

**Playa del Fuego
Annual Board Retreat
March 7-8, 2015**

Attendees: 6 Board Members participated on Day One of the Retreat

David Diller (President)
Patty Simonton (Treasurer)
Dove Russo
Ben Sarsgard
Ed “Lizard” Rosen
Damian Masterson

Vikki Frank, Lanier Place Consulting, facilitated the retreat and submitted this report.

Included in this report:

Saturday, March 7, Facilitator PPT for Board Retreat
Sunday, March 8, Facilitator’s PPT for Event Coordinator Meeting
Draft One-Page BP for Playa del Fuego

Retreat Design:

Day One, Vikki Frank facilitated the **Board Retreat**. The Retreat was designed in collaboration with PFD Board who provided their thoughts on agenda, purpose and goals. To support the board to achieve these goals, facilitator introduced several strategic visioning and action planning tools including: POP, Appreciative Inquiry, Stanford Model for Organizational Vision and Mission, One-Page Business Plan, and MOCHA/DARCI for action planning. On Day Two, the Board continued action planning.

The Board’s collective thinking, decisions and activities were recorded during the meeting via flip charts, sticky notes, note cards, notes, wall chart, and other media. Significant pieces of this record have been captured in the first section of this report.

On Day Two, Vikki Frank facilitated an **Event Coordinator Meeting** designed in collaboration with PFD Board who provided their thoughts on agenda, purpose and goals. The coordinator’s collective thinking, decisions and activities were recorded during the meeting via flip charts, sticky notes, wall chart, audio recording, and other media. Significant pieces of this record have been captured in the second section of this report.

Agenda for Board Retreat (Day One and Day Two)

Who We Are: Mission and Vision

Organization Goals (1-3 Years)

- Land
- Art Grants
 - Event
 - Community
- Transitioning of Event Management
 - Organizational (Re)-structure?
 - Roles and Responsibilities and Representation

- Governance
 - BOD Terms/Roles/Representation

Action Planning: Set Objectives and Actions for each Goal

- Create One Page Business Plan for: Land, Grants
- Complete MOCHA for Land and Grant Projects

Purpose: Celebrate WHO WE ARE
Objectives Define GOALS/OBJECTIVES for 1-3 years
Process Appreciative Visioning
 Clarifying Mission
 Planning: Strategies and Actions toward Goals

Successes in 2014

Board focus on building relationships with PC and coordinators
 Board conducted a Comprehensive Online Survey to Community
 Board hosted two town halls and two more coming up (DC, Philadelphia, NYC, Virtual)
 Board added two new Board Members: Ben and Damian
 Current Board members are all active and inspired and committed!
 Good follow-up on activities when board members commit
 Increase of transparency with posting board minutes online
 Pro-active putting things on website to increase collective sharing of ideas
 2 successful 2014 Burns
 Huge Dino! It was exciting and the first time in a while that had such large scale art.
 Good pipeline of artists applied for art grants
 Active discussion about how to expand art grants as well as community art and community grants to support art beyond the burns.

What held you back?

Fear – of things being hard, of action, afraid to act, fear of making decisions that can't be unmade, fear of change,
 Strong dynamic tension about integrating decisions with community, how make work with 1,000 viewpoints
 Buy-in, willingness to step up/in
 Land issue – this has been “tabled” for years
 Clear (and transitioning) role of board vis a vis Event Planning
 Most of our work is the two events, and there is energy there, but if we do work all year round, how channel energy all year round?
 Need more commitment and action: volunteers, “someone” to get stuff done, time Often people commit and don't follow through

VISION and MISSION

PDF strives to promote an interactive, experiential, sustainable environment that encourages artistic creativity and freedom of expression. We seek to attract, inspire, and nurture a diverse community that celebrates and encourages experiments in the creation of art, freedom of expression, a culture of play, and the collective sharing of ideas and skills.

The board reviewed the above VISION statement, reflected on how the board and community spent considerable time in 2014 creating and “word-smithing” the VISION statement and felt good about it. We discussed it was a strong statement of PDF guiding philosophy, purpose and core beliefs and values. We also discussed it could offer be a stronger representation of the future PDF wants to create without words like “strive” and “seek”.

