

Las Posadas Five County Board
November 13, 2023
Zoom Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Matt Torrance at 7:00 PM

It was agreed that the meeting would be recorded.

Matt asked Steven Worker to report on the Board's status as a 4-H support group. Steven introduced Anne Magaro, Director of Government and Community Relations for UC ANR, and Sheron Violini, Associate Director and asked them to participate in the discussion.

Steven reminded us that our status as a support group is currently inactive. UC ANR director of Advancement, Andre Ambrose, has sent Matt the annual information needed to be reinstated as an active group. Matt reported that the process is underway. The deadline is December 8. Steven thinks we can continue as a support group for one year. Steven will send copies of the email and paperwork to board members.

Steven explained that support groups are indistinguishable from the University. We must follow the same guidelines as any part of UC.

Anne said that as a group we cannot advocate or campaign for any issue that has not been approved by the UC regents. As individuals, we can advocate or raise funds, but we cannot claim to represent 4-H officially. We can identify ourselves as members of the Camp Board or supporters of 4-H but must represent ourselves as individuals, not as official representatives of 4-H.

David asked if we could ask for UC support if we do not get a response from other state agencies. He referenced the meeting with Mike Marcucci and stated that he did not feel we were given answers to our questions. Sheron suggested we contact Steven, who was the UC representative at that meeting with questions if they come up, but we cannot imply that a UC official is making the demand.

William Wagner suggested that we may need to form an outside group separate from UC since we are working toward advocacy.

Jim Bennett asked if advocacy can be tied to the Camp Board's current web page.

Matt suggested we change the name of the board, leaving out any reference to 4-H. Ann and Steven suggested this could be done but it would not be an easy process. We would have to work with the IRS, Franchise Tax Board, and the University. William supported the idea of forming a separate group.

Anne got back to the question of using the Board web page to advocate to save Las Posada. and said we would need a separate web page.

William offered his services as a web page developer to register the name 'Save Las Posadas' and start the new web page.

Jim supported the idea of forming a separate group to advocate for a return to Las Posadas but suggested the Camp Board stay together in the event we are able to use the camp at some time in the future. The board would still be needed to work with CalFire, deal with the equipment we own, and manage the funds in our account.

Responding to questions regarding support from UC, Steven said that we hope to raise millions to invest in improvements on land we do not own and that CalFire may not let us use in the end. He said that UC has other budget priorities and support for our efforts is not going to happen. He reminded us that he has said we need to make a compelling argument for why we need Las Posadas in particular when we have demonstrated that camp can happen at other locations.

Board members talked about the many difficulties and obstacles they face in trying to find other locations. Several counties have not secured a location to hold a camp in 2024.

Michelle asked for feedback on the draft letter she shared with this group and UC. Anne said the phrasing of the letter gives the impression that it is written from the perspective of the Camp Board and needs to be more from the perspective of an individual.

Several board members and others expressed disappointment in the lack of support we will receive from UC.

Board members asked for names of higher ups at UC we might contact to learn why they were unable to support the effort to return to Las Posadas. Sheron Violini asked for the request to be made in an email and said she would respond.

Sheron shared her experience as a legislative assistant. She suggested a single, unified approach, rather than a letter-writing campaign could be more effective. She said we should include in any letter what we need, what we are asking for, and what we can live with. She suggested we have a plan B if our first efforts are not successful.

Matt thanked the UC representative for attending the meeting.

Secretary's Report

Michelle moved to accept the minutes of the last meeting. The motion was accepted and passed.

Treasurer's Report

Jim reported a balance of \$54,452.25 in the business checking account, and \$85,425.43 in the money market account. He deposited around \$2,600 from an insurance refund of \$2,000 and money received from a Workers Comp lawsuit.

Matt asked Jim to look into our non-profit status which he agreed to do.

Unified Statement

Michelle is not sure how to proceed. Anne indicated that the letter needs to be rewritten from a more individual standpoint. Tony also worked on the letter. He planned to use the letter to get a meeting with an elected official and put some political pressure on them. He feels that we need support from UC in order to be successful.

We discussed the possibility of asking another non-profit already affiliated with Parks and Rec to take responsibility for the camp. Mike Marcucci has indicated that he would support this. Sonoma County will hold camp at a facility in Mendocino County which operates under this type of agreement. Former Napa Supervisor Brad Wagenknecht approached the Napa Open Space group at one time but they were not willing to take it on.

Michelle pointed out that CalFire is not meeting the terms of the lease because the property is not being used for education.

Tom pointed out the necessity of controlling our narrative. We need to over-emphasize the fact that we are not representing UC.

We discussed the logistics of forming a separate group such as the need for a membership list, by-laws, board insurance, and non-profit status, and whether the Camp Board can donate money to the advocacy group. Lisa Westin offered to help using her experience as a non-profit accountant. Michelle asked that she communicate with the board as a whole.

We discussed updating the Las Posadas Board Website. Dion has indicated he is willing to do this. Board member lists, by-laws, and copies of the minutes need to be updated. Allison

David volunteered to serve on the nominating committee. Several board members have indicated that they are willing to hold office. David will check on eligibility

