

Carolinas Region PCA – Board of Directors Meeting – Tobacco Roads Special Meeting
March 16, 2023 at 7pm
Zoom Conference | Charlotte, NC

In Attendance:

Executive Council: Jerry Widner, Jim Hess, Sadie Kilcrease, Brian Powell, Giselle Burner

Board Members in Attendance: Marty Barrett, Kathy Boehm, Barry Brown, Julie Harwath, John Kelly, Jerry Kilcrease, Matthew Johnson, Charlie Massler, Dale Moses, Jim Proper, Doug Seefus, Doug Strait, Michael Vittorio, David Violet

Meeting called to order: At 7:04 pm, Jerry Widner, President, called the meeting to order and presided over the meeting.

Welcome: Jerry Widner, President, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He reviewed the meeting agenda, which included Tobacco Roads Recommendations, Autocross Planning, and Summer Party at VIR.

Administrative Items:

1st Quarter 2023 Board Meeting Minutes – Giselle Burner, Secretary: Minutes from January 14, 2023 meeting were approved and published on the Carolinas PCA website.

Next Board Meeting: The 2Q2023 board meeting date was scheduled for May 20, but upon further discussion was changed. The next board meeting is scheduled for Saturday, June 24, 2023, to be conducted in person in the Upstate Area. Jerry Widner will email Board Members meeting logistics and agenda prior to the meeting.

Committee Report:

Review of Tobacco Roads Budget: During the 2023 Budget Planning meeting held on January 14, 2023, the Carolinas Region Board of Directors discussed the need to reevaluate printing the Carolinas Regions newsletter, known as Tobacco Roads, due to increasing costs associated with printing and postage of the newsletter.

At the January 14 Planning Meeting, The Board approved a 6-Month newsletter budget expiring in June 2023 with the June Edition and established a Tobacco Roads Strategy Committee to determine strategic steps to preserve, protect and maintain the historical significance of the newsletter and better position its usefulness for region members. Strategic actions recommended by the Tobacco Roads Strategy Committee would use the July 2023 Edition as the "starting point" for effective change. The following topics were evaluated:

- Financial Impact to the Region
- Historical Significance – Methods to preserve the newsletter (Print, Digital, or both)
- Change ramifications that would impact the Region's Tobacco Roads Advertisers
- Methods to restructure advertiser pricing going forward based upon recommendations by the Committee, if needed
- Pros/Cons with stated financial impact for all recommendations to the Carolinas Region Executive Council and Board of Directors for the future of Tobacco Roads
- Publication modification – reducing frequency, distribution, and print elimination to save costs

Recommendation presented:

1. Starting in July 2023, eliminate the printed version of Tobacco roads in lieu of fully digitizing Tobacco Roads. This recommendation would not change the frequency of the newsletter, it would remain a monthly publication.
2. Starting in April 2023, distribute a monthly email to the membership (Carolinas Region President), leading up to July 2023, announcing the digitalization of Tobacco Roads.
3. Notify current advertising sponsors of the change and indicate they will no longer receive a printed version of Tobacco Roads, reducing overhead and administrative costs to the region.
4. Submit a revised Advertising plan (Advertising Chair) modifying sponsor benefits due to this change.
5. Reallocate funds back to region funding for ways that would benefit members.
6. Review communication tools to ensure messaging is effective and reaching members – suggested review to take place in 2024.

Board members weighed in with the following commentary –

- Michael Vittorio recommended that the Board vote on each proposed recommendation.

Recommendation #1 - Eliminate the printed version of Tobacco roads

Motion: Motion made by Michael Vittorio to approve recommendation, seconded by Jim Hess. Unanimous motion passed by the Board to approve Board budget as submitted.

Recommendation #2 – Distribute monthly email communicating upcoming changes to Tobacco Roads

Board members weighed in with the following commentary –

- Brian Powell suggested adding an article to the newsletter indicating the decision reached to eliminate the printed version of the newsletter, which would address the audience that relies on mailed communications
- David Violet recommended adding an article to all publications leading up to July 2023
- Doug Strait recommended adding a story to the Carolinas Region Facebook page
- Jerry Widner plans to add change messaging to “From the Driver’s Seat” beginning in April
- Sadie Kilcrease recommended the Jerry Widner send an email via 3.0 in April indicating changes to the printed newsletter
- John Kelly suggested printing a 12-month archived version of Tobacco Roads for those members that wanted a year’s worth of newsletters, but Jerry Widner indicated that all newsletters were already available for any member to download and print from the Carolinas Region website

Motion: Motion made by Michael Vittorio to approve recommendation, seconded by Jim Hess. Unanimous motion passed by the Board to approve Board budget as submitted.

Recommendation #3 – Notify current advertising sponsors of newsletter changes

Board members weighed in with the following commentary –

- Jim Hess asked whether this plan had been vetted with advertisers to gauge reaction of the Board’s decision
- Michael Vittorio mentioned that this plan had been discussed with Porsche Hickory who agreed with the recommendation
- Doug Seefus also indicated that Black Forest Racing had been informed and supported the recommendation, but suggested that all advertisers receive targeted communication regarding the Board’s decision

Motion: Motion made by Michael Vittorio to approve recommendation, seconded by Barry Brown. Unanimous motion passed by the Board to approve Board budget as submitted.

