

Santa Monica Arts Parents Association
Board Meeting
October 19, 2011

Attending: Elizabeth Gelfand Stearns (Choir/SMAPA President); Tracey Hom (Choir); Doreen Gelfand (Band/SMAPA Treasurer); Helen Weary (ex-VP, SMAPA); Heather Graham (Choir); Jane Bortal (Orchestra); Mort Bernstein (Bands); Nancy Kane (Band Treasurer); Patricia Payró-Freeman (Theatre Treasurer); Nancy Mansfield (Orchestra); Robb Brown (Band President); Cyndy Turnage (Theatre/SMAPA Secretary); Laurel Fretz (Samohi Principal)

1. The meeting was called to order by Elizabeth Stearns, SMAPA President.
2. Representatives from each SMAPA organization introduced themselves and briefly described their organization's activities.
 - Elizabeth mentioned that there is a great deal of student crossover in SMAPA programs.
 - Patricia Payró-Freeman and Tracey Hom pointed out that the annual musical is an example of collaboration between SMAPA programs and teachers.
3. Doreen Gelfand, SMAPA Treasurer, explained that the purpose of SMAPA is to maintain financial oversight of the member organizations in order to protect the organizations' nonprofit status.
4. Elizabeth provided a brief overview of the history of SMAPA.
 - SMAPA evolved from the Santa Monica Band Parents Association, which began as a booster group of Samohi Marching Band parents.
 - Over the years, the organization grew to include parents of the other music programs at Samohi as well as at Malibu High School and the SMMUSD middle schools. Eventually, the middle schools and Malibu High School split off and established their own nonprofit entities.
 - For a variety of reasons, SMPBA transitioned into SMAPA. SMAPA now includes four organizations: Band, Orchestra, Choir, and Theatre at Santa Monica High School.
 - According to the SMAPA Bylaws, SMAPA membership is still open to the middle schools, if they should choose to join.
5. Elizabeth outlined some of SMAPA's goals:
 - Fine arts and dance are currently not represented in SMAPA, and we would welcome parents from those organizations.
 - There has been discussion about whether SMAPA should become an arts advocacy group, and whether SMAPA should maintain a website, but for now SMAPA remains focused on its mission to maintain the member groups' non-profit status by ensuring that everyone complies with laws covering nonprofit organizations.
 - Elizabeth is looking into the question of insurance for SMAPA. As the only legal entity for the member organizations, SMAPA should be insured to be certain that the non-profit organization is covered in the event of a claim against any of the member organizations.
6. Membership in SMAPA was discussed.

- Mort Bernstein asked what defines membership in the organization. Elizabeth explained that the general meeting is open to everyone. Transparency is important to SMAPA. All donations and expenses are public information.
- Tracey asked whether middle school parents could join. Helen Weary explained that anyone can be a part of the organization if they want in, but at this point the middle schools have opted out. Elizabeth added that the bylaws state that any of the SMMUSD middle or high school arts programs may apply to the SMAPA Board for membership.
- Laurel Fretz asked whether the voting members of SMAPA are the parents of all four member groups. Elizabeth answered that everyone is welcome, but to be a voting member, you must be a parent or guardian of a student participating in a SMAPA program.
- Laurel asked whether the public can address SMAPA meetings. Doreen said that they can, but for most issues it would make more sense to go to the participating organizations.
- Mort asked whether, as an example, people could come to SMAPA to complain about program directors. Elizabeth answered that SMAPA does not get involved in curriculum matters.

7. Doreen distributed and explained the SMAPA Treasurer Guidelines.

- The guidelines explain SMAPA's budgeting and financial reporting processes. They're based on generating the information needed to file SMAPA's tax returns.
- The 2009-2010 taxes were filed last summer. The 2008-2009 taxes also had to be amended.
- The SMAPA Treasurer should receive monthly financial statements, monthly bank statements, an approved annual budget, and the full year's financial statement at the end of the year from each organization's treasurer.
- The SMAPA tax return is arranged by how money was earned. In setting up accounts, treasurers need to separate revenue categories and expense categories.
- Doreen explained the deposit sheet forms included in the Treasurer Guidelines. These sheets must be completed at the end of each fundraising event to provide a paper trail in case of audit or human error.
- There should be two signatories on each organization's bank account (usually the President and Treasurer). Checks may never be signed by the Payee.
- Donors should be issued tax receipts/thank-you letters which include SMAPA's tax identification number. Individual donors giving \$5,000 or more or 1% of total support have to be reported on the SMAPA tax return.
- All consultants hired by the organizations need to fill out a W-9 at the time of payment. A 1099 form must be issued for any consultant whose payments total \$600 or more in a calendar year. (SMAPA's fiscal year runs from July 1-June 30.)
- Elizabeth explained that it's important to establish a financial reporting process so that the procedures can be passed on to successive treasurers. Doreen said that many of the Treasurer Guidelines were developed during the transition from SMBPA to SMAPA and some will need to be revisited as we go forward.

