



ICC Austin Spring 2016 General Membership Meeting Minutes

April 2nd, 2016

2:00 PM – 5:00 PM

University Presbyterian Church Youth Room (2nd Floor)

2203 San Antonio Street, Austin, TX 78705

Overall Theme: Meet Me Under the Twin Pines

Agenda:

Part 1 - Introduction and Reports

Welcome and Icebreaker –	<i>Tyler Rhodes, Vice-president</i>
Presentation of Ends Policy –	<i>Dawson Weehunt, President</i>
Large Group Discussion of Ends Policy –	<i>Giancarlo Besa, Facilitator</i>
ICC Austin Budget Presentation –	<i>Huyler Marsh, Treasurer</i>
Report from Staff –	<i>Billy Thogersen, Executive Director</i>

Part 2 - Board Perpetuation and Bylaws Referendum

The Importance of Board Perpetuation –	<i>Charlotte Carpenter, Secretary</i>
Nomination Committee Endorsements –	<i>Noah Vaughn, Avalon Board Rep</i>
Board Officer Candidate Introductions –	<i>Themselves</i>
Election Information –	<i>Billy Thogersen, Executive Director</i>

Part 3 – Member Engagement Conversations

- ICC Austin: The Drawbacks, The Benefits, and How We Can Do Better
- Small Group Discussions
- Large Group Discussions

Attendance trophy awarded and Meeting Surveys

Pizza and donuts

Spring 2016 GMM attendance list

Giancarlo Besa, Joshua McCauley, Jacob Garcia, Takahiro Shimada, Beth Aavang, Missy O’Sullivan, Lanz Porter, Tucker Whatley, Jacob Hakim, Carolyn Haskins, Marcelle Cohen, Julie Richards, Danila Reyes, Carly Dunn, Alex Aviles, Luca Masters, Tyler Rhodes, Dawson Weehunt, Noah Vaughn, Natalie Ruiz, Huyler Marsh, Mraie Sells, Travis Neely, Scott Delhommer, Michael Zhang, Jacob Bruner, Kevin Mejia, Cara McConnell, Brett Davis, Erin

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Dowd, Isabella de la Rosa, Mary Urban, Allen Ross, Dani Munoz, Daniel Hardesty Lewis, Michael Brown, Clay Downham, Roxanne Zech, Connor Healy, Philip Crandell, Nora Greene, Blake Silvertooth, Laura Marshall, Patricia O'Brien, Aimee Sixta, Marina Chazco, Valerie Roth, Sarah Zelich

Part 1

2:05 – Giancarlo welcomes everyone to the Spring 2016 GMM

2:07 – Tyler Rhodes introduces the icebreaker. The group will go around the circle saying “ha” in sequence and if a participant laughs or smiles then they lose and must join the group in the middle of the room.

2:16 – Presentation of the Ends Policy by Dawson Weehunt

Gives a high level of what expectations of GMM should be. Also, explains what the Ends Policy is and what it means for ICC Austin.

2:19 – Large Group Discussion of Ends Policy by Giancarlo Besa, Tyler Rhodes, and Dawson Weehunt.

Dawson and Tyler to moderate the large group discussion about the Ends Policy. Dawson explains to the group what they are look to talk about and rereads the Ends Policy. Before Tyler opens the floor to the people he gives a quick explanation about the last conversation the board had about the Ends Policy. Tyler goes on to asks What in the statement needs to be addressed? What in the statement seems most important? What in the statement seems like it could be changed?

Noah responds that ICC Austin could work more on diversity and inclusivity in the community.

Cara thinks that the Ends Policy is cool because it doesn't have guidelines on how to implement different solutions. Cara also asks for people to think about different solutions or ways to put into effect the ideas that people might have.

Roxanne of Seneca Falls ask what does “citizenship” in “fosters good citizenship” mean? Does it mean being a good citizen of ICC Austin, our city, or our state? Dawson responds that hopefully all of the above. There are many different communities throughout West Campus that have their own group of citizens within them. Dawson says that basically some of the main things to ask yourself is what you're going to take away from co-ops, have co-ops changed you, have they shown you something in your life, have you grown within the co-ops, and is that going to carry with you after you leave ICC Austin?

Tyler makes sure that all the members have a copy of the Ends Policy and for the members to ask themselves what in the statement is most import to you and what as an organization can ICC Austin do to accomplish those goals. This will help charge the large group discussion during this meeting.

Blake from Seneca Falls asks what ICC Austin is doing to encourage more inclusivity. Dawson responds by telling the members about the formation of the Committee for Combating Oppression, and why it was formed by the board this past year. The committee was formed based on multiple extensive conversations that came from the realization that ICC Austin wasn't as

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diverse as most would like it be. Dawson explains that changing the community of ICC Austin is a long and difficult process, and the board has to function with the best intent for the entire organization. With that being said they board does want to be able to have these types of conversations, but don't always have the time because of the logistics of running the co-op. The Committee for Combating Oppression allows the board to have these very important discussions and dedicate the time that is needed to the issues. Dawson says that each house can interoperate that part of the statement to best fit the community of the house. He goes on to give the example that House of Commons has done by having a film session which was able to start a dialog within the house that positively impacted the members.

