Fiber & Fiber Products Committee (FiberCom)

Meeting Minutes
November 2, 2015

Meeting: Conference Call—November 2, 2015, 8:00 p.m. EST

Members: Stacy Heydt, Chair
Launda Soper, Secretary
Stacie Chavez (absent)
B-J Ellis
Ruth Fuqua
Chris Reachard

Board Liaison: Norm Johnson

Staff Representative: Andrea Harrington (absent)

1.0 Meeting Opening:

1.1 Approval of Minutes for October 6, 2015: Ruth made the motion to approve and Chris seconded, motion passed.

2.0 Old Business:

2.1 National Fleece Show Update:

Norm let us know that the proposal has not been finalized and is before the Board pending approval. It would appear, at this time, the best venue available was located in Arlington, Virginia. Several other venues were viewed but were found to be inadequate for our needs or too expensive. The selected venue is a hotel type facility with plenty of room for our classes, seminars, fiber display, etc. The tentative date is late July. Board is currently looking for a venue for the 2017 show as well. Norm will let us know as information becomes available.

2.2 Project #5 Resource Directory Update:

Norm informed us that the brochure is now available on the website. He will obtain the URL and provide us with the link and specific location. An E-blast is being prepared to announce the new brochure. Stacy will update the site on a quarterly basis the next update to be roughly late February to early March of 2016.

2.3 Project #1 Student Design Competition:

Ruth told us that the call for donations will go in tomorrow to Darby and Andrea. Will be looking for yarn, roving, cloth, etc., to create kits for the students. Will have the kits ready to go by the end of December or first of January. Rosehaven has offered to send in scraps of their cloth and their partner in their new mill has different colors of cloth available and will be sharing those as well. Chris has a surplus of yarn from his shop and will be sending that in and will also be collecting spin-off sample skeins to add to the collection.

2.4 Project #8 USDA Project Update:

Norm will check on any updates available from Darby.

2.5 Project #11 Fiber Slogan/Branding Alpaca:

Ruth shared with us her experience from several years ago when she was part of a committee tasked with finding a catch phrase/logo for alpaca. Apparently the committee was making progress when Alpaca United became an entity and shared the goal of branding alpaca and making it a household name, similar to cotton, and the AOBA effort was quashed. The subject arose of having graphic artists involved to assist in creating a logo once our slogan/tag line is created. We discussed having a contest on social media to obtain a logo since several alpaca ranchers are also graphic designers. The finalists could be announced and a vote taken for the best out of three, and perhaps a free one year membership to AOA for the winner, thereby avoiding costs involved in hiring a graphic designer.

Stacy told us of her conversations with some of the Suri Network members who had informed her of the reason they use the term “Suri” instead of alpaca. They felt, in years past, that the low grades of fiber and fiber products did not realistically represent the true character of Suri fiber so they “branded” their program as just “Suri” and have had great success. Stacy would like for us to be able to incorporate the programs and rework the image to overcome the negative connotations previously experienced. Ruth feels we need more data about all the aspects of alpaca fiber before we make any claims as to its characteristics and Stacy suggested that we obtain the CF information available on all other fibers that are generally compared to alpaca and have our facts confirmed.

Ruth also told us that the task force she had served on had decided it was important to include the Canadian alpaca ranchers when creating a logo/brand and the committee had thought “North American Alpaca” should somehow be incorporated. A brainstorming session ensued and several creative tag lines were suggested. We feel it is vital to emphasize the incredible and unique softness of alpaca. Other words to work with are: comfort, breathable, sustainable, agriculture, affordable, luxury, unique, practical, rare, happy alpacas, happy people, environmentally friendly, huggable fabric, snuggable fabric, the warm fuzzy feeling of alpaca, and cozy up to alpaca. Stacy feels we should set our parameters first and keep working on a brand/tag line.

2.6 Project #10 Fiber as a Business Brochure:

Stacy had a list of suggested headings including “It all begins at shearing,” “What happens after shearing,” “Selling Fiber Wholesale model,” “Retail Opportunities,” “Who buys raw fleeces and where to find them,” “Packaging models,” “Pricing models,” “The Value of Value Added Products,” “The Farm Store Model,” and “Art shows vs. Craft shows”…our goal being to create a comprehensive basic brochure that answers the basic question “Ok, I’ve got alpacas…now what do I do with my fiber?” We will continue to brainstorm headings and topics to get this project completed in a timely fashion.

2.7 Project #12 Adopting International Yarn Standards:

Stacy will be writing a rough draft of a proposal for the Board and sending it out to all of us for perusal.

3.0 New Business: No new business.

4.0 Meeting Wrap:

4.1 Next Meeting: Monday, December 7, 2015, 8:00 p.m. EST.

4.2 Adjournment: Motion to adjourn was made by Ruth, Seconded by B-J, motion passed and meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. EST.