- As an organization with approximately \$300,000 in revenue, SMAPA is the largest donor organization to Santa Monica High School.
 - Doreen explained that SMAPA can no longer file a short form tax return because yearly revenues now exceed \$250,000.
8. Heather Graham mentioned that the Orchestra purchased auction software several years ago, and that this year the Choir purchased an update for the software. This tool is available to all SMAPA groups. It's useful for setting up and managing live or silent auctions. Elizabeth pointed out that this is a great example of synergy within SMAPA.
 9. Laurel asked whether SMAPA organizations ever collaborate on expenses. Elizabeth replied that they do. Examples include musical instruments, risers, and a copy machine that are shared by several groups. Mort asked whether the groups could collaborate on a big fundraiser. Doreen said that would be possible.
 10. Elizabeth discussed the procedure for handling bank statements. She suggested that the system that was set up in the past was unnecessarily complicated. (The SMAPA President received all the groups' bank statements, reviewed them, photocopied them, and then delivered the originals to each organization's treasurer.) It is still necessary for each group's original bank statement to go to the SMAPA Treasurer. Elizabeth suggested that in the future, statements should be mailed directly to the SMAPA groups at Samohi, and then each group's treasurer can be responsible for getting the original statement to the SMAPA Treasurer. Treasurers for each group can also access their online statement for reference only.
 11. Tracey asked about the procedure for a group to sue a vendor in small claims court. Would SMAPA be the entity filing the suit? Elizabeth said the question would be investigated.
 12. Elizabeth raised the subject that we may need to provide Workmen's Compensation for contractors hired by SMAPA groups. Elizabeth and Laurel will further investigate our obligations in this area.
 13. Elizabeth has been also discussing options for SMAPA insurance coverage with the companies who provide insurance for PTSA groups.
 - Laurel discussed that everyone who comes on campus to work with kids must be fingerprinted. This includes parents who come in to volunteer on a regular basis.
 - Elizabeth said that as the only legal entity for the SMAPA groups, SMAPA could be sued if something happened. Insurance could protect both the organization and individuals on the SMAPA board from these suits.
 - Laurel also pointed out that by following guidelines for screening contractors and volunteers and having the right insurance, if something does happen, SMAPA will be in the clear.
 14. Elizabeth discussed the Nonprofit Raffle Program. Organizations wanting to hold raffles must register with the California Attorney General. Elizabeth has registered SMAPA for the entire year, so all SMAPA groups will be able to hold raffles. Once SMAPA receives the permit, there are rules to follow. For example, there is an accounting form for just the raffle income, and winners of the raffle must provide their contact information to SMAPA.
 15. Elizabeth introduced the proposed slate of SMAPA officers for 2011-2012:
 - President: Elizabeth Gelfand Stearns

- Vice-President: Mort Bernstein
- Secretary: Cyndy Turnage
- Treasurer: Doreen Gelfand

The SMAPA Board also includes the Treasurers of each of the four SMAPA groups.

16. The date for the SMAPA General Membership meeting was set for Wednesday, November 9, 2011, at 7 pm. Elizabeth will create an announcement that can be emailed, and each group will be responsible for notifying parents about the meeting.
17. Doreen gave a brief financial report. Checks were written for:
 - The Post Office box fee (paid through June 30)
 - The accountant's fee for preparing the tax returns (\$2250 for the 2009-10 return and \$1250 for the amended 2008-9 return)
 - The next tax return will be for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011. All SMAPA groups have the same fiscal year.
18. The possibility of cancelling the Post Office box was discussed.
 - Elizabeth said we need to keep it open for now, since all the banking information goes there. We also need a common address for grant paperwork, donations, legal notices, etc.
 - Helen and Tracey mentioned that we should have a physical address (as opposed to a P.O. Box). The possibility of having an address at Samohi or at the district offices was discussed.
19. Elizabeth mentioned that all groups' financial statements need to be posted on their respective websites. Each group should post an annual budget and a monthly financial report on its website.
20. Elizabeth suggested that the SMAPA Bylaws should be reviewed and revised, and that a subcommittee could be formed to do that work. The goal would be to revise the bylaws to better represent what works for the groups, based on SMAPA's experience to date.