

ETRC Special Board Meeting 1/4/12

Present: Carol Stone, Brent McCoy, Roberta Williams, Kelley Eller, Tom Beeckman, Ken Wade, Karen Edwards

Location: Shoneys on Lovell Rd, Knoxville

The purpose of this specially called meeting was to discuss the AKC delegate position, and decide some rules for running a contested secret ballot election.

7 Board members is enough for a quorum so we got started at 6:30 p.m.. Carol passed out a sheet of paper with several options and questions for discussion, and the first order of business was a brief break while we all read it.

AKC Delegate. As a member club, we are expected and entitled to have a delegate who participates in AKC delegate meetings and AKC decisions. The delegate is elected by the club but has to go through a lengthy approval process with AKC, which usually takes about 7 months. Until a new delegate is approved, AKC continues to recognize the old delegate.

We went to a lot of trouble and work to become an AKC member club 12 years ago thinking that this would give us a good voice in AKC matters, particularly those involving the field world. However, the delegate situation has not worked well for our club for the following reasons: (1) we have not had the money to pay for the delegate to go to the meetings. (2) the two delegates we have had in the past/present have not done a good job of relaying information back to us (nor have we done much with providing them with any direction). Catherine, our first delegate, did go to all the meetings but never sought input from us or provided us with feedback. Our current delegate, Garry, has gone to 7 meetings, not all, and hasn't provided much feedback although he indicates he is certainly willing to do so in the future, will attend all board meetings if asked, and will take our direction on matters that we have an interest in.

There was some discussion that most of the stuff affecting the field world isn't done in the delegate meetings but is under the aegis of the Performance Events group, which is an AKC body. They may present recommendations to the delegates for voting, but all the real decisions have already been made. It may be more effective for us to lobby this group rather than worry about having a delegate.

We have two choices: continue on as a member club and try to make the delegate situation work better for us, or give up our membership and go back to being an AKC licensed club instead. We have already paid our membership fee for the year 2012, but it was only \$25 or \$50. There are no real financial incentives either way: the membership fee is not much, and we make it back on reduced fees / no fees for the first event we put on during the year. There are still fees for being a licensed club (which may be actually higher), and fees for events will be slightly higher but they are all reasonable enough that the money is not an issue even for our financially strapped club. We might be able to get

information more quickly on what is coming down the AKC pipeline if we continue on as a member club with an effective delegate, but we might be able to get just as much information by closely following the discussions on the AKC website and various field blogs.

If we stop being a member club, there will need to be changes in our Bylaws with all that entails.

Karen moved that we stay a member club for the year, set clear expectations for the delegate and invite him to all board meetings, and try to make our membership work for us. At the end of the year, we can evaluate whether the situation has improved and whether we want to continue on as a member club. No one seconded this motion.

Brent moved that we immediately drop out as a member club. Ken seconded, and the votes were 5 in favor and one opposed.

So, the delegate position will be removed from the ballot for the February election. Carol will contact Garry and tell him that we are withdrawing our membership and that we will no longer consider him to be our delegate. Carol will also contact AKC to find out what we need to do and the steps we need to follow to get our charter changed and our bylaws revised. In the meantime, AKC may still continue to recognize Garry as our delegate.

Contested election. Our election is coming up in February, and for the first time we have more nominees for the board/officer positions than positions to be filled. This means that our usual method of a show of hands and election by acclamation will not work for us this year. Roberta mentioned that AKC came down hard recently on a breed club that did not run proper secret ballot elections and maintain records for 5 years, and that they imposed a hefty fine. This underscores the need to decide how to run an election.

