

ESMHA - Special Meeting - Meeting Notes

Sunday, May 26th - 3pm

Bingo Hall - ES Community Center

Jason Baker opened the meeting at 3pm, welcomed those in attendance and thanked members for taking the time to attend the meeting. Jason went on to add that the Special Meeting was called by a group of 50 plus parents in order to discuss their proposal for a partnership between ESMHA and CHMHA. Jason noted that he attended a Presidents meeting, on September 12th, where a loose discussion took place, surrounding a partnership between Dartmouth and Cole Harbour minor hockey associations. Jason asked that he be part of further discussions, moving forward, but that no new communication arose following that meeting. Jason went on to add that on April 9th, Danny Cole created a facebook group which was helpful in commencing discussions surrounding a potential partnership. on April 16th, Jason was contacted by Jim Bungay, President of CHMA, and invited to attend a meeting, with a few ESMHA executive members who would have pertinent knowledge to lend to the discussion at hand. Jason went on to say that a loose conversation occurred and that no other meeting, decisions or discussions have since taken place. On Mya 13th, Jason attended a meeting with Hockey Nova Scotia pertaining to PW AAA changes. Jason concluded his introduction by saying that today's meeting will allow for a great conversation opportunity.

At 3:06, Danny Cole addressed those in attendance and thanked the executive members for the work they do for the entire association. Danny noted that this meeting came to fruition as a result of a discussions among parents, within the association, and the fact that several members are not happy with the levels of play, offered by the association, based on registration numbers. Danny went on to say that no fault lies with anyone and that it is just factual, based on numbers. Danny advised the the fb group was independent of the executive committee so that it would allow for open discussion where members could speak freely in an environment not governed by the executive. Danny went on to add that the steering committee was made up of 12 parents from all levels of play. Countless conversations have taken place surrounded what are some likes, dislikes and what changes members would like to see and wad determined that with the current registration numbers, offering all levels of play is impossible. Danny went on to note that there is a shortage of approximately 150 players in order to have sufficient numbers for all levels of play. Danny added that since no plan has been put into place by the executive, the steering committee decided to get the ball rolling and commence a plan to move forward. The steering committee believes that the best solution is to align with CHMHA in a 2 year trial partnership for rep teams. The steering committee considered to not include B level of play in their proposal but feared those players would be negatively affected. Danny went on to note that the love of our "home rink" is a sensitive issue and that it has been kept in the forefront of discussions. The steering committee is very aware of membership concerns and Danny noted that he believes the steering committee has addressed most concerns in the proposal.

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Danny completed his introduction by noting and governance changes would need to be implemented and that a joint coaching selection committee would be required. Danny briefly reviewed some highlights from the steering committee's proposal and concluded his opening comments at 3:31.

At 3:32, Andrew Lowery introduced himself as the meeting moderator and laid out some ground rules for asking questions or sharing comments. Andrew asked that when speaking from the floor, folks state their name, what level of play their child/ren and then pose your question to the appropriate person.

Name	Child/ren level of play	Question Comment
Andrew Lowery	Peewee and IP	Andrew asked Danny Cole, if in a partnership with CH, would multiple teams at each level be offered? Danny Cole replied by stating that multiple teams at each level has been considered in their discussions but more consideration and work must be done surrounding this topic.
Shelley Bonang	Peewee and Atom	<p>Shelley asked how rec level hockey would be affected with said partnership and also asked for the names of those on the steering committee and asked of any steering committee members were parents of C level players. Danny noted that two committee members are parents of C level players and went on to say that he believes that C level and IP hockey would remain intact and that novice numbers may drop slightly . Danny went on to say that C level hockey is an important part of the ESHA.</p> <p>The members of the steering committee are: Donna Horne (Stepped Away), Danny Cole, Doug Gallant, Renee Abelleira, Jose Abelleira, Shelley Peddle, Melissa Theriault, Lori Hen (former board member), Pat Walker, Tammy Garber, Jodi Bengert and Drew Petite</p>
Alana Gates	Midge and Bantam	Alana stated that by not including C levels in a partnership proposal, that it indicates rec. teams are not as important as rep teams. Alana went on to note that move from the association needs to encompass all teams and not just rep. Danny replied by stating that this is a legitimate concern but the steering committee felt that little political will was there to include non rep teams. Alana noted that more work needs to be done on this.