The board also reviewed the MISSION statement from IRS documents and also on the website and realized the current mission focus on holding interactive events was now too narrow as an organizational Mission. Without starting from scratch, it was suggested we could split the two statements in the VISION into a VISION and a MISSION. The result:

VISION

Attract, inspire, and nurture a diverse community to celebrate and encourage experiments in the creation of art, a culture of play, and the collective sharing of ideas and skills.

MISSION

We build an interactive, experiential, sustainable environment that encourages a culture of play, artistic creativity and freedom of expression.

VISION/MISSION Next Action Steps:

- Share updated Mission and Vision with the Community
- Update Website – homepage, about us page, board page
- IRS/Incorporation documents do not need to be updated.

PROJECT LAND

We asked ourselves what the **Objective/Goal** for land is:

- Better space for 2 PDF events?
 - Higher quality land?
 - Capable to host more people per event
- Create permanent space for 365 days?
- Land is goal!
 - Once we have it, we will figure out what to do with it
 - During process, we can look at Farm land? Type of space?

Answer: All of the above!

“Most important thing for me, and why I want to do this, is how excited we all got and if something is that exciting, I want to do it.”

If we have land:

- Always available for PDF use, we could be there for this retreat!
- “Having a permanent space opens us up to cool new idea we haven’t thought of yet.”
- “have something there much more full-time, whether it’s workshop, artistic (glass blowing, a forge), my vision is a permanent space with ability to do more than events.”
- Hopefully having a way to integrate infrastructure into local community to benefit rest of year
- Permanent structure for meeting hall and also have a kitchen and floor space for people to crash
- “Like my firehouse – bunkroom, meeting hall, room for equipment”
- Could host this retreat on the property, town halls, early set-up of camps, roundtables
- Burning man community will have dedicated space
- Operate burner hostel
- Be Incubator to produce art to ship to burn
- Let burners buy/rent an acre? – there’s a model in Ithaca, NY
- It’s an experiment in radical community!

“Having a permanent space opens us up to cool new idea we haven’t thought of yet.” - Damian

Criteria/Issues/Things to Consider when buying land:

- We created Criteria years ago, and need to revise this
- Host minimum of 2,500 people for PDF Burns
- Minimum of 75 acres
- Has “personality” – “I like our current swamp, part of our personality”
- “Just holding two events is not significant justification for investing in land, not good stewardship” Vision is a permanent space with ability to do more than events.”
- Good relationship with neighbors
- Isolated
- Finding appropriate and affordable land in the mid-atlantic region
- Coordinators can practice Event production procedures at new place – sound, fire/safety, gate, exodus, art, etc.
- Good community relations – building community is important to PDF mission and vision
- Brainstorm structure that would minimize risks/failure
- Lease-to-Own may be best option so that we can thoroughly test land and also build relationships with neighbors and community
- Identify how land is cared for 365 days – some options are to hire people, find caretakers, identify a partner, etc. to manage the land 365 days
- Potential Partnership may lead to larger land acquisition, and we can evaluate:
 - Co-ownership options
 - Supporting Partner to buy land that we rent
 - Creating subsidiary of PDF to own land

What we need to solve:

- current space is not sustainable – too much water (it’s a swamp. it’s a wetland.)
- current land is too small, can only 1,300 people, no room to grow

- “It will be the death of us
- “I want us always to be allowing new people in”
- “Difficult for new person to get in community because of process to get a ticket”
- “in order to sustain good people and returning and chipping in, we’re experiencing a brain drain, because of weather, not everyone in community can go or can’t get ticket, way things are now, harder to maintain good people in community to come and come way want to.”
- current space is not art friendly – not enough space for art, artists afraid of water
- Not get halted and muddled in details and discord of personality conflicts.
- Identifying right space will be one in a million – how keep energy for the search, and encourage ideas and not have people get deflated when land isn’t right.

