

Newsletter



Knife River Heritage & Cultural Center

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JANUARY, 2020

By Paul von Goertz, KRHCC Board Member

KRHCC HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING - SETS 2020 WORK PLAN

Your KRHCC Board of Directors met Wednesday, January 8, 2020 to conduct its annual meeting as required by KRHCC by-laws, and held a business meeting immediately following.

At the meeting, the board established the date for its annual meeting to take place during the month of January, at which time board members and officers would be nominated for two-year terms.

KRHCC Secretary Bob Entzion, chair of the nominating committee, nominated all board members and officers to repeat terms. All nominated agree to serve. The position of Vice President remains unfilled and unanimously agreed by the Board as presently not necessary.

For KRHCC years 2020 and 2021:

Officers:

- President: Paul von Goertz
- Secretary/Treasurer: Bob Entzion
- CFO: Mona Linden
- Historian: Todd Lindahl

Board members:

Duane Madison
Larry Ronning
Randy Ellestad

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Additional business was conducted in accordance with by-laws and the motion was made and seconded to adjourn the Annual Meeting and move to the Business Meeting.

Business Meeting highlights:

Report on Phase I: Stabilize and restore depot and freight buildings

Larry Ronning, volunteer general contractor, described the work on the depot as “very successful.” From May 13 to Julebyen weekend the building was made level and square, slab poured, roofed and sided, painted and heat installed. (Wow!) Remaining windows, minor exterior trim, and the interior will be completed starting as early as mid-February, now that the building has heat.



“Commissioning” depot on November 22 by placing name board on depot. Two weeks later it welcomed the first passenger train to KR since 1956.

Photo: Paul von Goertz

The board agreed that for 2020 the depot interior space should remain somewhat open until display areas and educational programming is determined.

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KRHCC partner with our Larsmont friends:

One exciting event in planning stages is to partner with our Larsmont friends on their “Pioneer Little Red Schoolhouse Days.” These are days in May and October when the historic Larsmont “Little Red School House” returns to 1914 and area school children, dressed in period clothing, experience a school day from that time. Initial plans call for a morning at the school, followed by a ride on a NSSR train to KR to experience a real 1900s train depot, complete with interactive opportunities - like operating an order board (signal pole) and telegraph. See photo of order board elsewhere in this issue.

School children experience a 1914 school day at the “Little Red School House” during Larsmont’s Pioneer Days. The KRHCC is working with Larsmont and the NSSR to bring the children to KR during the same day to experience a real working 1900s railroad depot.

Photo: Lake County News Chronicle



We’ll let you know how this idea works out in future newsletters.

Freight Building:

The board determined the best use of the freight building at this time would be as a repository for historical records and artifacts awaiting to be recorded and displayed, and for equipment needed to maintain KRHCC grounds. Last year the freight building was moved about 16 feet north in order to clear a path for a rail siding paralleling the main line that the NSSR intends to install at a date to be determined.

In 2020 the freight building will be resided and reroofed to match the depot. Windows will be installed on both east and west sides and the current two doors reduced to one as it was originally. We are still looking for people to sponsor two

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windows @ \$1,000 and a custom door replicated to look like the original for \$1,200. Can you help?

The freight building is skidded back from the railroad right-of-way to make room for a railroad siding that will parallel the mainline.

Photo: Paul von Goertz



Phase II: Shelter(s)

Much discussion was devoted to Phase II, which focuses on building a structure(s) that would shelter both CRUSADER II and an open picnic area large enough for six to eight picnic tables with ample walk-around space.

The KRHCC'S volunteer architect, Richard Gilyard, AIA and a former Larsmont resident, recommended we not tie the boat shelter and picnic shelter together under one roof. Logic is that the building would be so big it would overwhelm the depot. So, now we are planning on two separate shelters, the boat shelter being big enough for the 35' CRUSADER II and additional boats we may add in the future. Right now KR has two restored and functioning "gas boats" and a third under restoration. At some point they could join CRUSADER II.