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Joey Abeleira	Pee and female	Joey addressed Alana's comments and stated a partnership would help rec players and not hinder them. Joey noted that glancing numbers needs improvement. Joey added that some rec. players may not want to travel to town but would rather stay in the community.
Alana Gates		Alana noted that losing players to a partnership will most definitely affect C level hockey.
Paul Anderson	Novice and Metro Inferno	Paul asked if there was a reason that two C teams were offered at peewee and bantam levels. Andrew noted that it was based on HNS policy 3.6. It is based on numbers and sill level. Andrew noted that there is the potential, in December, to have to mix B and C level players, following tryouts.
Shelley Bonang		Shelley noted that there are kids playing outside of "their level" in every sport and in every association. Andrew noted that players have been released, in the past, but HNS has changed the rules surrounding this. Andrew noted that if a player is motivated to play at a certain level, there are options for B, in particular. AA and A level players can be released if those levels of play are not offered. B are not mandated to be released according to HNS. Danny added that this rule has been on a year to year basis, is dependent upon a number of factors and there needs to be a clear path moving forward from year to year.
Gina Dunn	Midget	Gina noted that in the past, if there was a desire and skill to have a B team, and we were only short a few players, kids who did not try out were asked if they wanted to play with the B team and it worked out well. Gina went on to note that for the younger players, development is important and these players can develop their skills. Gina added that this season there were 9 Atom players who wanted to play B level and that players who didn't try out could have been approached since there were 4 Atom teams and lots of numbers, there was the potential to offer B level for Atom.
Jacqueline Sanford	Atom	Jacqueline encouraged every to think of possible solutions with the association. She went on to say that with commitment and hard work from the bottom up, more opportunities for levels of play are possible. More discussion among parents need to take place and we must be careful not to pigeon hole players from one year to another as it may limit player opportunity. Jacqueline noted that Communication is key. Danny acknowledged that growing the association numbers has to be looked at but it takes time and what happens in the meantime. Danny noted that the two year trial proposal was a good interim solution.

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Jacqueline Sanford		Jacqueline noted that HNS is already looking at problem solving some of the identified issues and that we should allow them to work this out and we should not reinvent the wheel if HNS has a plan already laid down.
Dustin	Bantam and IP	Dustin stated that history seems to be repeating itself, year after year and expressed concern over the decreasing numbers at the IP level. Dustin expressed concerns with the number of players who will be iced moving forward, depending on different scenarios. Dustin went on to note that it would be great if the numbers allowed for every level of play but has concern about the future of the association and it's numbers.
		Jason noted that current issues are not going to be a huge affect on IP level and that the executive has been looking at ways to increase numbers with a focus on growing numbers at the lower levels.
		Danny added that the steering committee did not include IP and Novice in their proposal as HNS does not consider these levels to be competitive levels.
Carla MacQuarrie	Novice, Midget at Newbridge and High School hockey	Carla agreed with Dustin's comments pertaining to the need to increased numbers at the IP level. She went on to state that economics plays a huge role in the reduction of players and that registration costs are a barrier. Carla expressed concerns with the steering committee's proposal and how it does not include any input from CHMHA and what they would want in a partnership with ESMHA. Carla noted that registration costs in ESMHA covers a great deal more expenses than CH and questioned how a partnership would then help lower costs for players and lend to increasing numbers?
		Danny added that no input is available from CH at this time and that the proposal was created to initiate conversation. Danny noted that CH has not agreed to anything at this point. and that ESMHA members must know what they want prior to presenting a partnership proposal to them. Carla noted that she has fears that CH would not be ok with some of the information laid out in the proposal. Danny noted that most rep players have gone to CH at some point and are ok with the additional expenses. This is a discussion only at this time and a proposal has to be comprised of wants from the entire association.

