

Probus Club of Vancouver - Strategic Plan 2018

Members of the Strategic Planning Committee Meeting held January 16th 2018

Brian Maunder, Chair, Hugh Lindsay, Jack Zaleski, Hugh Chaun, Peter Scott, Tim Sehmer, Raymond Greenwood

Introduction

Probus Club of Vancouver, which has a membership of about 400, provides its members with services which are highly valued, according to a membership survey completed in early 2014. The purpose of this Strategic Plan is to recommend whatever changes might further improve upon the existing organization of the Club and its activities. We emphasize that the function of this report is to recommend; it will be up to the Management Committee to implement whatever action it deems appropriate.

Mission Statement

The club uses two "Mission Statements" which are similar to that of Probus Canada.

1. Enriching members with topical, entertaining speakers and social activities.

Used in Probus Vancouver news letter

2. Ours is a men's club for retired and semi-retired professionals, businessmen and others. We are affiliated with Probus Canada.

We organize monthly addresses on topical subjects, and arrange activities which include visits by members to places and organizations of interest.

Used on Probus Vancouver Website Home Page

3. Probus is an association of active retirees who join together in clubs. Its basic purpose is to provide its members with regular opportunities to keep their minds active, expand their interests and to enjoy the fellowship of new friends

Used on Probus Canada website.

We suggest that the club consider revising the versions in the Probus Vancouver newsletter and website to recognize fellowship as in the Probus Canada wording.

Attendance

Attendance at monthly meetings has declined over recent years for reasons that are not apparent. This may be due to increased availability of presentations from other organizations and electronic media. It may also be related to the willingness and desire of members for social contact.

We suggest that the Club conduct a membership survey on this and other issues.

Succession Planning

We continue to believe that the current practice of appointing a President and Vice President for terms limited to one year is working well and should be continued.

We recommend a continuance of the current practice of forming a nomination committee, consisting of the current President, Vice President and immediate Past President, to make recommendations of candidates to fill the roll of Committee Chairs for the coming year.

We recommend that the Vice President be responsible for ensuring that each Committee Chair has appointed a Vice Chair and that each Committee Chair's Job description is up-to-date. Service on committees should recognize the reality of planned and unplanned absences and the need for backup to provide continuity.

Legal

The club is required to revise its constitution to conform with the new Societies Act. This will need to be approved by members at the 2018 AGM and will be done with help from honorary counsel.

Honorary counsel will also provide assistance in reviewing the club's indemnity agreements for members of the Management Committee and other volunteers.

Membership

Current membership fluctuates under 400 members and the turnout for monthly meetings ranges between about 125 -200. We recommend no change in the size of the membership, which seems about right for the current venue, though at this point it seems unnecessary to formally cap its size. We recommend no change in the rate at which new members are introduced (3 at each of the 11 meetings which take place at the Planetarium); this is about equal to the number of members dropping out of the Club each year.

We recommend that the Membership Committee continue to seek ways to enlarge the number of younger (under age 75) members and the number of members from ethnic groups not well represented by the current membership.

We suggest that a “Welcome Package” letter be presented to each new member by the President

Speakers

Our principal activity at monthly meetings revolves around speaker presentations and the previous membership survey confirmed that they are usually seen as high quality; the people and organization of this committee are working well. We continue to recommend that all speakers be asked to speak no longer than 45 minutes, meaning that the speaker would finish by 1100. Also that the President (or person presiding over the meeting) allow the question period to continue for at least 10 and up to 20 minutes, provided that, there is a high interest in the subject but not go past 11.30 am

As stated in previous Strategy Plans, occasionally the introducer or thankers speaks too long, we recommend that the Speakers Committee make it clear to introducers and thankers, both verbally and in writing, that they should speak for no more than one minute.

Activities

Activities continue to be well organized and well received by the members; there remains the possibility of expanding the number and/or the scope of the activities. As previously, we have no specific recommendations to make with regard to Activities, except to encourage the Committee to explore new ideas and continue the good work.

Annual Dues

Annual dues were reduced in recent years from \$80 to \$50 to reduce a surplus that the Management Committee considered excessive. For the 2017/18 year, the dues were increased to \$60 and similar increases may be needed for the next few years to eliminate annual deficits, cover anticipated increases in expenses, and provide an adequate reserve for unexpected costs.

We compliment the Treasurer for preparing a three-year budget plan this year and recommend that the practice be continued.

Venue

The Planetarium continues to provide good facilities at a reasonable cost, although this has been increasing in recent years. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Planetarium is cost-effective and competitive, however significant future increases would require the club to increase annual dues.

We suggest that the Club continue to use the Planetarium facilities but be prepared to consider alternatives if the cost becomes excessive.

Presidents Lunch

The Presidents Lunch is still thought to be well received, though turnout continues to be disappointing, perhaps reflecting price sensitivity. We recommend that it be continued. Responsibility for organizing this event has been divided between Speakers Committee (responsible for everything related to obtaining, introducing and thanking the speaker) and the Activities Committee (venue, attendance, money and catering).

We recommend that the Management Committee continue to look for ways to improve the attendance, and consider if the Presidents Lunch should continue to be for members only.

Newsletter & Web Site

Members continue to be very positive about the Newsletter which has been emailed to members and is also available on the web site. Members have also commented favorably on the web site