new manager and Louise asked members to let her know if anyone have ideas or suggestions. Louise said she is happy Chris will be around next year to help with the transition.

The club has been fortunate to also have excellent coaches who put tennis first. She said Zhenya Kondratovski and Dan Vila are strong leaders on the court. The Board gave each of the coaches a \$1,000 bonus.

Louise also thanked our staff. We had a lot of new faces this year, and we are hoping some return next season.

This year we are losing two Board members. She thanked Julie Smyth and Jackie Douglas. Julie has been involved in many areas of the club, welcoming new members, running social media, taking photos and promoting the club, serving on the Board for four years, helping with adult programming and tournaments, and contributing to club policy. Jackie has been on the Board for three years and has been instrumental in developing our junior programming and improving the experience for families.

3) Director's Report

a) Finances

Louise handed it over to Treasurer Phil English to detail the year's finances. Phil said it has been an excellent year. He said he was too conservative and pessimistic in his estimates early on in the season. In the end, we had 575 paying members versus 405 last year, a huge increase. Our income from membership fees was \$60,000 higher than last year.

Our net income was a record high compared to recent years: \$69,000 after our books were audited (up from the \$67,000 estimated pre-audit), vs. \$27,000 last year. We have never surpassed \$40,000, according to recent records Phil looked at.

Half of the net income came from junior programming. The remainder came from memberships, lessons and adult clinics, sponsorships and the canteen.

We are in very good shape in terms of cash in the bank.

Phil shared the documents for members to view and said Christa our bookkeeper is on the call if there are questions.

b) Grounds and Clubhouse

Louise said our contractor was not able to fulfill the conditions of our agreement to fix the hard courts this year. As a result, the club will get a significant reduction in cost and the courts will be finished early in the spring. Much of the court repair schedule for the spring will depend on the weather, and there are options for how we close the courts to get the work done. For all of the irritation and frustration, the club will save money to make up for the delays and loss of camp revenue due to cancellations we made in the expectation of work being done those weeks.

Louise said the club has preordered clay for the spring. It will allow us to open earlier, and we plan on doing this on an ongoing basis so we can get a jump on opening.

We will be doing more to help with scarifying the clay courts. There are some water issues that we need to remedy. We need to add protocols for staff so we can do more in-house maintenance.

This is the first time we brought in a full-service company to maintain grounds and we were happy with the work. It made things look nice, and we had good feedback.

Although we use volunteers for many things, it's good to have professional help for the weekly maintenance. We will engage the same company next year.

Louise said members will have seen the beautiful work on the deck. It is looking fabulous. Gill Kirkwood and Paul Bernier have done a fantastic job. We are very grateful. They put in new boards, built new benches and did a lot of work to refurbish it.

The ball machine did not arrive in time given Covid and supply chain issues. We have secured a new unit and it is Canadian made. It is currently sitting in Mitch's garage and will be ready for spring.

The Board will look at establishing rules for when the ball machine is available and perhaps provide some sessions on how the machine works.

Louise noted that at the last AGM the lighting discussion took up a lot of time. Due to Covid, we were not able to move ahead as planned but we have a framework for what comes next. This will include a formal request for a meeting with the city, which may include a representative of the Rockcliffe Park Residents Association (RPRA), and a meeting with the community on its own.

There were some upgrades to the kitchen with new appliances, including a stove. The Board is looking at other upgrades to the kitchen next year.

Kathie Swim did a great job working with Chris on the menu and food, and she is keen to get suggestions for next year.

Comments and Questions:

Gavin Murphy said it's been another year with inactivity on the lights. He said we have \$22,000 invested in lights sitting in storage. It is going to take a long time to get the building permit and get the neighbours on board. He said these lights are deteriorating. He acknowledged we got a deal on the lights. But he thinks the money should be put to better use. He thinks we should sell the lights now and repurchase them if it goes ahead. He proposed a motion to sell the lights now.

Louise said she felt we should keep the lights until we have an answer from the city about going ahead. We should hear before the next AGM, and if it will not go ahead we discuss the option to sell. There are supply chain issues now and we got a good price.

Gavin made a supplemental comment about capping numbers if needed. He believes tennis may not be as popular next year and we may have fewer members. He responded to Louise's comment and said he would postpone his motion, perhaps to next year.

Marc LePage thanked the Board. He asked if the Board would look at whether we could arrange to use the lights at ONEC and test the reaction in the community. He also proposed a future merger with ONEC and RLTC. He said this might also be useful if we have demand for the courts that outpaces availability.