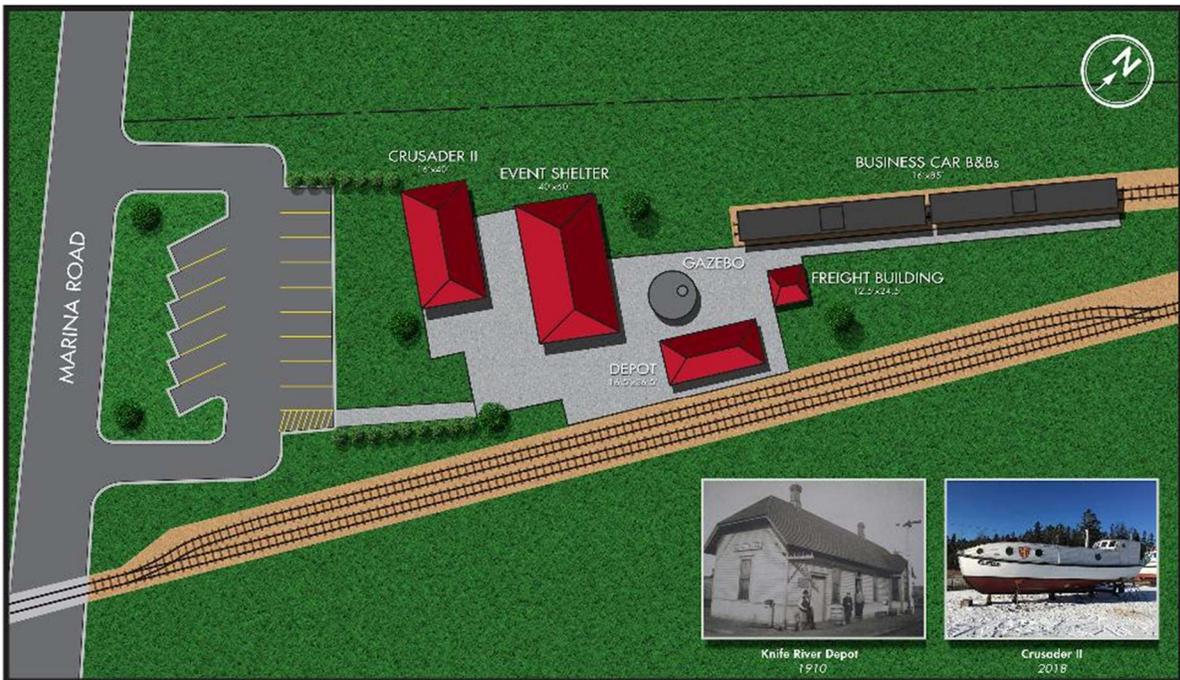
When addressing long-term use possibilities for a multi-purpose open shelter, it was agreed to ask other KR stakeholders what they would like to see in future. These stakeholders would be the KRRC and its needs for an ever-expanding Julebyen on KRHCC land, the North Shore Scenic Railroad, the Regional Rail Authority and Lake County Planning & Zoning for building protocols.

We hope that collectively, we can build a structure that can best serve the future needs of KR stakeholders and visitors. We invite all KR residents, year round and

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seasonal, to email your comments and ideas for “best use of an open shelter” to the KRHCC at: info@krhcc.org

It is hoped by fall of 2020 we will have a shelter/building design that addresses all interests and many community needs. Grants will be written this fall, and if funded, construction could begin in the spring of 2021.



KNIFE RIVER HERITAGE & CULTURAL CENTER



*Site plan showing approximate locations of boat and picnic shelters.
Schematic courtesy Krech & Ojard Consulting Engineers; design courtesy Richard Gilyard, AIA*

KRHCC COMPLETES AN AMAZING YEAR!

Thanks to all who volunteered their time and financial support to truly make 2019 a remarkable year of accomplishment! Here are some of the highlights:

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- ✓ January 2019 - five-year renewable lease signed with the Regional Rail Authority at the cost of \$1 per year;
- ✓ February 2019 - A challenge match of \$20,000 to the KR community from a Knife River resident was matched by the Knife River Rec Council, which resulted in a quick \$40,000 to get the depot restoration underway;
- ✓ March 2019 - CRUSADER II purchased from the KR Rec Center for \$1;



Workers from the Knife River Marina bring CRUSADER II to the KRHCC site late last year. We thank Sailboats Inc., who operate the marina, for donating their time to bring this KR icon to where it can help interpret KR's rich history in commercial fishing.

Photo: Paul von Goertz

- ✓ May- 2019 The depot purchased from Randy Ellestad for \$1;
- ✓ May 13, 2019 – restoration of the depot begins;
- ✓ November 14 – CRUSADER II moved from KR Marina to KRHCC site;
- ✓ November 22, 2019 – Depot is formally “commissioned” with placement of “Knife River” name boards on depot;
- ✓ December 7, 2019 - KR depot welcomes first passenger train to KR since 1956!

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DEPOT ACCESS TO THE KR AGATE BEACH

An issue that relates to long range planning is beach access from the depot. It's clear the only option we have now is not a good one. Access requires walking along the railroad right-of-way and on Marina and American Dock roads. A better way would be a wood walkway direct from depot over tracks and down embankment to beach parking area. The walkway over the tracks could include an integral train boarding and unloading ramp.

More on this idea as it may develop.

Here's a refresher on the KR beach and access to it:

The Knife River Rec Council owns three acres of land that incorporates the parking lot, walking path from Marina Road to beach, and the land up to the railroad right of way. The KRRC also owns 300 feet of beach. The land was deeded to the KRRC under an arrangement with Lake County back in the early 1990s. Many thanks to the KRRC people who worked so hard to make the deal with the county and secure it with a deed.

A covenant within the deeding of the property to the KRRC, was that the beach must be made available to the public at all times, or the deed becomes void. The KRRC has been faithful to that covenant by designing and paying for an expanded, and safer, parking lot and walking path; satellite toilets and garbage collection.

