

Minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting of QPIRG Concordia

9 October 2014
1500 de Maisonneuve W., #204

1. Introduction

Introductions:

Ashley Fortier facilitating.
Mary Foster taking notes.
Fred Burrill is Chief Returning Officer.

Acknowledgement and call to anti-colonial resistance read out by facilitator:

We acknowledge that we are on traditional territory of the Kahien'kehá:ka, who are the keepers of the Eastern Door of the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations) Confederacy. The island we call Montreal, called Tiotia:ke in the language of the Kanien'kehá:ka, has historically been a meeting place for other Indigenous nations, including the Algonquin peoples. However, QPIRG recognizes that it is not enough to acknowledge, action to resist colonialism is essential. Several QPIRG Working Groups are active educators and supporters of anti-colonial action. Two things to highlight: the Summer Research Stipend project by the Indigenous Women and Two-Spirit Harm Reduction Coalition (to be published later this year); and the upcoming "Fall Feast: An anti-colonial evening of food, film and resistance" to take place at the Native Friendship Center on November 6. [Read full statement in Annual Report.]

Accessibility arrangements announced by facilitator:

- Translators available (Danielle).
- The location is wheelchair accessibility.
- Gendered washrooms accessible to wheelchairs are available.
- Childcare provided by Oliver Fugler in the library.

Annual Report and AGM Package:

A package of information for the AGM as well as the Annual Report are available at the door. These will be put on the website as well.

Media:

Facilitator asked media to identify themselves. No journalists present. Thien present to take photos. Facilitator asks those who don't want their photo taken to please tell staff members.

Facilitator explains voting processes and who can vote:

- A simple majority by a show of red cards will be used to approve the agenda and adopt the 2012 minutes.
- A $\frac{3}{4}$ majority by show of red cards used for constitutional amendments.

- Simple majority by secret ballot will be used to elect the new Board and the Conflict Resolution and Complaints Committee (CRCC).
- Only active members can vote. An active member is an undergraduate or graduate Concordia student who has paid their fees or an active volunteer of 10 hours or more to a QPIRG committee or working group or a community member who has paid \$10 membership fee prior to the AGM. Voting members were given red cards at the door when they signed in.

2. Approve Agenda

The facilitator presented the agenda aloud. It is also projected on a screen and is in the printed package.

Proposed amendments:

- “Art in Action” should be replaced by “Research Stipend”. It was an error in preparing the agenda.
- “School Schmoool” moved up so that it is the first item in #5
- “Alternative Library” moved up so that it is the second item in #5.

Motion to adopt meeting agenda with proposed amendments (Ian).

Seconded (Marie)

VOTE:

YES: many.

NO: 0

Abstention: 0

Meeting agenda adopted.

3. Approval of 2013 Minutes

Minutes are made available in AGM package and are projected on the board.

They have also been on the website since last year.

Ian Perrin-Bradley's name is spelled wrong and Ian didn't self-nominate. We don't know who nominated Ian.

Motion to adopt 2013 AGM minutes (Geneviève).

Seconded (Fred).

VOTE:

YES: 15

NO: 0

Abs: 13 (weren't present last year)

AGM minutes adopted.

4. Proposed Constitutional Change

Proposal to amend constitutional language around use of gender pronouns, notice of amendment emailed on 9 September 2014. This was written in 2000, and at the time it was considered a challenge. However, language has developed and it no longer fits QPIRG's gender politics. In any case, gender pronouns are not even used in the constitution.

Proposal to strike the following sentence from the constitution: "For the purpose of clarity, the feminine pronoun is used throughout this document. It is meant to refer to people of all genders."

Noah approves the proposal.
Gwen seconds.

Questions: none.

Yes: 32
no: 0
absent: 1

5. QPIRG and Core Project Reports

Note: These oral reports are supplemented by written reports in the Annual Report distributed at the AGM and soon available on QPIRG website.

i. CORE Project Reports

a) School Schmool (Jay)

School Schmool is an radical anti-capitalist agenda produced annually with McGill QPIRG. The coordinators, Jay and Cera Yiu, secured funding, drafted a model, solicited materials (texts and artwork), compiled, designed, put together an editing collective and ran it by staff to make sure it was coherent with QPIRG principles. Relied on same basic set up as last year, three sections: Issues, together with a resource listing; Groups; and the Agenda. The only major difference this year is that the agenda section was also illustrated.

Question: do you have a favourite article?
Answer: No. the articles are all good.

