Commons Photographers User Group
Board meeting notes – November 12, 2022

Attendees:

- Suyash
- Kwameghana
- Ailura
- Frank Schulenburg
- Shreya
- Wilson
- Irvin

Item #1: Online workshops

Shreya organized a successful workshop. More than 30% of the participants were women. Shreya documented the event on Commons with screenshots and recordings. Future events like this would be even more successful, if more participants had access to Adobe Lightroom licenses.

Item #2: Fiscal sponsorship

Frank proposes to have Ailura in her role as our chair to formally ask Wikimedia Österreich to provide fiscal sponsorship for our group and manage a bank account on our behalf. 6–0 for the proposal (1 board member joined later)

Item #3: Virtual meetings for members

We had another successful virtual meeting with four different presentations on August 27. Based on the feedback from that event we'll host the next meeting at a time that works better for people in Australia. We'll also reduce the number of presentations so that we'll have more time for discussions.

Item #4: Wikimedia Summit in Berlin

Suyash and Frank attended the Wikimedia Summit in Berlin (both in their other roles). It was disappointing that no member of our group was invited to represent the group in person. Given that we're the second biggest user group in the Wikimedia universe, and that the Wikimedia Foundation has already signaled interest in talking to us, we're hopeful that this situation will improve going forward.

Item #5: Open letter

The open letter has garnered more than 300 supporters so far. We hope that the Wikimedia Foundation will get in touch with our user group in order to coordinate next steps in the process to improve Wikimedia Commons. Individual board members talk about problems they've encountered when interacting with the site (e.g. when uploading images from their mobile phones; when contributors get blocked; or even when accessing Commons on their phone while using specific internet providers). They express support for the idea to completely overhaul Commons or start all over.

Ailura proposes to sign the letter on behalf of the user group and to encourage our members to sign the letter individually. 6–0 support (1 board member being absent during the vote)

Item #6: Board elections

Our term expires in December. Given that it takes a lot of time to get oriented, Suyash proposes to ask our members whether they're ok to extend our term by another year. Ailura will draft a letter to our members by the end of November. Suyash also suggests that we have at least one in-person meeting annually.

Kwameghana suggests approaching the Wikimedia Foundation and making them aware of the need for an in-person meeting.

Item #7: Volunteer Support Network

During the Wikimedia Summit, Suyash and Frank were approached by a representative of the Volunteer Support Network (VSN). They are interested in meeting with us so we can talk about ways they can support us. Suyash suggests meeting with them on Sunday, November 27, at 16:00 UTC. Suyash, Ailura, Kwameghana & Irvin volunteer to meet with them. Suyash will organize the meeting.

Item #8: Satellite Groups

In his role as an AffCom member Suyash reports that several people in Africa would like to create new photography-related user groups. The question is whether we're open to having them join our group as a satellite group. Wilson reports that the photographer's user group in Nigeria would be interested in an answer to this question; he makes an argument for people to organize in smaller, local groups. AffCom would like the Commons Photographers User Group to decide whether we allow satellite groups; AffCom is concerned about people creating new user groups that are too similar to other user groups.

Irvin proposes to draft regulations that clarify how people could create satellite groups; he's also personally interested in creating such a group in the Philippines. Wilson asks whether we should decide now or continue to observe the situation going forward. Ailura points out that there's currently a lot of change in how different parts of the Wikimedia universe work with each other, given that we're still in the middle of the Wikimedia Strategy Process. Suyash highlights that we should have control over how our trademark is being used. Irvin proposes that people become members of our user group first, so they can use our branding. Suyash proposes that the minimum requirement for using our logo is to inform the group.

Item #9: Wikimania 2023

The organizers of next year's Wikimania have approached us to (a) organize Commons-related events, and (b) document the event photographically. Frank has already created [a page on Commons](#) where people can add their ideas and volunteer. Suyash will ask our members in his group message to contribute to the page.

Item #10: Meeting the connectivity / equipment needs of our members

Some of our members encounter problems with internet connectivity. The board members discuss whether our user group should support those individuals who have problems with data packages, and/or photography equipment. With the discussion being inconclusive, we'll get back to this point later.

Item #11: Projects under the umbrella of our user group

Board members discuss under which conditions members can run their own projects under the umbrella of our user group. Frank proposes to have a subgroup of the board draft a policy that answers this question. Suyash and Wilson volunteered to draft such a policy by the end of November. Everybody is invited to help with this document.

Item #11: Roles and responsibilities

We're going to create descriptions on Commons that clarify what the different board roles are. In general, we should help each other in fulfilling our duties, in particular when we see gaps.

Item #12: Frequency of board meetings

The group decides to continue with quarterly meetings and to have special meetings whenever needed. We're also trying to organize one in-person meeting annually. Given that today's meeting takes almost three hours, Wilson volunteers to help with preparing more streamlined board meeting agendas going forward.

Item #13: Partnerships

Members are encouraged to bring possible partnership ideas to the board.

Item #14: Website and email addresses

Frank registered different domain names that could be used for running our own website. He is willing to transfer a fitting domain to whoever takes on the task of setting up a website and email accounts. Frank and Suyash are going to work on this.

Item #15: Global Commons Conference

Wikimedia staff member Ben Vershbow proposed at the Wiki Indaba 2022 conference to organize a Global Commons Conference. Frank volunteers to talk to Ben in order to gather more information.

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