



Greater Framingham Running Club

January 9, 2021 – Susin Carlson hosted the meeting via Zoom.

Attendees

Susin Carlson, Ted & Mary Tyler, Tom Miller, Marie Leigh, Mike Gannon, Rich Busa, Mike Carlson, Cindy Moore, Wendy Akeson, Kevin Greene, Edw. S. Ginsberg, Rachel Sortino, Susan Richardson, Jeff Hattem, Arnie Pollinger, Tom Abbott, Carol Leiter, Anita Yip, Lisa Burgess, Mark Goldschmidt, Tim Conlin.

MONTHLY MEETING:

President (Susin Carlson):

Susin said good morning to all and wished all a Happy New Year. Susin asked for our thoughts if a mid-month, mid-week catch up meeting is something we should do for those who can't attend the Saturday meetings. A lot of members do their long runs on Saturdays or work, so a catch up meeting might be something they are interested in. There was some interest, so Susin said she'll talk with Cindy and they will set something up within the month.

The 900 challenge GFRC won the biggest team and the first team to get to 900 miles. The reward is 25 cases of beer (Sam Adams Cold Snap) that Susin has in her garage that needs to be distributed. Susin will work with participants to distribute the beer. Susin congratulated all who participate - great job! Susin thanked Judy for bringing up the idea that really took off.

Boston Marathon - no new news. Still no date set yet.

Susin is getting her first vaccination shot this Friday! Hope is on the way for everyone to get vaccinated soon.

The BAA has a new webpage. If you have volunteered and you are a loyalty member that's helpful but you don't need it to create an account, you can go to the site, create an account, and participate in their events at no costs. Then post what you are doing so we can see it!

The Ragnar January Challenge is \$5. Congrats to all who are participating. There are many other fun virtual Ragnar events to choose from, such as the 30 day Yoga Challenge, etc.

VP Report (Cindy Moore):

Cindy said hello and happy New Year! Cindy is participating in the Ragnar also. You can put a dog walk, core workout, etc. on there to keep it fun and motivating. There were some glitches in logging in the activities at the beginning but it seems Ragnar and/or the participants have worked those out.

Secretary (Tim Conlin):

No report.

Membership Director (Mike Gannon):

There have been no new members since November so we are still at 280 members. I sent you all a list of members to compare year end membership to last year when we were at 335 at this time and currently this year we're at 280. This is the first time we've been under 300 since 2015. In the last ten years we've never dropped more than 10 members in a year, so this year's drop of 55 members is dramatic. Hopefully the pandemic ends and things pick up. People request to join the Facebook group but are not necessarily interested in the GRFC membership. Team Framingham is the exception the last few years, they can join the GFRC Facebook group. There have been 27 new members this year, which is the lowest new membership in many years, probably due to the pandemic. Cindy thought the pandemic could be a good opportunity to capture the many new runners that have started running due to the pandemic. Many don't know we exist. The idea of distributing a membership card, which Kendra has done in the past, was discussed. Mark said the couch to 5K is has been a good source of new members but was not held this year. Mark would like to have membership cards handy so he can hand them out on runs (i.e. at Cushing, etc.). Mark thinks Cushing is a good place to make people aware we exist. Perhaps a lawn type sign could be placed at strategic locations around town. Susin asked if there is a source for lawn signs. Mike Gannon said one of the top 3 reasons people join the club is that they see our shirts at races. In absence of races Mike thought if we run with our GFRC shirts that will also help attract members. Susan Richardson shared her story of how Central Mass Striders provided incentives for new and existing members to join or stay in their club. If you ran the Freezer 5, you could become a new member or extend your existing membership. It was through the Central Mass Striders that Susan became aware of the Framingham Running Club at the time. Lisa suggested advertising the club on Framingham Facebook pages.

Grand Prix (Tom Abbott, Jeff Hattem):

Trail Races (Jeff Hattem)

Our last virtual trail race was right after a snow storm, and we had a very impressive showing considering the conditions with 10 people who actually got out there to run, or snow shoe, or hike on trails. When you consider there was a foot of the snow, that's very impressive. If we have a weekend snowstorm, and it's on the weekend of a virtual trail race, if you can get out on the trail whether it be run, hike, snow shoe, country ski, or if it's icing and you can get traction devices to get out there, it's all about the participation, and remember you total up 11 Grand Prix races and you get a special gift at the end of the year. The Grand Prix year runs from June to the end of May. Right now we are in the 20-21 Grand Prix year. Jeff is keeping the distances short, no more than 5K right up through March. The next scheduled race is the weekend of the 23rd and 24th. It's all about getting out there on trails in any way you can. We don't care about the times. Jeff is keeping an eye on To Hale and Back, but he does not think it will happen; this race usually goes late in March.

