

Soderville Athletic Association

Annual Board Meeting Minutes

Date: October 17, 2006

Board Members in Attendance

Steve Voss	President
Greg Stephani	Vice President
Rodney Gillund	
Brad Eppenberger	
Dale Blonigen	
Paul Krenz	

Not in Attendance

Phil Morem	Secretary
Brian Braden	Treasurer
Doug Evans	

Others in Attendance

Nancy Nelson
Curt Olsen
Jim Jarvi
Jeff Arvold
Curtis Moe
Marty Tynda
Terry Speckel
Julie Speckel
Tom Bauer
Kelly Doonan

Welcome and Call to Order - Steve Voss at 7:07 pm.

Introductions were made by the Board members and the public.

Approval of Annual Meeting Minutes for March 14, 2006 – Steve reported that we changed the by-laws so the annual meeting is now in October instead of March. Paul K. made the motion to approve the March 14, 2006 Annual Meeting minutes, Brad E. seconded the motion, motion approved.

President's Report - Steve V. reported on how the 2006 season went. Steve V. said he had started to come to the Board meetings in 2005 and could see there were some changes that were needed to be made to improve the organization and he ended up coming on the Board in September of 2005 and is now the President. Steve V. saw the skills the Board Members had and lack of communication in the organization and this is how the website began. Steve V. also noticed how the Board meetings were lasting so long and that needed to be changed so more discussions would be taking place outside of the meetings.

By organizing the skills of each Board member into specific tasks, we were able to improve the association and increase the number of volunteers. These volunteers took an association that nearly crumbled and made much it into a much improved and stronger community organization.

Things that went well for 2006:

Communication: The communication was exceptional mostly because of the website. All the information needed for the season was on the website. Steve V. sent out many emails to the association so they knew what was going on. Over 90% of the association registered online and we had over 1,200 kids in the program.

Concessions being open at all three ball parks – this was a great service to our players and fans and we made a profit besides.

Traveling baseball and fastpitch had positive changes – much success in both of these programs this season, especially in the increased number of players.

In-house – a complaint before was lack of umpires, this year we had umpires at 96% of the games, we have a good foundation now for improvement in this area.

Team photos – we tried something different and it did not work quite how we planned but that should be something we can improve on easily for 2007.

SAA allows players the chance to play with their friends so there are challenges there in trying to find a happy medium. Some of the teams are getting too good and we need to keep the focus that this is in-house and this seems to have gotten lost with some of the coaches on the rec. side. Some coaches are far too competitive for the rec. level so we want to focus on keeping it fun and not so competitive. Finding a way to rein that in is a top focus for 2007.

A big thing that we intended to do that was not done was fundraising. This will for sure happen in 2007. SAA dropped charitable gambling and we don't see this being picked up in the near future so fundraising is what we are focusing on for the financial side.

We had a mandatory volunteer policy for 2006, predominantly for the concessions part of it. We had some mix ups and challenges but for the most part it went well. We need to look at this as the Board to decide if we will be charging a fee for the volunteer program. On the questionnaire that was sent to the association about half agree with this policy.

It was discussed what a big jump it is for players going to player pitch level. We talked about if we could take the 10's and 12's and break them up into two groups, one being at a more competitive level. There is a tremendous drop off in the 9 and 10 year old league – a 60% drop in kids when they turn 10 as the games are more frustrating. We would like to improve that and try to retain more kids in that age group.

This past year on the baseball side there was only 3 13U teams and 3 15U teams so as a group we pulled the coaches together and decided to group them together, we thought it would go smoother than it did but there were some challenges. We will look into some options for them for next year.

Most of you know we have a new building on Highway 65, it is basically for storage and meeting and we are looking into using it for a work out facility as we would like to get some better use out of it in the future.

SAA Feedback Forms

Steve V. reported that about 25 feedback forms were received, which in itself may be a good indicator. The on-line registration, web site, and overall communications were in the excellent to very good rating range. Team photos and umpires were near the bottom of the feedback range. Overall, SAA scored 4 out of 5.

Public Forum –

Terry S. made a suggestion that he agrees with the idea that the building be used so the kids can pitch and hit in the winter. Rodney G. reported that the clinics will continue in January through March that went on at Blaine High School also. Julie Speckel reported that the girls start to pick up that the harder they work the better they are going to be. They have looked at the website and many of the places they can go to are far away and if there is something available for the SAA players many of them would take advantage of this. The girls liked working with the high school kids at the gym last year so she sees this will strengthen the organization and would contribute funds to our own area.

The question was asked if anyone knows of any other associations that offer winter clinics – it was answered that OMGAA in Osseo/Maple Grove has them offered.

