

VCN Annual General Meeting
Thursday, Nov. 29th, 2007
411 Dunsmuir St., Vancouver, B.C.

Board in attendance: Jim Sayre, Richard Smith, Chantal Iorio, Michael Felczak, Pedro Mora.

Staff in attendance: Tom Hansen, Steven Chan, Kalia Turdueva, Shannon Ross.

Quorum achieved with 20+ VCN members in attendance.

Meeting called to order at 7:35 PM.

MOTION for approval of the agenda – m/s/c.

MOTION to approve minutes from last year's AGM – m/s/c.

MOTION to strike appointment of auditor from AGM – m/s/c.

Jim Sayre presented the president's report:

- Brief introduction and overview of VCN's mandate.
- Acknowledgment of staff, volunteers, members, and funders for their contributions to VCN.
- Ongoing issues:
 - Community Access Program (CAP): not sure whether it will be renewed next year by federal government. Provides essential computer and Internet access in the Lower Mainland to people without computers and/or Internet access.
 - “Lawful Access” proposals by the federal government to access information about Internet activity of people suspected of crimes: concerns over VCN members' rights and privacy.
 - City wireless in Vancouver: city staff preparing recommendation report on which wireless model should be adopted in Vancouver.
 - Non-profits in the city that complement VCN's activities: Free Geek (refurbish PCs and provide free PCs); FreeTheNet (using mesh wireless networking to share Internet connections); Vancouver Linux User's Group (Linux operating system users helping other users).

Chantal Iorio presented the financial statements:

- Still have a contingency reserve.
- Used some funds to support help desk operations and website updates and developments.
- With the exception of CAP, revenues are down this year relative to 2006. Little additional revenue from sources other than CAP.
- Discussion of VCN's future if CAP was discontinued.

Steven Chan presented the technical report:

- Increase disk space storage on main server (doubled this year mainly due to mail, websites, and members' files).

- Spam filter installed one year ago. Lots of fine-tuning since then, since system is quite complex. Still trying to work out all of the kinks and improve the overall performance of the system.
- Plan to distribute services to multiple servers over time so that VCN's services are more robust and reliable: when one system goes down, others will still be able to continue functioning.

Question from member: Should VCN consider providing low-cost DSL? To attract new members? As a new source of revenue to fund its other operations?

- Steven Chan pointed out that DSL is expensive to maintain and difficult as a source of revenue since the revenue margins are very thin and the costs of accounting, tracking/collecting payments on a monthly basis would require additional staff time.

Kalia Turdueva presented the staff report:

- Overview of CAP:
 - Community access points with computer and Internet access.
 - Funded by Industry Canada.
 - Administered by VCN in the Lower Mainland.
- 101 CAP sites in Lower Mainland.
- This year, requirement that CAP sites report on who uses the sites: diverse user base, including senior citizens, First Nations people, immigrants, the unemployed, people facing literacy challenges, the homeless, and people with disabilities and mental health issues.

Shannon Ross presented the CAP Youth Initiative report:

- Youth hired to develop skills and help support CAP sites.
- Also involved in various projects based on skills and interest:
 - Past projects: recommendations to federal government about CAPYI, promotion of CAP within communities, participation at World Urban Forum and Youth Summit on the Information Society.
 - Current projects and collaborations:
 - CAPYI documentary: for presentation at the 2008 Summit on The Strategic Use of Information and Communication Technology for Communities.
 - Youth portal website: Online hub for youth to access resources in education and career development.
 - Fearless Media: aims to celebrate the arts and culture of the Downtown Eastside via a website that will stream audio, video, and other content produced by community members.
 - Taking IT global: Canadian developed online community for connecting youth and enabling political involvement at both the local and global level.
 - Web team supports local community organizations by helping them to develop their websites. In past 5 months, team has worked on 20 community website projects.
 - Tech team supports computer labs, provides troubleshooting assistance via phone and email, and refurbishes donated computers.

Suggestion from member: Some improvements should be made to improve the online security and privacy of users making use of CAP site computers, since some users do not log-out and may leave their email or other accounts logged-in for the next user accessing the workstation.

- Kalia Turdueva indicated that some work has been done in this area: signs near workstations to remind users of the 30 minute time limit and to log-out when finished. The web browsers have

been configured to delete all private data when the browser is closed.

Jim Sayre introduced the special business:

- To decide whether to register or to rescind the 2001 changes to the bylaws of the Society, as set out below:
 - (1). The term of office shall be two (2) years and each Director shall at the time of his election and throughout his term be a member in good standing, and shall be elected to hold office until the second Annual General Meeting after he shall have been elected, or until his successors shall have been duly appointed or elected.
 - (2). Each Director shall be eligible for two (2) and only two (2) additional consecutive two-year terms.
 - (3). The President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be Officers of the Society and appointed annually for a one (1) year term from among the Directors of the Society by the Board of Directors. Each Officer shall be eligible for three (3) and only three (3) consecutive one-year terms.
- Since the changes were not registered by the 2001 Board, it is the view of the current Board that considering the vacancies and the need for continuity, a term limit provision is not desirable at this time. Also, board members are already elected at each year's AGM. Alternatively, members may wish to establish a special committee to examine the issue of board membership, and report back to the members at a future special meeting or AGM.
- MOTION to rescind the 2001 changes to the bylaws of the Society, as set out above – m/s/c.

Kalia Turdueva presented a summary of the VCN online member survey:

- Survey made available to all VCN members in fall, 2007 via VCN website.
- Most respondents satisfied with VCN and the services that they use.
- Respondents who use email identified spam as ongoing problem.
- Many respondents would consider volunteering time in non-technical positions.
- Respondents indicated an interest in high-speed Internet if it could be made available at a lower cost than existing commercial offerings.
- Respondents believe that VCN should explore potential partnerships with local community groups and businesses.
- Respondents would like to see more updates on VCN website about system outages and upgrades.

MOTION to set quorum for future AGMs to 16 VCN members – m/s/c.

Board membership:

- MOTION to approve the presented slate – m/s/c.
- Nominations called for from the floor.
- The slate is elected by acclamation.

Exceptional volunteers recognized with certificates for their contributions in the past year.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

To explore potential collaboration with other community groups and to introduce VCN members to organizations that offer resources and services complementary to that of VCN, Free Geek Vancouver,

FreeTheNet Vancouver, and the Vancouver Linux User's Group were invited to provide an introduction and overview of their respective organizations.

Presentation by a representative from Free Geek Vancouver (<http://freegeekvancouver.org/>):

- Free Geek is a not for profit community organization that recycles used technology to provide computers, education, internet access and job skills training to those in need, in exchange for community service.

Presentation by a representative from FreeTheNet (<http://www.freethenet.ca/>):

- FreeTheNet is using mesh networking to share Internet connections in Vancouver. Anyone can participate by either using the wireless network or helping to extend it by adding a special wireless router to the existing network.

Presentation by a representative from the Vancouver Linux User's Group (<http://www.vanlug.bc.ca/>):

- VanLUG is a non-profit association of computer professionals in the Greater Vancouver area whose purpose is to provide a forum for technology professionals to meet and discuss issues related to Linux and open source software.