As part of long range planning, the KRHCC will involve the RRA and KRRC in addressing a safer, more convenient and controlled access to KR's popular Agate Beach from the depot.

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NEWS FLASH!

Word just in that we may indeed have a 30' order board at the depot this summer! We have located a stand (pole with integral ladder) and the separate top which controls the boards. We hope to have both donated. Some parts are missing, which we hope to scrounge somewhere. Stay tuned. See photo for what an order board looks like.

An order board much like what our depot will have. The boards and lights gave instructions and information from the depot agent to train engineers.

Photo: Todd Lindahl



KR TRAINS A BIG PART OF JULEBYEN OUTREACH TO DISADVANTAGED KIDS

For about six years now, Julebyen has had an Outreach to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Duluth and Superior to bring up to 30 inner-city, disadvantaged children to Julebyen at no cost for a celebration of Christmas they might not otherwise experience. The children love coming to KR from Duluth on the Julebyen Express, searching for trolls on the "Troll Train to Troll Canyon," playing outdoor games and enjoying treats.

Mike Ojard of Knife River and owner of Heritage Marine, sponsors the Outreach to the club with additional funding from private donations.

The KRHCC is pleased to play a role in the Outreach initiative by serving as Julebyen's liaison with the North Shore Scenic Railroad, and having the depot available for arrival and departure of trains. It is the intent of the KRHCC at some

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point to have static and interactive displays at the depot so kids can experience a real 1900s train station! This will make the Outreach even more fulfilling!

If you would like to support the Julebyen Outreach program, which is now focused on bringing complete families of B&G Club members to Julebyen, please make out your check to Knife River Rec Council, designate FOR JULEBYEN OUTREACH, and mail to:

Knife River Rec Council
PO Box 266
Knife River, MN 55609

It costs about \$100 to bring a family of four, which must include one adult, for a day at Julebyen.

The Knife River Rec Council is a non-profit 501(c3) so your donation is totally tax deductible.



Captain Mike Ojard, owner of Heritage Marine and sponsor of the Julebyen Outreach to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Duluth and Superior, poses with Club members who just arrived on the Julebyen Express to enjoy a day at Julebyen in 2018.

Photo: Paul von Goertz

Mary von Goertz, Julebyen volunteer dressed as a Jule Nisse, becomes fast friends with a member of the Boys & Girls Club on the Julebyen Express to KR.

Photo: Paul von Goertz



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You ask ...why does the KRHCC lease the land it's on rather than own it?

That's a question we hear on occasion and a good one.

When the organizers of the KRHCC first considered the depot site for the Center, we knew the Regional Rail Authority (RRA) might balk at selling it because land immediately adjacent to a railroad-right-of-way has value for potential use. Well, they balked. So would this be a deal breaker, like when we apply for a grant or a commercial loan? Would this situation be analogous to asking a banker to write a mortgage on a home where the applicant did not own the property?

For answers to our concerns, as well as those who support the KRHCC, we turned to Bob Manzoline, Executive Director of the RRA. Here is his response:

"The North Shore Scenic Railroad, is public land owned by the St. Louis & Lake Counties Regional Railroad Authority (RRA). The RRA was established by a Joint Powers Agreement between Lake and St. Louis Counties. The RRA is governed by a Board of Directors made up of two (2) Lake County Commissioners and three (3) St. Louis County Commissioners.

"Since 1987, when the RRA acquired the railroad, the RRA board has from time to time leased/permitted parts of the railroad property for other uses, but has not sold any of the railroad lands.

"Dispersing the railroad property will require an action of the RRA elected officials. I cannot assure you this will never happen, however; no land lease/permit, without reason, has been canceled over the past thirty-three (33) years."

I feel Bob's response does away with any fears the RRA might pull our lease at some point to pursue another land use.

We are very happy that some of the biggest cheerleaders for the KRHCC (KR community the biggest!) have been the RRA and the NSSR. The KRHCC has achieved in just seven months much of what the RRA envisioned for its KR property since its formation in 1987. This support is witnessed by our five-year renewable lease at \$1 per year, and a gift last year of \$1,000 to the KRHCC authorized by the NSSR's Board of Directors.

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Over the last two years, while reviewing potential granters and their criteria for evaluating non-profits, we have found only one, a state agency that would not accept our request. Had we challenged that, and pointed out our relationship with the RRA, which is a government authority and not a private entity, the state agency may have waived the guideline.

The KRHCC is very fortunate that more than 90% of funds raised to date have come from private parties or other 501(c3)s, and nice to know that although we do not own the property we are investing in, that it is not - or may not be - a deal breaker with granters.

Additionally, it's comforting to know that our interests are well represented by our elected Lake County commissioners who comprise two of the Authority's five board members - the other three members being St. Louis County commissioners.

We look forward to many years of a good and rewarding relationship with our landlord - the Regional Rail Authority.

Your comments and suggestions for this monthly emailed newsletter are always welcome. Email to: info@krhcc.org If you have family or friends you feel may enjoy receiving it, please send their email addresses to same address above.