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Shannon Karsten	Atom and Midget	Shannon noted they we are all dancing around the bigger issue and that just because a players or a player's parents want to play at a certain level, does not mean they should be playing at that level. Shannon went on to add that why doesn't membership look at growing numbers and development from the bottom up instead of bailing ship. Multiple conversations took place on the floor.
Derek	Peewee	Derek questioned whether any of the members of the steering committee lived east of PL and LE. Derek also stated that CH players will not want to come out to the ES arena for 1/2 of their practices. Derek went on to note that if our rep teams do partner with CH, he fears there will be no hockey on the Shore.
		Danny responded by saying that there is a fundamental problem with what Derek said and that conversations need to be had with CH in order to gather facts surrounding their willingness to travel to ES.
Leah	Atom and IP	Leah asked what the advantage would be for rep players, in the event of a partnership with CH. She went on to question if CH only takes the top percentage of players for each level, during tryouts. Somebody from the floor confirmed that was not the case with CH but is for DMHA. Leah asked if a partnership were to move forward with CH if something could be put in writing to state that top few players only will make teams. She went on to note that her son tried to get a release and it was denied. She expressed concern that if this happens, a player may digress. Leah questioned whether ESMHA could consider releasing Novice players if competitive levels are not offered. She feared that when players try out for spring hockey etc. they may be discriminated against because they don't have rep experience in their resume. Leah went on to state that inconsistencies of levels of play from year to year, post difficulty such has players have to invest in multiple association track suits.
		Jason noted that although there is a possibility of Novice players being released, he is not aware of any conversations slated to occur surrounded this issue. Jason was asked if the ESMHA executive has ever been approached about doing a merger before and after several discussions on the floor, it was agreed that yes, similar discussions have occurred in the past, with past executives and membership.

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Lori B.	Bantam	Lori noted that the costs, for registration with CH were not more than that of the ES. She went on to note that CH players got more for their money in terms of full ice practices and 1.5 hours rather than 1/2 ice at ES and 60 minutes of ice time. Lori noted that in talks with coaches she has worked with, they would welcome ES players. Enrolment is down in schools thus down in all associations. She questioned the fears of the rink dying and that we reside in a large community and the viability of the rink should not rest on the shoulders of one hockey association. Lori went on to note that CH was booking ice time with ES until a few years ago and then the ESMHA stopped it as they wanted all of the available ice time.
Carla MacQuarrie		Carla disagreed with the registration cost breakdown and asked Danny if you could obtain an invoice from CHMHA in order to have facts pertaining to costs and what it includes/excludes.
Alex Mitchell	2 Atom players	Alex posed the question "is anyone strongly in favour of leaving things the way they are" and "how do we change"? Alex noted that staying the same is just not sustainable so what should change look like? Alex noted that larger associations can offer something for every level and not just rep teams but rec teams as well. Alex stated that the membership first has to decide if we agree to change and then look at how to change.
		Danny noted that the work of the steering committee began because they see that change is needed so let's now talk about what the change looks like. Jason agreed that changes indeed need to happen.
		Alex indicated that folks may be fearful to admit that change is necessary if they are unsure or afraid of what the future and change may look like.
Michelle	Midget	Michelle stated that over the years, her son has played on the ES and in town and at all levels and went on to say that level titles are not as important as coaching, development and practices are.

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		<p>Shelley noted that change is needed but is confused about what opportunities the proposal will afford players, in comparison to how business is currently done. For example, if players can be released to play in town, how is the proposal going to change anything. Shelley went on to add that she had heard that the financial standing of CH and Dartmouth associations are not good and questioned whether they would agree to partner with ES in order to help get them out of the red.</p>
Leigh Anne Jennex	Midget	<p>Leigh Anne questioned that if a partnership occurred and rep teams left the ES rink, would the rink be able to sustain itself with losing that many bodies from hockey. Danny noted that the concern was attempted to be mitigated in the proposal by the steering committee, by suggesting 1/3 of ice time be utilized at the ES rink. Leigh Anne continued to question how the rink would be affected.</p>
Josh		<p>Josh questioned what the plan is and asked if the executive is going to put the proposal to vote by membership. Jason noted that this is not an executive decision but a membership decision and that the executive will find out if such a proposal is something that membership wants. Jason noted that HNS has to be involved in any decision moving forward. Jason added that the association can only move at the pace of other groups who would be involved in such decisions/partnerships. No timeline has been set at this point. Jason went on to note that information is starting to be compiled and another President's meeting will occur shortly, at which time it will be determined what is on the table.</p>
Shannon Karsten		<p>Shannon noted that removing rep teams in no way helps the association.</p>
Carla MacQuarrie		<p>Carla noted that we need to agree. as an association on what is most important to us. Change is needed so let's look at problem solving.</p>
Derek		<p>Derek noted that the rink isn't just about hockey and that we reside in a rural community and know that rural communities cannot offer what the city associations do.</p>
Carla MacQuarrie		<p>Carla stated that a more global approach must be taken to make permanent change.</p>