What owning land will not solve:

- There isn’t a burner event in the world not struggling with caps. Buying land won’t fix that, it might just trigger more. How can we also expand outside of events?

Review of Community Survey Results:

Buy permanent land? – 331 agreed or agreed strongly
 Willing to help? 267 agreed or agreed strongly
 Rent alternative? 222 agreed or agreed strongly

More than 50% respondents said YES to buy permanent land as opposed to rent. However, open to options. AND many people in community willing to help!

“If we vote, all options are open.” - Dove

Vote: To buy land to meet our vision, to host PDF events for a minimum of 2,500 people, and as a permanent space that opens us up to cool new ideas we haven’t thought of yet.

Dove moved. Ben seconded. Dave thirded.

Vote: 5 yes, 1 opposed. No abstention. PASSED!

After the vote, the Board set the following Objective/Goal for Project Land in 2015:

- By March 2017, identify land for purchase that meets our vision to host events for a minimum of 2,500 people and is a permanent space that opens us up to the cool new ideas we haven’t thought of yet.

Dove and Ben committed to leading the Land Committee.

Next Action Steps for Land Committee:

- Send message to FB page with updates so people know what to do, how to do it, and invest time on helping with the land search.
- Provide monthly updates to the community, through a new e-newsletter?
- Create process for people to join Land Committee or help the Land Committee

- Create and inspire process for community to search for land and bring ideas to Committee
- Talk to Banker and Lawyer about financing
- Talk to Lawyer about options for partnering, purchasing, and clarify what happens to money collected in the name of Land if best option is to rent, partner or least-to-own
- Crowfund to raise more money
- Hire someone for the next year with sole goal is to establish this plan?
- Go to Burning Man conference in SF and discuss with others. Understanding is that no other regional has bought land yet, but others are looking at it.
- Update financials with Fund Accounting to clarify funds set aside and available for Land.

*See other Strategies and Actions in the PPT.

GOVERNANCE

Financials:

- Event Expenses:
 - Rent: \$13,500 for two events plus electricity, dumpsters, port = \$15k event;
 - Department Expenses = up to \$15k for two events
 - Art Grants = average \$10k for both events
- Event Revenue = \$125k, Net \$25k per year
- Up through 2013, all Net was set aside for land.
- Starting in 2014, Net is set aside as General Operating
- Current approximate asset status per fund:
 - \$350k or \$370k in bank?
 - \$300k Land Fund
 - \$23k Art Grants
 - \$9,500 Community Grants
 - \$25k Reserve
 - \$10k General Operating
 - Event Production?

Event Planning – who approves this budget? Does the board want/ need to put a cap on event expenses? Currently, the Planning Committee sets/creates/approves the budget, and coordinators each have a department budget. Current experience is coordinators spend half of their budget.

General Operating: How manage this new pot of funds so that the Board knows what is currently available, what is projected for the following year, and can discuss how to use these funds.

Board Members: The board is currently 6 active members. They bylaws allow up to 15 board members. PDF added two board members in 2014, and also lost a few board members in 2014. One current board member is not active.

Future:

- It is likely that 1-2 board members will step down before the end of 2015. We would like to have 8-10 board members.
- We don't want to grow to 15 board members, or grow too quickly. However, we need to add at least 2 board members in 2015, and ideally want to add 3-4 board members in 2015. However, it is hard to find good board members.
- We would be happy to discuss term limits, but right now we are more focused on growing the board and adding board members, not asking current board members to step down.

Next Action Steps for Governance:

- Create Board Objectives (per sample on the Draft Business Plan) to:
 - implement Fund Accounting
 - add more Board Members (specific number each year? For 2015?)
- Patty will clean up financials so organization can buy land and do everything she can to make sure it can happen.
- Implement Fund Accounting, to clarify what funds are specifically reserved for Land. In addition, separate funds for: Art Grants, Community Grants, Reserve, and General Operating. It does not require separate bank accounts, but fund accounting.
- Clarify approval process for Event Production Budget
- Create Income/Expense Budget at start of each year, and ideally have projection for 3 years
- Create Process to find great new board members with skills, energy and commitment.