Positions open for election. First, we need to clarify the positions that are up for election. Trudie Kuka was appointed to fill Kelley Eller's unexpired Board term when he was elevated to Vice President. Kelly's board position was not up for re-election until 2013. The Bylaws say: "Any vacancies occurring on the board ... shall be filled until the next annual election by a majority vote of all the then members of the board..." There was some discussion whether this meant at the next election where that position was to be filled – i.e., since Trudie was filling a position that wasn't due to expire until 2013, was her interim appointment effective until 2013, or was she up for election in 2012. There was concern expressed that this would throw off the staggering of board positions (6 positions, with 2 being elected each year). Karen commented that other clubs assured that the staggering stayed in place by having the election be for a different term – i.e., Trudie would be a candidate for a 1 year position, not a 3-year position. Several people commented that in the past, ETRC has interpreted "until the next annual election" to mean until the completion of the original term. Tom moved that we continue to interpret this provision the way we have always done it, and Trudie's interim

appointment is good until 2013. Brent seconded the motion, and the vote for approval was 5 to 1.

This means that only two director positions will be on the ballot, and there will be 5 people competing for these two positions – Derek Dieterich, David Knott, and the three extra nominations, Mike Evans, Patti Gibson, and Sheila Nelson.

There will also be a contested election for President – current interim president Carol Stone and extra nominee Brent McCoy. Should Brent win, his current board position will be filled by the board for the remainder of his term which expires in 2013. In that case, Carol will become the immediate past president and Ken Wade will be off the board.

Ballot counting and procedures.

The following procedures were agreed upon by acclamation without a formal motion/approval:

Tom and Marianne Beeckman will be the official ballot masters and counters. They were asked to do this as Tom is currently on the Board but his term is expiring and he is not up for re-election. Carol will put together a ballot, and will email it to Tom. Tom will print it out in whatever size and color he feels is appropriate and will keep this information secret until the ballots are passed out at the meeting. Karen and Chuck Atchley will sit with Tom at a table at the door, checking off members as being in good standing and paid up to date, and then Tom will hand each family/individual member a ballot with his initials or some other identifier on it. There was some discussion whether the ballots should be numbered, but it was decided that this was not necessary or desirable as it might make the ballot less secret. Tom will keep tabs on how many ballots he has passed out and if he gets more back, that will be a clue that things are not going well. If there is a tie, then plain paper and ad hoc ballots with only the tied candidates on it will be passed out, and Tom and Marianne will be in charge of this as well.

A suggestion was made that each nominee be asked to write up and submit a brief paragraph about themselves and their qualifications, which would be published in the newsletter before the election. Since we are so widely scattered and many members don't know many other members, this would give everyone some idea about the people they are voting for and at least some basis for their votes. Several people said they felt uncomfortable about this; it would seem like tooting their own horn and might lead to unintentional harm to some of the nominees. Tom moved that no bio sketches be provided, Ken seconded, and the motion passed 5 to 1.

Karen brought up that several members, including one of the Board nominees, had asked about the possibility of absentee voting. The Bylaws specifically prohibit proxy voting, but are silent on absentee voting. This could be set up so that people would have to request an absentee ballot and give reasons why they needed one. Pros would be: large membership with wide geographical dispersion, shift work schedules, etc., and wider participation by more club members in the election. Cons would be: possible difficulty of getting a quorum at the meeting if absentee voting were to be allowed. Tom moved that absentee voting NOT be allowed, Kelley seconded it, the motion passed 5 to 1.

Other Matters.

1. Email communications/discussions. Ken urged the group to stay away from email communications about issues under discussion by the Board. He felt this could lead to excessive acrimony and that face to face discussions were better.
2. Tom mentioned that he is putting their house on the market and when it sells will be moving out of state.
3. Gun dog rules: questions have been raised about the use of the word “complete” in the new gun dog rules. Someone had pointed out that their dog completed a particular test but did not pass. Does this mean they get the extra point? The general consensus of the Board was that the word should be changed to “qualified” or “Passed” rather than completed.

At 7:45 pm, Tom moved the meeting be adjourned. Brent seconded it and the vote was unanimously in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Edwards
Interim Secretary

Approved at the ETRC Board meeting 3/2/7/12