Question: how many are being printed?
Answer: 1800 copies.

b) The Alternative Library (Elena and Swetha)

The Alternative Library is run by a coordinator, Elena, on a work-study grant. Elena has worked there in winter 2014 term and is returning in this fall term. The mandate of the library is to provide zines and books reflecting QPIRG's anti-oppression social justice mandate. Work has focused on merging with other alternative libraries, such as the Centre for Gender Advocacy and McGill QPIRG libraries, in the online alternative libraries database; finding ways of working together while respecting the specific functioning of each library. Elena's interest is in working on a bookmobile specifically aiming at black youth and creating a presence at youth centres to make books available. Elena invites ideas for activities and books; Elena can be found at the library or emailed at library@qiprgconcordia.org.

Part of the library is a poster archive project to create a memory of social movements. Swetha has been working on this since May and has catalogued posters for stacks (new poster storage drawers) and a website.

ii. Board Report

Otto gave the report for the 2013-2014 Board. Many activities were carried out through the committees: finances, policy, programming and working groups, staff liaison, accessibility committees. The board also participated in: organizing and de-cluttering the QPIRG space and renewing the lease; looking into legal implications of a needle exchange programme; Fee Levy Advocacy at Concordia (FLAC) (to reject divisive per-faculty fee levy opt-outs); supporting programming, which this year focused on responding to the xenophobic and sexist Charter, anti-sex worker legislation, and voter suppression during elections; and supporting core projects such as Disorientation, School Schmool, the Alternative Library, the Community-University Research Exchange (CURE), Convergence, and Study In Action).

Otto thanked all the working groups on behalf of the Board.

Otto extended the Board's thanks to staff: Alternative Library coordinator, Elena; Poster Archives, Swetha; School schmool coordinators, Cera and Jay; CURE coordinator, Gwen; outreach coordinator, Lindsay Nixon; support staff, Jessica Charest (book-keeper) and Amir Al-Shourbaji (network administrator and computer technician); and full-time staff, Christina Xydous, Jaggi Singh, and Noah Eidelman.

iii. Staff Reports

a) Volunteer and Administrative Coordinator, Christina Xydous

Staff takes its general direction from the Board. Christina provided support for the Policy Committee, which is difficult to maintain because it always gets de-

prioritized as things get busy. This year, its goals were: to update staff policy to better reflect reality of QPIRG; and create an accessibility policy with the accessibility committee. The accessibility policy was created and is a good first policy, pretty exhaustive. It will soon be on website along with other information about accessibility in the city. Christina also supported Study in Action with McGill QPIRG and, for the first time, GRIP UQAM. Working with GRIP was an entirely new element, and the intention is to continue together. The first panel was at UQAM this year and this was a very positive change, making the conference more relevant. In general, this year had its challenges and successes, the work QPIRG does is very relevant and involves pushing discourses on a lot of issues. Christina thanks the excellent board this year: Ian Bradley-Perrin, Otto Buxton, Karina Chagnon, Shayla Chilliak, LeeLee Davis, Asher Faerstein, Lael Kim, Jess Mac, Akki Mackay, Lindsay Nixon, Cassie Smith, Bader Takriti, Thien Viet Quan, Keara Yim.

b) Finance and Fundraising Coordinator, Noah Eidelman

Noah supported organizing of Disorientation, a week of events from 22 to 26 September, including workshops, bike tours (anti-gentrification and community organizations offering resistance), a comedy night, and ended with a co-sponsored conference with the Indigenous Women and Two-Spirit Harm Reduction Coalition. In terms of Finance Committee, QPIRG ended with a surplus this year. QPIRG had to make cuts because of fee levy readjustments; QPIRG did a good job of cutting back its budget, and largely because rent was less than anticipated, there was a significant surplus of around \$30,000 (see financial report in Annual Report). This can be put to other projects.

c) Programming and Working Groups Coordinator, Jaggi Singh

It is a privilege to work at QPIRG Concordia, with its amazing staff. A lot of the work QPIRG does is public, but there is also a lot that is not. For example, the other night all three rooms at QPIRG were in use: a meeting by an anti-gentrification group; a film presentation and discussion organized by Independent Jewish Voices; and an anti-deportation campaign planning meeting. A lot of working groups do valuable work entirely behind the scenes, such as Books to Prisoners, Prisoner Correspondence Project, the Childcare Collective, and Sound Team. QPIRG concretely supports these initiatives by, for example, providing space for the Sound Team to store its equipment. QPIRG this year had thirty working groups and provided other forms of support to other groups. Some highlights of the programming this year were: a panel discussion, Accessibility, Disability and Resisting Austerity, in May; a talk by Mel Bazil on Defending the Land: Indigenous Resistance to Extraction; and, the Comedy Night, The Truth Hurts with Aamer Rahman. More are outlined in the Annual Report. In addition to working with the Programming and Working Groups committee, Jaggi provided support for two core projects, CURE and Convergence. Jaggi thanks Board members and fellow staffers by name.