ART GRANTS

We spent some time discussing the types of grants, the number of grants, and the sources of funds that PDF has had to make grants over the past 3-5 years. We then discussed the vision for grantmaking over the next 1-3 years and what it would take to achieve these goals.

1. Event Art Grants

10% of ticket sales go to following year Event Art Grants

In 2014, \$12k budgeted and granted \$9k. (In 2012 and 2013, granted \$14k each year). For 2015, have \$23k available for Art Grant.

Damian is part of the Event Art Grant Department. He clarified that per PDG event, the committee receives 15-20 applications, thus 30-40 per year. Virtually everything that can be approved, is approved. Most art grants are in the \$500-\$1000 range, but have been as high as \$2,000 or higher.

Dave, President of the Board, is very involved in the Art Grant process, both reviewing applications and finalizing artist contracts and reviewing receipts for reimbursement to ensure each expense qualifies and meets conditions.

Patty, Treasurer is responsible for disbursing Event Art Grants. She has created an efficient online process.

2. Community Grants

PDF earned revenue from inauguration event in DC. This money was allocated to support nonprofits that promote interactive art and events in the mid-Atlantic region. Grantees have included: Figment DC, Figment Philly, Artomatic, etc.

PDF currently has \$9,500 available for Community Grants in 2015.

3. Bring it Home Grants

PDF has used money from both the Event Art Grant fund and the Community Art Grant fund to enable artists to bring art home from the PDF event, and/or to bring art to

The Board set the following Objective/Goal for Grant in 2015:

- Over the next 3 years, raise \$20,000 and award at least \$20,000 in Art and Community Grants annually.

Damian and Patty offered to lead the Grant Committee.

Next Action Steps for Grant Committee:

- Develop strategies and create a One Page Business Plan/Action Plan to achieve Objective.
- Collaborate with Event Art Grant Department activities to streamline vision and mission of Event Art Grants, expand outreach and marketing, and streamline reimbursement process.
 - Update Event Art Grant approval process to empower the Coordinators/Department to finalize artist contracts and review receipts for reimbursements. (i.e. delegate Board President tasks to Lead Coordinator)
 - Evaluate disbursement process to empower a Lead Coordinator to approve the disbursements. (i.e. streamline Board Treasurer task to Lead Coordinator)
- Look at best practices and processes of other art grantmakers (ie. Burning Man art grant process),
- Clarify types of grant, size of grants and grant-making process and put clear vision, mission and process for applying for different grants available on the website.
- Develop and implement strategies to raise \$20,000 over 3 years including identifying foundation and local government funds and/or crowdfunding.

EVENT PRODUCTION

The Board made a list of the different Event Production Departments (up to 25) and then did an activity with sticky notes and a wall chart to

1) document the current status of activities of the Board and the Planning Committee/Department Coordinators; and

b) vision what they would like to see which was described as the Board “creating the skeleton” or “creating the conditions” for the event, and the Planning Committee/Department Coordinators “creating the event”.

**Playa del Fuego
Event Planning Committee/Board Retreat
March 7-8, 2015**

Vikki Frank, Lanier Place Consulting, facilitated the retreat and submitted this report.

Day Two: Event Planning Coordinator/Board Retreat

Attendees:

Event Department Coordinators participated on Day Two of the Retreat

Leah – Volunteer Coordinator

Omen – Art Grants Coordinator

Fritz – Exodus

Rev (Dave) - Burning Art coordinator

Nick - Greeter

Fernando – MASH Coordinator, with Lizard to combine with Safety Planning

2E –

Ed “Lizard” Rosen – Fire Safety

5 Board Members participated on Day Two of the Retreat (Damian sent regrets).

Morning: Board Members worked on Business Planning and Action Planning for future of Land and Grant projects.

Afternoon: Board Members joined Coordinator Meeting and created an Event Production Objective.

Best of 2014 Burns:

Leah got engaged at the Burn

2E has been ordained to officiate Leah’s wedding

The DINOSAUR – thanks REV!