Louise said the the RLTC has been a private club for almost 100 years. With such a firm establishment there is a lot of financial, legal and administrative work to make a merger of two clubs happen. Additionally, ONEC is a competitor to our club. If we send members to the ONEC courts, they will also be spending money there on lessons, food, and drinks. She is concerned that if we collaborate with ONEC to share revenue, it takes a lot of work given our bylaws and other issues. She believes we look at lights in terms of whether it helps our community of players. Lots of people want more hours to play in the evening.

Phil pointed out ONEC does not just have tennis. It has sailing and rowing, too. It would be complicated to merge. It is already complicated for ONEC to manage all of its interests. But he said we hear your comments, Marc, and thank you for that.

Joel Weiner asked if there is a limit to the number of members we can accommodate. He asked if the Board has considered a cap. He also asked about lights and mentioned how last year we were going ahead with community engagement. He said we have not been active given Covid and he wondered if the community has reached out to the city, and if the people opposed to lights are better prepared than us.

Louise said the idea of a cap has been debated by the Board. The decision by the Board was to monitor it and see if we are exceeding our capacity. If there is an issue, we can look at waiting lists. We can monitor court use on a monthly basis, for example. We don't want to put a cap if we don't need to as memberships generate revenue. She said there are a lot of times when courts are underused, and members have other interests aside from tennis so it is not always full.

Phil said he does not expect the exceptional numbers next year if Covid declines and the situation normalizes. He expects some new members might have been first-time players who may not return.

Louise said the Board is on top of the lights situation and has been discussing it at the Board and within its committee. She said the RRPA will have a fair chance to discuss its case with the city, as will RLTC. It comes down to the Heritage Plan and whether it restricts lights or not. Are they (people opposed) prepared? I would say yes. As for us: Are we underprepared? I would say no.

David Clendenning said the lights mandate given to the club at the AGM last year was based on information not known at the time. So he suggested the Board go back to the membership again after the city meeting. Then the membership can get behind the Board and those opposed can also give their views.

Louise said the purpose of the last year's motion was to allow the Board to move ahead with consultations with the community and outreach to the city. She feels last year's motion to pursue the permit was sufficient and the motion as adopted was fine. She said the club's survey last year showed large support for lights as a capital expense.

c) Programming

Zhenya joined the call. Louise reiterated the club's appreciation of our pros. Zhenya said it was a great year for him and Dan.

Louise said some weeks there were 30 participants in camps and overall the junior programming was well attended. We had excellent feedback and participation. The junior staff, including Junior Pro Ronan Boyd, were all great.

Louise said when we tried to push into competitive tennis, we faced competition with Rideau, which is close geographically and runs all year. So we are going to focus on recreational and pre-competitive tennis for younger kids who want to try some tournaments. She said the pros have great suggestions for how to move that forward.

Adult programming also went well, from round robins to tournaments and clinics. In the spring and fall, people are highly engaged but in summer it was harder to get numbers for clinics. Louise said we will work with the pros off-season to work on that.

Louise said overall the Board was very happy with the programming and we want to keep the focus on tennis, as that is what we are here for. She gave big thanks to volunteers running our round robins: Paul Bernier and Gill Kirkwood (twice-weekly daytime), Joel Weiner (new Sunday round robin), Nick Fortier (advanced one on Wednesday evenings), Richard Martineau (intermediate-advanced daytime). Louise said it's a sign of a great club to have so much volunteer help.

Phil said if people have concerns courts being booked for organized play, it's important to remember these are particularly important for new members so they can join in and meet other players. Also, they are enjoyed by many members.

Comments and Questions:

Carol Hart said we had the best year ever for round robins since we had so many of them. Also, the booking system has changed things with less spontaneous play. Gill, Paul and Joel did a great job and made them so much fun.

Louise echoed that and agreed it is thanks to our volunteers that we have such an active and engaged membership. Louise said she thinks the return to spontaneous games will come and believes it is more a function of Covid than the booking system.

d) Volunteer Report

Louise said we have so many volunteers, from round robins, to so much more. She thanked everyone. There are two very special volunteers. This year, we are giving Gill and Paul our first Outstanding Volunteer Award. Paul looks after our wine selection, works on the deck, painted the clubhouse, is engaged in policy, runs the daytime round robins. Gill is the jack of all trades, assisting with tech and IT, building and running our website. There is nothing Gill has not been working on. He's cleaned out the gutters, taken garbage to the dump, answers emails off season. He goes above and beyond. A club like this relies on our broad group of volunteers, but Gill and Paul have logged an incredible number of hours over the years. They've also served on the Board as executive members.