Road Races (Tom Abbott)

We had the New Year's virtual 5K.

There's the Resolution Run to Kick Cancer, a virtual race based out of Lexington. Some GFRC members are signed up. This will be posted on the GFRC Facebook page.

For February there's the virtual Paddy Kelly, and normally we have the Lawry Cushing Pub Run - it was discussed to possibly have this virtually.

Mary suggested providing more advance notice for any virtual races that require a fee, so there is opportunity to get any swag on time (i.e. T-shirts).

Susin said she could post the virtual fee based races once she's informed which races are selected.

Tom said lately there have been two virtual road races per month.

Newsletter (Tom Miller):

Tom sent out the newsletter this morning. Tom says it highlights the diversity initiative. There's also a good article about the marathon in England that Mark contributed. Mark says there's a great document on Amazon Prime called Mind Over Marathon. The movie is based on the idea of taking 10 participants that struggle with mental illness of different forms, train them to run a marathon, and see if it helps them feel better as they run and run with a group. Mark said be prepared to have tissues when you watch it, it's a great story and encourages everyone to watch it.

There is also an article on a national organization "Black Girls Run", and its two founders. They have over 7000 members nationally. There is also a similar organization for black men. We also have the opportunity to attract the many nationalities and diverse people right here in Framingham.

Tom said he'd like to get more pictures from the GFRC community from their runs. Take a picture on one of your runs and send it to Tom, but not the picture of your watch!

Web (Rachel Sortino):

Rachel was officially voted in as web director at this meeting. Rachel said she will be working with Michael Peloso on updating the website as she transitions into her new role.

Social Media Director (Susin Carlson):

Susin continues to maintain GFRC presence on social media. Susan eco's Tom's request - please send pictures of yourselves during a run so it can be posted.

Uniforms (Wendy Rieder):

No report.

Activities (vacant):

Susin reminded us GFRC still needs an activities director. This position can be shared. It does not need to be one person. Susin thinks the Activities Director and Social Media Director play similar roles and could be combined into the same job.

Other Business:

GFRC Scholarships

Arnie said the scholarship committee is in the process of updating the application for this year. The biggest change for this year is that we will award it to the two best, most deserving applicants, not one male and one female. The primary reason is that last year we did not have complete applications from both genders. We expect to get the applications out to the schools the end of next week. The application includes the question "What does running mean to you?" and requires a coaches recommendation.

Lisa Burgess says Framingham is not allowed to do any organized athletics right now, including no cross country running.

Arnie is concerned about the coaches recommendations if there is no coach in this pandemic. We may need to take that requirement out; we'll think about it.

Arnie said the applications will be going out to towns where there are 5 or more GFRC members. Those schools are Framingham High School, Keefe Tech, Wayland High School, Natick, Ashland, and possibly Holliston. Arnie will double check Holliston. Last year included Lincoln Sudbury but this year they're out because we lost the members from Sudbury.

Lisa asked so if there is a kid, like her daughter, who lives in Framingham and is part of the club but goes to a private school nearby but not located in those towns, is she a candidate? Arnie said normally it's a high school senior within the aforementioned GFRC community. Any change would have to be voted on and approved by the club. The topic has been contentious in the past. Arnie said these changes can be voted on in this meeting per the Bylaws, or we can have a separate meeting, but that is not preferred as the applications have to be sent out. The issue was discussed and it was decided that if the high school senior was a member of the club by October 31st then they could apply for the scholarship, even if they did not attend one of the qualifying high schools. The change was voted on in this meeting and approved. Language will also be added in the application stating that there is no preferential treatment in the selection process.

Anita asked what about homeschoolers? Mark said homeschoolers are affiliated with a school and are welcome to participate in school events. The consensus was then a homeschooler could apply for the scholarship and would be subject to the same qualifying criteria as an in school student.

Mary asked if the Resolution Run is a Grand Prix ? Tom Abbott said it will be considered. Susin said she'll post it and see if there is interest.

Tim Conlin - Secretary