Artwork was really good – hall of justice

Nobody died

Got two new associate/asst coordinators for Volunteer Department

Great cohesion of leadership – some great coordinator collaborating, stepping into new roles, carrying the torch

We have great/awesome leadership – that’s why I drive 10 hours to this meeting

From Exodus –we were out before sunset at both BURNS! Huge. No major fires. Not a ton of trash left.

Art Grant numbers are increasing – that’s exciting. Regularly getting 20-25 applications, try to give as many legitimate art pieces grants.

People are getting on board with safety planning, people making amazing strides toward the safety piece – and getting ready for 2015.

Doing a tremendous amount looking at safety protocols from other burns, and looking at roles and responsibilities for organization and all departments, emergency planning and disaster, want to work with Fritz and Exodus, work with Rangers for evacuation procedures, we are getting the structure there and can look BurningMan.com in the eye

We went through a long insular period, and we are really reaching out to other events and learning best practices to improve our operations – that's really kind of cool. Reaching out to Burning Man, medical coordinators, see how different are related to geographical
Really excited about cross-pollination with other events and similar departments – looking at job swap with other regionals to have Coordinator go and assist job at another regional – CROSS-BURN with Flipside. Transformus, Freeform
Nick – coordination gate CROSS-BURN with Freeform and PDF
No ambulance calls in 2014!
Really loved the TOWN HALLS – ingenious, very important to community, the accessibility and nexus point for all the birds in winter, and can foster future leadership

What are the Event Planning Departments?

Coordinators identified 21 departments. There was good consensus.

Facilitator Comment: It is clear that all the Coordinators and Board members are very invested in planning for a great event and have a very good and similar understanding of the departments and work that goes in to making the event happen. It is pretty phenomenal that so many people in the community are so fluent in the Event logistics. Congrats PDF!

How do Departments and Coordinators occur?

- You are a Coordinator if you say you are
- PC recognizes you as a Coordinators and approves a budget for you
- You stay a Coordinator until you want to step down
- There are no term limits:
 - One Issue: there are not enough committed people stepping up to replace coordinators
 - (Board perceives this same issue to find new good board members)
 - Alternative explanation – people are not stepping up because there is not a clear process – how do we suss this out?
 - Philosophy –
 - Do we want to keep the event changing by changing coordinators?
 - Are we creating a stagnant event (and community) by recognizing the same coordinators every year and giving them Reserve Tickets

What is the role of the Coordinators to PLAN THE EVENT?

Coordinators were clear on the roles of each department. There was tremendous consensus on the role of the board. And, again, there was amazing overlap between what the Board and the Coordinators thought was happening. The exceptions to this:

1. Who APPROVES each event budget?
 - a. The Coordinators knew they submitted department budgets and these were voted on at the level of the Planning Committee. The understanding is the PC sent the budget to the Board/Treasurer and were waiting for approval.
 - b. The Board/Treasurer understood that the PC approves the budget and sends to Treasurer to manage reimbursement.
2. Who APPROVES each artist grant and ensures the contract is signed.

- a. The Coordinators believed that they selected artists and sent recommendations to the Board Chair who approved and managed the contract process.
- b. The Board believed that the Arts Committee approved artists and managed the contract process.
- c. All agreed that the reimbursement process included the Board Chair post Event and that this could be streamlined.

What is the role of the BOARD to create the skeleton/space for the event?

General:

Insurance – Board Members are insured through D&O
File Tax Documents

Event Planning:

Coordination between Departments
Approve Event Budget
Ticket Waivers
Print Tickets
Umbrella View

Roles at Event

Liaise with Coordinators
Evictions
Radios
Board member on Property until last person leaves/Exodus (due to Insurance)

Post Event Activities

Reimbursements to Coordinators and Artists

What would it look like for PC/Coordinators to Collectively take FULL RESPONSIBILITY for Creating the Event?