Recommendation #4 – Advertising Chair to submit a revised Advertising Plan that coincides with July implementation of the all-digital newsletter

Board members weighed in with the following commentary –

- Jerry Kilcrease asked when the plan would be distributed to the Board
- Doug Seefus indicated the plan would be shared with the Board; He would set up a meeting with David Violet first to discuss the new digital strategy and layout
- Sadie Kilcrease inquired about the plan to revise advertising costs; Doug Seefus agreed that advertising costs should be reduced but could be made up in volume.
- Sadie Kilcrease suggested to increase the gray scale cost to make both gray scale and colored advertising equal

Motion: Motion made by Michael Vittorio to approve recommendation, seconded by Doug Seefus. Unanimous motion passed by the Board to approve Board budget as submitted.

Recommendation #5 – Reallocate funds back to region funding for ways that would benefit members – A & B

Board members weighed in with the following commentary –

- Michael Vittorio mentioned that the options presented were only meant to be considerations for the Board to vote on through the normal general budgeting process
- David Violet and Brian Powell both agreed that the considerations would be up to a future Board to agree on and vote into action – not for this Board to determine at this time. Furthermore, Brian suggested striking the considerations from voting as the funds were going to be redirected to the general fund.

Motion: Motion made by Jim Hess to approve recommendation, seconded by David Violet. The majority passed and approved this recommendation.

- *Approving Board Members:* John Kelly, Jerry Kilcrease, Michael Vittorio, Sadie Kilcrease, Jerry Widner, Julie Harwath, Doug Strait, Jim Hess, Matthew Johnson, Barry Brown, Marty Barrett).
- *Opposing Board Members:* Charlie Massler, Kathy Boehm, Dale Moses, Brian Powell, David Violet, Giselle Burner.

Recommendation #6 – Review communication tools to ensure messaging is effective and reaching members

Board members weighed in with the following commentary –

- Michael Vittorio suggested that the Board review all communication vehicles (email, social media outlets, website) to ensure that members are receiving all communications
- Barry Brown Kelly suggested that Area Directors communicate more frequently with members, ahead of the published newsletter, to ensure members are aware of upcoming events

Motion: Motion made by Michael Vittorio to approve recommendation, seconded by Jim Hess. Unanimous motion passed by the Board to approve Board budget as submitted.

Summer Party 2023/Porsche 75th Anniversary: Jerry Widner discussed the plan for Drivers Education course in June at VIR coupled with the Summer Party 2023/Porsche 75th Anniversary. Charlie Massler discussed the plan for the summer celebration which included Cars & Coffee sponsored by Hagerty, charity laps with car showcase by Ingram Car, VIR BBQ country dinner with entertainment, anniversary gifts sponsored by a local Porsche dealership and driver-led drives. Charlie was concerned there would not be enough of a draw to pull members from the Carolinas Region, therefore would be detoured resulting in a lower turn out.

Board members weighed in with the following commentary –

- Marty Barrett spoke to Steve Sudler who indicated VIR would sponsor the dinner, but Jerry Kilcrease suggested that sponsorship was still uncertain and further discussions were needed.
- Doug Strait suggested publishing a survey to get better membership response on the proposed summer event given the June timeframe.
- Michael Vittorio agreed that a survey could provide some membership insight. He suggested that since PCNA was directing all Porsche dealerships to host a 75th Anniversary party, Porsche Greensboro would need to sponsor the event.
- Jerry Kilcrease and Doug Strait disagreed that Porsche Greensboro should be obligated to be a paying sponsor for this event citing inability to get a return on investment – negatively impacting relationship with Carolinas Region PCA.
- Brian Powell disagrees with sponsoring an event during the June DE citing conflict of interest.
- Michael Vittorio, Jim Hess and Charlie Massler agreed that voting on a plan that needed to be fully vetted would not be possible – further research to determine whether Porsche Greensboro would sponsor would be necessary to bring the event to a vote.
- Sadie Kilcrease suggested that this event would put a financial strain on the Region.
- Jerry Widner suggested the Board take a vote to continue exploring the actual cost of the event and send an email to the Board with all details and costs associated with the event by Thursday, 3/23/2023.
- Michael Vittorio recommended deferring vote until there was more information that included a budget for the event.

Motion: Jerry Widner recommended that the Board hold off on a motion to vote on the Summer Party event until further research could be conducted and a budget brought forward so the Board can decide.

Update 3/18/23: Charlie Massler confirmed that Porsche Greensboro had restrictive guidance from PCNA about the 75th Anniversary function, indicating the event needed to be conducted at the dealership. In addition, a significant investment by the Region would have put a strain on a tenuous budget. Therefore, an offline decision was reached by Jerry Widner on March 19, 2023, to cancel the summer party.

Autocross: John Kelly discussed the 2023 Autocross budget but after further discussion about the pending June event at VIR, the Board decided to table any decisions to add/remove any Autocross events until a plan was reached for VIR. Therefore, no further action would be taken until the next meeting.

Motion to Adjourn: Motion made by David Violet to close the meeting, seconded by Jim Hess. Meeting adjourned at 8:33 pm.

Minutes submitted by Giselle Burner, Secretary