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Greer Grady	Midget	Greer stated that his son's season was great this year but has had not so great seasons as well. Greer went on to add that his son has play with both ES and CH associations and that CH is facing the same issues as ES. Greer noted that his son wants to play with his friends on the Shore. Greer stated that last year, 7 or 8 players were released to CH at his son's level and if those players were not released, ES could have had a very competitive team. Greer suggested that perhaps the top 3 or 5 players should be released but that the remaining skilled players should return to the Shore after CH tryouts.
		Jason noted that Dartmouth does only take the top players at each level and for consistency should a larger partnership be formed, CH would have to agree to the same. Son went on to add that HNS puts those rules in place.
Greer Grady		Greer questioned whether HNS should be invited to this and subsequent meetings in order to discuss putting something in place
Mike Humphrey	Midget	Mike agree with Alex that change needs to happen and suggested that having some parents on the steering committee who reside east of Musquodoboit Harbour, would be beneficial. Mike went on to add the Midget C is good hockey and the proposal has the potential to hurt all C level hockey on the shore. Mike added that C level hokey is a fundamental level of play. Mike stated that if there was no high school team this season, ESMHA would have iced a great AA team.
Jennifer Desmond	Peewee	Jen questioned where female players fall into the steering committee's proposal.
Paul Anderson		Paul confirmed that HNS sets the rules around what female hockey looks like.
Doug Gallant	IP and Atom	Doug noted that CH and Dartmouth are merging and the steering committee began discussions about what will happen to ES players should that occur. Doug questioned where that will leave our association and what the long term future of our association looks like. Doug noted that all factors need to be examined . Doug stated that players are fired to play in town because ES does not offer the desired levels. Players should not be forced to play down a level or two as it doesn't challenge the player and this is regardless of the sport.

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Jennifer Desmond		Jennifer note that has sat on the ESMHA executive committee in every capacity, including President. Jennifer went on to note that in the past, ES made the best with what they had. Amazing coaches, mentorship are resources we should be drawing on and are not currently being utilized. Jennifer went on to add the at the ES has tremendous talent and resources. The numbers now are the same as they have always been. Jennifer added that past executive for which she served, told HNS that they would not be dictated to in interns of what levels we could offer.
Rene Abelleira		Rene questioned Jason as to whether a proposal was discussed at the meeting he attended with Cole harbour and Dartmouth association Presidents.
		Jason noted that very loose discussions took place at that meeting about what members would want/not want. Jason went on to say that nothing formal was proposal during that meeting.
		Jason stated that he had difficulty with Doug Gallant's comments, stating that a CH and Dartmouth partnership is a done deal. Jason advised that this is not the same information he is receiving. Jason noted that conversations surrounding a partnership are very early and committees will be essential in order to look at all scenarios.
Jen		Jen noted that development is key and with too many players not he ice at one time, development can not occur.
Justin		Just noted that it is possible to keep our teams on the shore, with development, coaching and commitment.
Alex Mitchell		Alex noted that one thing we can all take away from this meeting is there is a number of scenarios that need to be looked at and the solution has to address all players in order to ensure all concerns are taken into consideration. Alex went on to say that it would be naive to think a merger will never happen, based on history in other sports and associations. Alex ended by saying that larger numbers foster great development.
Joey Abeleira		Joey noted that we are all here for the kids and without the steering committee, a meeting would not have happened. Joey added that B level players were not permitted to try out in town last year but was the previous year. Joey stated that A, B and C are all desired levels.

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Amanda	Bantam and Atom	Amanda noted that numbers speak and that if a partnership occurs, it has to be all or nothing. It has to include all teams at each level and not just rep teams. She noted that finances of the larger associations must be examined in order to see what registration and expenses may look like with a partnership. Amanda feared the ESMHA losing it's identity should a merger happen and that an entirely new association should be formed rather than confirming to CH association.
Andrew Lowery		Andrew closed the floor discussions at 5:05 pm
Jason Baker		Jason closed by noting that Alex had great suggestions and the next steps are to take the information gathering during this meeting, moving forward. Jason thanked everyone for attending and noted that communication will be shared with membership as it received by him. Jason thanked Andrew for being the meeting's moderator. The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 pm.