iv. Core Project reports (*continued from (i) above*)

c) CURE (Gwen Muir, coordinator)

CURE is the Community-University Research Exchange, community-driven social justice research by students. This year new community groups were involved, for example, Accessibilize Montreal. The website was updated and CURE also organized workshops. UQAM will join CURE in January. The long-term plan is to organize a fee levy so that CURE can become its own project. The CURE committee has not been active; all are invited to join! Community groups and students are also invited to get involved!

d) Summer Research Stipend

In past, research stipend has included anti-gentrification guide, and a guide to fighting deportations. This year it went to a new working group, the Indigenous Women and Two Spirit Harm Reduction Coalition to put together a publication addressing decolonization and solidarity aimed at community organizations and activists. Interviews and essays by Indigenous organizers will cover different perspectives on decolonization practices and a second section written by members of collective will include articles about introductory aspects of decolonization practice and creating reciprocity. The resulting text will be a useful addition to discussions on decolonization and Indigenous solidarity for non-Natives and will be published later this fall.

e) Convergence (Kama)

Convergence is a journal of community-based social justice research. Volume 4 was published last year, with colour print and 12 articles. Volume 5 will be coming out sometime in early December. This year it is 12 articles, from Study in Action and a couple of CURE projects this year as well.

6. Questions about reports

No questions.

Shared message from Bader Takriti, Board Member who resigned in late september to study in England. Just called from England earlier to wish QPIRG well with the AGM.

7. Candidates and Elections for Conflict Resolution and Complaints Committee (CCRC)

Fred, the Chief Returning Officer, asks for assistants and Danielle and E volunteer as Electoral Assistants. The assistants will no longer be able to vote themselves.

First, we will ask for nominations (from floor and then from people who submitted their candidacy prior to AGM). No proxy is possible unless people have already submitted their candidacy. We will hear presentations from each candidate or a proxy, and have a chance for questions after each one. After that, Fred will explain voting procedure.

The CCRC is there to resolve conflicts and complaints inside the organization, to help move through conflicts and it also applies the policy that QPIRG has on conflicts and complaints.

There are no set meetings; the only requirement is to attend a training a few weeks after the AGM. Then, unless there are conflicts or complaints, there is no necessity to do more. The committee exists to resolve conflicts that are beyond the capacity of the staff and board to resolve, for example conflicts between staff members.

Staff (Christina) explains that it is useful to have candidates who know QPIRG and are familiar with its policies.

In the CCRC elections there are four spots to fill.

Cassie Smith (first-time CCRC candidate). Seconded by Elise.

Cassie has been on QPIRG board for two years. Elise is thus familiar with the CCRC policy and has attended the conflict resolution training. Elise thinks having a conflict resolution process is important for the health of organizations. Elise likes fact that CCRC process recognizes that there are non-judicialized ways of resolving conflicts. Elise helped Fine Arts Student Association at Concordia develop their own Conflict Res and Complaints policy based on QPIRG's policy. Please refer to AGM booklet, where there is more information about Cassie on p. 21.

Karina Chagnon (first-time CCRC candidate). Seconded by Cassie. Proxy is Cassie.

Karina has been on QPIRG board for past two years and has a good sense of QPIRG. Karina would like to maintain ties and continue to contribute to QPIRG. Please refer to AGM booklet, where there is more information about Karina on p. 19.

Milena Gioia (returning CCRC candidate). Seconded by Ian.

Milena has been on CCRC for two years and has been on the board for one year. Milena wants to stay connected and contribute to QPIRG, but doesn't have time to be on the board.

Please refer to AGM booklet, where there is more information about Milena on p. 20.

Ian Bradley-Perrin (first-time CCRC candidate). Nominated by Ashley.

Ian has been on the board for three years and wants to stay involved. Ian believes it is important to maintain the CCRC and notes that it is telling that there has been no conflict since the CCRC was established.

No other nominations from floor.

Fred explains that this is a non-competitive election (four candidates, four slots to fill). A vote is still necessary because candidates have to be elected by simple majority. There are four lines on the ballot and people should write the four candidates' names on the ballot, one per line, and then circle yes or no for each. Fred reminds non-members not to vote.

Electoral Assistants hand out ballots to members. Completed ballots are placed in the ballot box by the members.

8. Candidates and Elections for QPIRG Board

Same procedure will be followed as in the CCRC election.

The Board has two types of seats: student and community; and there are six of each. There will be a separate vote for the six student seats and the six community seats.

i. Candidates for Student Seats

See page 22-31 in AGM Package for more info about student nominees who presented their candidacy in advance.

Shayla Jean (returning candidate). Seconded by Thien Viet Quan. Proxy presentation by Akki.

