

GoTriangle Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
September 26, 2019
Retreat

Museum of Life & Science, Woodland Lab, Durham, NC

Board Members Present:

Will Allen III

Mike Fox (left 12:30 p.m.)

Sig Hutchinson

Wendy Jacobs

Vivian Jones

Valerie Jordan (arr. 9:58 a.m.)

Mark Marcoplos

Michael Parker

Ellen Reckhow, Chair

Jennifer Robinson (arr. 9:30 a.m., left 3:15 p.m.)

Steve Schewel (left 3:28 p.m.)

Russ Stephenson

Nina Szlosberg-Landis

Michelle Ferguson, retreat facilitator from The Novak Consulting Group, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Ellen Reckhow welcomed Michael Fox, the newest member of the Board of Trustees and Chair of the North Carolina Board of Transportation. She stated that he will be sworn in at October meeting.

Chair Reckhow turned the meeting over to Ferguson. Ferguson's report of the retreat is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes.

Chair Reckhow adjourned the meeting at 3:57 p.m.



Ellen Reckhow, Chair

Attest:



Michelle C. Dawson, CMC
Clerk to the Board

Michelle C. Dawson, CMC
Clerk to the Board

GoTriangle

Board of Trustees Retreat

September 2019



On September 25, 2019, the GoTriangle Board of Trustees held a retreat at the Museum of Life and Science – Woodland Conference Room. All Trustees were in attendance, in addition to the Clerk and the Interim CEO. The retreat was facilitated by Michelle Ferguson from The Novak Consulting Group.

Introductions

The Board Chair welcomed the group, and the facilitator set the stage for the retreat by sharing the norms the group would operate by:

- Be open and honest
- Be candid and constructive
- Be engaged and patient
- Practice self-awareness
- Listen to understand
- Remember the power of “Yes, and...”

Next, the facilitator reviewed the agenda and asked each person to share their expectations for the retreat:

- Interested in regional transit; reaffirm regional commitment to transit
- Take an active role in regional transit plan
- Knit organization together; opportunity to unify our Board; work is vital to our economy and our community
- Strengthen GoTriangle’s ability to be a powerful regional authority; need a genuine regional approach
- Rebuild the organization; important point for soul searching; be open to APTA feedback; develop strategy to rebuild GoTriangle
- Excited about learning; bring experience from other areas; connection between Triad and Triangle
- Recommit to our goals and vision for the region
- We are an organization for regional transit; we need to lead to achieve it; this retreat is the first step in a process to rebuild the organization
- Clarity after a difficult year; honor Ellen’s leadership; direction, priorities, and focus for our future; understand the significance of our work and role; have a clean slate about where we want to go
- This is a region; we need to work together for our region as a team; work to feel more like a team
- There are morale and trust issues in the organization and with external partners; need a unified Board to help the organization
- Reaffirm our role in advancing transit; be the trusted body in this region; establish role of the Board; need for one voice
- Time to think about our future; reset and rebuild trust and confidence in our organization; create a new cohesive regional vision for transit

2017-2021 GoTriangle Strategic Plan

The Board was provided a copy of the current GoTriangle Strategic Plan. The group was asked to review the vision, mission, and priorities and discuss their relevance to today's environment. Reactions to the strategic plan framework included the following:

- Equity, diversity, changing demographics
- Equitable delivery of services
 - How do we serve all?
 - Expand collaboration to provide equitable delivery of services
- Very passive vision; not written in an active way
- We are not the creator of land use plans, but we can influence and be conveners of conversations
- Leadership without governance authority
- Need to capture the attention of users – focus on their quality of life in more relatable language
 - Transit modes do mitigate climate change if we can achieve sufficient ridership
- Define mobility – in the context of transit
 - Provide frequent service sufficient to compete with automobiles
- Transit = freedom
 - If frequent enough
 - Can improve the health and wellbeing of our communities
- Need diversity on Board in order to make social equity advancements
 - This leads to increasing trust
- Look at ridership diversity
- Need to represent the end-user
- Ask our users if we are providing exceptional public transportation
- Provide exceptional public transportation that allows our communities to offer high quality of life
- Vision doesn't articulate how we serve as a **leader**, knitting together all of the partners