Longest pitching we can get in that building is 50 feet, batting cages will fit better than the pitching even; we are hoping to use the storage area at the concession stands to store some of the stuff at the building

A question was asked about the status of charitable gambling. Steve V. reported that we did not make any money with gambling in the past two years and that the association is under investigation. We just did not make the money that some of the gambling does for other associations. We only had pull tabs at Ham Lake Lanes. It was stated that gambling was a sore spot at the meetings as it was not being run properly. There is a chance that it could be resurrected at some point but we are focusing on fundraising to make money for the association right now. Steve V. reported on his fundraising idea of selling the cards. We are also looking at going out to businesses and selling advertising for the outfield fences and having advertisements on the website. We do not want to sell stuff like candy and Christmas wrap but with the cards everyone can get involved and we have the potential to make quite a bit of money. It was stated that it takes a lot more than just fees to keep the organization going. Steve V. talked to Brian B. before the meeting and reported that charitable gambling took money away because of legal fees and all in all we are doing fine, especially when the fundraising is done this next year. We would like to have a better balance but considering the year we are doing well. Rodney G. talked about the benefit we are considering having at the VFW in February. That is another fundraising opportunity and will also raise awareness for the association.

It was reported that there is still an issue that the coaches are not respecting the umpires. The suggestion was made that every coach should umpire a game so they see it is not as easy as it looks. Realistically all we can ask of the umpires is that they are consistent. We are also looking at helping make sure they understand the rules better. There was also the point made by Curt Olsen that many of the coaches are also good to the umpires. Someone also stated that part of the problem is some of the adults have trouble having a kid have authority over them. We had offered a coaches clinic and we could look at making this mandatory for next season. Brian Raabe, who instructed the coach's clinic, talked about dealing with parents and umpires, besides the mechanics of the game. It was brought up that the coaches could go to the umpire clinics too. It should be conveyed to the coaches that they are in charge of dealing with the parents on their team and they should be told this at the beginning of the season.

Curt Olsen has something on baseball that Cambridge is going to start a program of 13 and 14 year olds. Cambridge/Isanti would be separate from SAA. It was stated that additional work would be required by whoever does the scheduling. Paul K. has talked to Blaine and they are also interested in having the 13's play separately. Andover will probably not per Curt Olsen as the Northstar thing works for them. Curt will communicate with Kevin in Cambridge if we are interested in looking into it. Tom Bauer had a question about how the rules would interfere with each other and Curt said they don't have any rules yet so they would be looking to SAA for rules help. Paul K. reported that Blaine had issues with combining 13 – 15's also so the Board definitely thinks this is worth pursuing

It was brought up that Soderville field could use some work. This and other issues with the fields will be brought up to the City.

Fill Vacant Board Positions – we have two vacancies on the Board as of right now so Steve opened the floor to see if anyone present would be interested. Steve V. explained it is a working Board setting the direction for the association. He gave information on when the Board meetings are and what being on the Board entails. The question was asked if we have insurance in case we are sued and the answer was yes. It was asked what the vacant positions would be in charge of and it was answered that Steve V. would call them positions at large. One seat expires in October of 2007 and one in 2009. It was asked how much commitment is requested besides the tournament and Rodney brought up that the tournaments are a big commitment and Steve reported that setting up the teams is a complex job.

Terry Speckel has decided he is interested in the being on the Board.

Marty Tynda is interested in the one year commitment position on the Board.

Curtis Moe is interested in being on the Board too.

Rodney G. made a motion to increase the Board from 11 to 13 members, Greg Stephani seconded the motion, Curt Olsen brought up that what if down the road we have troubles getting that many on the Board (this was discussed as not being an issue), motion approved.

Steve V. would suggest we should put terms on the additional Board positions, it was decided that we would make one a three year term and one a two year term.

Rodney G. nominated Jim Jarvi for the Board and this was accepted. Rodney G. makes the motion to accept all four nominees, Brad E. seconded the motion, motion approved.

Jim Jarvi – 1 year term

Marty Tynda – 1 year term

Curtis Moe – 2 year term

Terry Speckel – 3 year term

Fill SAA Coordinator Positions –

Steve V. to move that Nancy Nelson's Operations Manager position be renewed for 2007, Greg S. seconded the motion, motion approved.

Rhonda Rodger has expressed interest in renewing her position as Concessions Coordinator, Steve V. made the motion to approve this, Brad E. seconded the motion, motion approved.

Curt Olsen will be in charge of doing the in-house baseball rules again.

Don Kessler is considering being in charge of the clinics again.

Greg S. made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Dale B. seconded, motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.