We are giving them each a five-year membership. Louise said, on behalf of the membership, you are both kind and generous. We appreciate it.

Also, the OTA is giving Gill and Paul the Bruce Childs Award for their dedication to tennis and volunteer work over the years. Zhenya has certificates for the two. There is also a write-up in the OTA newsletter.

e) Social

Louise said we did not have the same level of social events, such as the annual social and big open house, but we had some activities that went well. BBQs went well and some staff contributed, bringing families to run our BBQs with different themed foods. That was a great initiative by Chris. We hope to return to more events next year.

We have a very special landmark coming up. RLTC will be 100 years old in 2023. We are looking for volunteers. If longstanding members have old photos and memorabilia, we would love it if you could share those. Also, we are looking for volunteers that are not on the Board. Louise asked for people to contact her at the President's email.

Zhenya mentioned the Centennial Club award. Louise said she is aware of it and it involves a cost. Mitch said he has looked into it and has the information.

Bill Clarke suggested we contact Neva Bruce (our previous manager who built our garden, maintained it for 30 years and has been a longtime member and club champion). Bill offered to help with the 100th planning. He also suggested we add a photo on our clubhouse wall to recognize the Southam family's gift of land.

4) Treasurer's Report

Phil went over the documents, which were shared on the screen. We had \$69,000 in net income. Nearly half of our net income is attributed to junior programs, mainly camps. The rest is sponsorships, canteen, membership and adult programming.

He said it's important to note that the clinics and camps continue to keep the club afloat and add to the capital reserves.

Chris and his team netted more from the canteen than last year, and Chris earned his three bonuses as outlined in his contract, including one for ensuring the canteen made a profit.

We also received the government grant for staff, which helps enormously.

We decided to give the pros a bonus of \$1,000 each.

We have \$288,000 in assets.

We are in good shape and have money for future capital expenses, including hard courts, clubhouse renovations, and even the lights.

Comments and Questions:

Tony Brunst thanked everyone and said it had been a great year. He asked what we have in available cash after deducting liabilities.

Phil said it is about \$270,000.

Phil said our only real liabilities are accounts payable, and some member credits. There is also \$10,500 held in a GIC, from which earned interest is used to provide an award to one or two juniors each year. Phil added it was Bill Turner who initiated sponsorships when he was president. That netted \$21,000 this year.

Louise said she is happy the club is in good financial shape.

5) Capital Expenses

Phil said the capital plan is a work in progress. The document was shared on the screen. Phil said the club has not always had such a document, which is not a criticism but more a reflection of the limited resources available. He added that in past years there have been fundraising campaigns to finance major projects.

He pointed out the kitchen appliances and deck expenses this year, in addition to work on the parking area and around the grounds.

The \$15-20,000 for hard courts is lower than the original budget due to issues with the contractor.

We did not do the clay court levelling and scarification as planned. It will be next year. There is money set aside.

We purchased a ball machine at a lower cost of \$2,500 versus the higher cost projected with a different model we looked at from the U.S.

There is work to do on the shed roof, and there was leakage with courts so there are likely to be plumbing costs.

We need new posts for the clubhouse, so that will be a big job ripping up the floors and added work.

We have a unique clay court system. It is one of the only of its kind in Canada. The lifespan is 30 years, and we are at 30 years. We need to be ready to do major repairs going forward. We are budgeting for the years to come to cover the estimated cost.

We have not budgeted for a full clubhouse renovation or rebuild as it does not appear to be necessary at this time and the Board and membership have not prioritized that expense.

Comments and Questions:

None.

Motion: That the capital plan outlined in Table 1 be approved, with the understanding that the membership will be provided with an update at each Annual General Meeting of the club and will be asked to approve any major changes to the plan.

Moved by Kathie Swim. Seconded by Joel Weiner. Approved.

Louise pointed out the capital plan can change as time goes on, but there will be updates to members as things evolve.

6) Election of Board of Directors

Motion to approve returning members for re-election: Louise Malhotra (President), Phil English (Treasurer), Michel Bouchard, Pablo Gonzalez, Sébastien Huard, Julie Mouris, Jordan Samaroo, Kathie Swim.

Moved by John Taylor. Seconded by Bill Clarke. Approved.

Motion to approve new Board member Laurie Maybury.

Moved by Bill Clark. Seconded by Jackie Douglas. Approved.

7) Other Business

Nothing raised by members.

Louise adjourned the meeting at 3:42 p.m.