Based on this conversation, the group was then asked to define what **LEADERSHIP** for GoTriangle should look like:

- Build external relationships – partner and collaborator
 - Need a stakeholder strategy
 - Need to define who the stakeholders are
 - Identify who is targeted in terms of “community”
- Convene
- Educate
- Inspire
- Connection
- Set vision, mission, and goals
- Ambassadors
- Visionary leadership
- Questioning but not micromanaging
 - Seek the hard trust
 - Trust but verify
- Conduct risk assessments, especially at inflection points
- Be the antennae for the organization out to the community

- Ensure the organization has resources and capacity to be successful in implementing vision
- Create relevance
- Rebuild trust
- Ensure that every project is everyone's project
- Demonstrate value in the region
- Regional summit to bring people together
- Bring people together for a shared vision
- Connecting our communities and acting as a region
- Start by building a foundation – Listening Tour
 - Act on what we learn

Further, the group articulated the key roles of the agency, such as the following:

- Banker, fiduciary responsibility
- Execute vision and mission
- Oversight of certain staff
- Provide regional mobility options
- Set policy for the organization to implement
- Evidence of regionalism – regional institutions
- Lead by messages that reinforce that value of regional transit integration

After the conversation, there was general consensus that a key role for GoTriangle is to articulate a shared vision for what regional mobility options can do/achieve for the community.

Roles and Expectations

Next, the group discussed the differences between the specific roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees and GoTriangle Staff.

What is the Role of GoTriangle Board?

- Define or articulate the “what”
- Be aware of political implications
- Ambassadors
- Speak as one body
- Political capital
- Conduit between the organization and community/constituencies
- Ask the tough questions – dispassionate outsider
- Decision-makers
- Create policy
- Hire the CEO
- Approve the budget
- Set clear, meaningful goals
- Create a culture of honesty and openness

What is the Role of GoTriangle Staff?

- Execute the ideas and priorities of the Board
- Keep Board informed – present decision-oriented information
- Tell us what we need to know
- Provide timely information, emerging needs/issues
- Tie initiatives to the strategic plan
- Provide regular updates on the strategic plan
- Represent GoTriangle out in the community

The group also discussed the need to stay informed. The Interim CEO discussed her approach to try to communicate effectively with all members, but the group acknowledged the difficulty in communicating with every member. Therefore, it was agreed that the Interim CEO will routinely communicate with the Board Chair and the Executive Committee. It will be the responsibility of the Board Chair and the Executive Committee, in collaboration with the CEO, to elevate issues that need to be shared or discussed with the full Board. All members of the Board agreed to this approach.

The Next CEO

Members of the CEO Search Committee shared the proposed process, as developed by the recommended Search Consultant. The group agreed to provide the Search Committee with additional names of individuals or groups who would be surveyed as part of the process.

Additionally, the group reviewed the job description for the CEO. In addition to the job description, the group articulated the need to define organizational priorities for the CEO's focus in the first 12 months, such as the following:

- Rebuild reputation and trust
- Commuter rail
- Creating organizational structure
- Internal leadership
- External communication
- Proactive leadership

The Search Committee will review with the Search Consultant and report back to the Board as the process continues.

Bike Rack/Parking Lot

Several outstanding topics were placed in the Bike Rack for future Board discussion.

- Board membership
 - Is this the ideal size and representation to fulfill the purpose of GoTriangle?
- Define the "region"
- Budget process
- Alignment of financial resources with priorities
- Free transit

Parting Thoughts

At the close of the retreat, participants were asked to share their parting thoughts.

- Super productive; good alignment and healthy disagreement
- Incorporated lessons from APTA
- Important conversation; on the same page; need to internalize our discussion
- Very encouraged; reaffirmed my faith in my colleagues
- Encouraging to be with those who care about transit in our region
- Took the trauma of light rail to get us to have this meeting
- Looking forward to building on what we have in common
- One voice – headed in the right direction
- This was the first step in getting the “team” feeling back in this group
- Productive day; we face many challenges, but we are committed to working together