Specific things were discussed that could facilitate current structure:

1. Insurance
 - a. Coordinators did not believe they were insured, did not want to make decisions, handle money, etc.
 - b. Recommendation: PDF review insurance and consider adding E&O, Event Insurance, etc.
 - c. PDF clarify what Insurance covers for Coordinators
2. Art Grant Reimbursements are post-event and process could be streamlined
 - a. Committee could review receipts pre or during Event and set-up for reimbursement
 - b. Clarify who/when Art Grant Contracts are currently managed
3. At Event, instead of looking for a Board Member to deal with an “emergency”, on-site decision, a quorum of 3 Coordinators could make the decision

Options:

- A. Combine 25 departments under 5-7
 - a. For example, COC is combining Rangers and Mash

- b. GOD is combining Greeters, Parking, Ticket and Gate
 - c. Don't Die is combining Fire, Medical and Sanctuary
- B. Add Logistics Department as Go-To Umbrella
 - a. Manage Spreadsheet with Deadlines pre and post event
 - b. Manage Expense Reimbursements in coordination with Board Treasurer
 - c. Manage Artist Contracts
 - d. Manage After-Burn Report collection
 - e. Ensure each department has documented SOP/Checklist
- C. Assign 5-7 Lead Coordinators to be Umbrella and Go-To

Solution: Option C - Assign 5-7 Lead Coordinators to be Umbrella and Go-To

Lead Coordinators were affectionately re-named TRDLs.

Follow-up conversation were many questions on how to operationalize, including:

- a. Who is eligible to be a TRDL
 - i. Current Coordinator?
 - ii. Previous Coordinator?
 - iii. Anyone in community?
 - iv. Specific Skills set?
 - v. How measure commitment?
- b. How will people be nominated?
- c. How will vote happen? Vote will be Planning Committee?
- d. How will community and current Coordinators be informed?

From Vikki's notes:

Just to clarify, the Vote was to buy land, here's that language from my notes/minutes:

Vote: To buy land to meet our vision, to host PDF events for a minimum of 2,500 people, and as a permanent space that opens us up to cool new ideas we haven't thought of yet.

Dove moved. Ben seconded. Dave thirded.

Vote: 5 yes, 1 opposed. No abstention. PASSED!

When we worked on the objective, your updated to create a short-term objective to **Identify land by March 2017** to take into account the testing, relationship building with community, lease-to-own options that might come with the land you find before the purchase happens.

Playa Del Fuego

2015



vision

Attract, inspire, and nurture a diverse community to celebrate and encourage a culture of play, experiments in the creation of art, and the collective sharing of ideas and skills.



mission

We build an interactive, experiential, sustainable environment that encourages a culture of play, artistic creativity and freedom of expression.



objectives

- By March 2017, identify land for purchase that meets PDF vision to host events for a minimum of 2,500 people and is a permanent space that opens us up to the cool new ideas we haven't thought of yet.
- Raise \$25,000 over the next 3 years and fund at least \$20,000 in Art and Community Grants each year.
- By Fall 2015, the Board will empower a trusted team to fully own production of 2 Burning Man regional events annually.
- By April 2014, PDF will implement Fund Accounting and the board will know what resources are available for Land, Grants, Event, Reserve and Operating.
- PDF will add 3 new Board Members each of the next 3 years to grow the board and respond to natural succession as current board members roll off.



strategies

- A Land Committee with board leadership will engage the community.
- A Grant Committee with board leadership will engage the community to clarify available grants, grantmaking process, outreach to expand artist applications, and implement resource development strategies.
- Board creates call for new Board members clarifying commitment, passion, responsibilities and skills needed.
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action plans

- Ben and Dove: Lead Land Committee, create and implement action plan, keep board and community informed. Create criteria, process for land search, and testing of land.
- Patty and Damian: Lead Grant Committee, create and implement action plan, and keep board and community informed. Include: fundraise, outreach, coordinate with Event Art Grant department and streamline approval and disbursement of funds.
- Dave: Talk with Bankers and Lawyers to inform Land process and funds.
- Lizard: Work with other Coordinators to identify a process to vote/nominate TRDLs.
- Patty and Dave: work with Accounting and Accountant to implement Fund Accounting and more regular and comprehensive reporting to board and community, and projections for budgeting.