Shayla is dedicated and diligent. Also involved in Open Door Books, a QPIRG Working Group and a member of the Sound Team.

Farhana J. Haque (first-time board candidate). Seconded by Gwen Muir.

Farhana is an undergraduate in 1st year. She is interested in policy committee. She is involved in Solidarity Across Borders, a QPIRG Working Group, where she is trying to set up a immigrants with disabilities committee.

Kwaku Adomako (first-time board candidate). Seconded by Idil.

Kwaku has been around QPIRG for a while, in Sudy in Action and now has more time because is studying part-time and would like to finally get involved. Would be very excited to be involved.

Question: what do you study? Anthropology and Sociology.

Laura Boo MacDonald (first-time board candidate). Seconded by Ian.

Laura Boo is an undergraduate at the JBMolson School of Business. Laura has been involved in organizign in the past, particulary queer, youth, disability organizing and has been part of the anarchist bookfair. Laura has returned to school to become a chartered accountant. Laura is interested in being on the Finance Committee.

Dan Wolfe (first-time board candidate). seconded by Otto.

Dan is a 1st year undergraduate at Loyola Campus. Dan would like to promote QPIRG at Loyola and get some activities happening there.

Question: what are your political interests? Dan has been involved in the Belle Époque collective in the past and also a QPIRG McGill Board member and was involved in SPHR in the past as well.

Thien Viet Quan (returning candidate). Nominated by Cassie.

Thien was on board last year. Thien would like to expand beyond his involvement as a photographer to other areas, being on the board would help with that.

No other nominations from the floor for student seats.

ii. Candidates for Community Seats

See page 32-43 in AGM Package for more info about community nominees who presented their candidacy in advance.

Otto Buxton-Vicentini (returning board candidate) nominated by Dan.

Otto has been on the board since June. Otto is running again, has organized around migrant justice and food justice. Is on the staff liaison committee.

Shaina Agbayani (first-time board candidate) nominated by Thien. Proxy presentation by Thien.

Shaina is involved at McGill, inorganizing around queer people of colour. Does performance and sings. Involved at Justice alimentaire Montreal.

Sophia Salem (first-time board candidate) nominated by Akki

Sophia is an exchange student at U de M political science. For a term and a half, Sophia was on board at SF Pirg in BC, where Sophia was on the anti-oppression and policy committee and facilitated anti-op workshops.

Alyce Dressner (first-time board candidate) nominated by Emma

Alyce doesn't have clear plans but would like to be active and potentially on policy or staff liaison committees.

Jess Mac (returning board candidate). Seconded by Alyce.

Jess has been one year on board. Jess has taught at Concordia, is artist and anti-prison organizer.

Idil Isse (first-time board candidate) nominated by Sophia.

Idil studied political science and history. Now has time and would like to be involved in meaningful work which really addresses root causes, which QPIRG does. This is why Idil would like to be involved.

No more nominations from floor.

Fred explains that this is a non-competitive election (six candidates to fill six slots in each of the two elections). A vote is still necessary because candidates have to be elected by simple majority. This time there will be two ballots distributed, one for community and one for student candidates. There are six lines on each ballot and people should write the six candidates' names on the ballot, one per line, and then circle yes or no for each. Fred reminds non-members not to vote.

Electoral Assistants hand out two ballots to each member: one for community, the other for student. Completed ballots are placed in the ballot box by the members.

9. Community Event Announcements

A wide variety of events are announced including Mad Pride's Mad Hatter Tea Party, Tea with my Monsters; Culture Shock Event Series at McGill University with a keynote by Dark Matter and featuring a People of Colour and Indigenous

organising conference to connect dots and contribute to an anti-racist, anti-colonial front in Montreal; Justice for Victims of Police Killings on 22 October at Montreal Police Fraternity with the slogan « black lives matter » coming out of Ferguson; Printemps CUBEcois, a sculpture of banners highlighting student strike and there will be events on the side; Certain Days 2015 Calendar is ready, a joint project of black panther and ally prisoners and people on the outside for many years; Canadian Greenhouse AGM coming up, to apply contact admin@concordiagreenhouse.org; Community Lecture Series on HIV and Aids starting with science-base lecture with Sean Strub, and continuing through the year.

10. Election Results

Staff announces that the training for the new board will be Saturday and Sunday of the following weekend (18 and 19 October, 9 to 5pm), will send information to new board members tonight.

The ballots are still being counted.

11. Adjournment

Proposal to adjourn AGM and to delegate the Chief Returning Officer, Fred Burrill, to provide the results of the elections to staff, to post them on the website, fb, twitter, and make them known generally.

Proposed by: Christina. Seconded: Alyce.

VOTE

Yes: 25

No: 0

Abs: 0

Proposal adopted. Meeting adjourned. Thanks to all!