Tyler explains to the members that a large part of what the board does is educate the board on what can be done to better the organization. GMM is an example of this by gathering a lot of information which allows the board to look at what is needed and how to achieve these goals. Tyler also clarifies that the Ends Policy does have parts of it that are vague that don't have isolated parts to it that clearly say what to do. Tyler gives the example of one of the things the board is currently looking at pertaining to the issue of diversity and inclusivity. West Campus itself is not necessarily affordable and the population of the people who live on West Campus are a group of people who can afford the rates, and that can have an effect on the inclusiveness of people who can't afford the rent rate.

Roxanne from Seneca Falls says that the week before GMM there was a student housing fair and was sad that ICC Austin was not there to promote our services. Billy responds that it costs thousands of dollars to participate in those kinds of functions.

Gaby from New Guild wants to respond to the question Blake asked about the issue of affordability. The ICC Austin's admissions is a first come first serve basis, and the board has been talking about different solutions that might involve changing the admissions to a more needs basis.

Giancarlo thanks those who spoke up about their concerns of the Ends Policy. He moves the conversation over to the Financial State Presentation that will be given by Huyler Marsh.

2:36 Financial State of ICC by Huyler Marsh

Huyler shares with the members that ICC Austin had an audit this past year where they had a group of third party accountants came and looked at the accounts of the organization. This is the second year in a row that ICC Austin has looked good. In the Ends Policy it is interpreted that the organization will have a little bit of profit even though we're a non-profit so that we can have funds in case of an emergency. In the past ICC Austin has never met the threshold of 10%. Huyler reminds the members that there has been posters and emails sent out stating that rent is going to go up soon and that is due to the increase of costs. The increased rates will be able to offset that difference, so that we can still have a cushion and make sure that the organization won't become bankrupt. ICC Austin is working its way back up to the 10% threshold and we've been able to implement a business plan to help with the future.

Giancarlo turns the floor over to Billy for the Report from Staff

2:39 Report from Staff by Billy Thogersen

Billy announces to the members that Avalon will be around for another year, and that it is a year-to-year lease. The Ruth Schulze project will be taking over a lot of the staff's time to make sure

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that it gets off the ground and running. The staff also realized that having just three full time staff members is not going to be efficient for ICC Austin. The staff will be thinking of different models that might include bringing another staff member onboard depending on the budget. Another thing that Billy has been working on is getting ICC Austin and College Houses working more closely together possibly on the board level. Also, staff has been working on trying to work with other staffs of co-ops nationally to work cooperatively with other co-ops.

Billy asks the members to share why they are at the meeting. Giancarlo says that he believes in ICC Austin and that co-ops can work together.

A member says that he wants to know what's going on in ICC Austin and thinks it great to see other members from different houses.

Gaby says that she is here to get to know people and hear what their opinions are. She wants to get closer to the community.

Billy explains that the reason he and staff in general is here to hear what members have to say. Billy moves the conversation to talk about some of the things that staff took from the Fall GMM. People wanted all the information from and about ICC Austin more consolidated, and one thing that has been a solution is a weekly ICC Austin email and there is now one ICC Austin Facebook page. There is a new member online training now available and staff is working on having other forms of training available for members.

Josh from Eden asks for more information about the Avalon house's lease whether the landlords have said if they are going to renew the lease next year or not. Billy replies that the landlords have not said any information and ICC Austin won't know until December 31st if they will renew the lease or not.

A member asks Billy what is the content of the new member online orientation. Ashleigh explains that it gives a general overview of ICC Austin and what the new member could expect on what a general member's responsibilities could be. A member asks Ashleigh if one on the slides on the new member orientation talks about oppression. Ashleigh says that currently there is no slide that talks about oppression, but that the Committee for Combating Oppression will talk about it at their next meeting.

Scott asks Billy if it is possible to hire members of ICC Austin to help the staff so that there won't be an issue with affordability and possibly offset costs. Billy explains that the staff is looking for someone who would have a strong background in property management that can do high level facilities skills. The staff members are hired to do things that members can't or won't do due to skill or experience. Billy reassure the members that this information will be presented to the board as these conversations continue.

2:50 Giancarlo turns the floor over to Noah from Avalon to present the Nominations Committee Endorsements.

2:51 Nominations Committee Endorsements by Noah the Avalon Rep

Noah talks about the importance of the board participation. It is good for there to be veteran board members to help the new members. In the past ICC Austin would elect all four officer positions for a full year term, and this year we've shifted it to be a staggered elections. This initial election

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will be for two full year term and two for a six month term. In the future they will still be yearlong terms for the officers.

Noah moves on to the endorsement of new officer nominees. Noah also explains that the board has changed another part of the election process, by having nominees run for an officer position and then the titles will be determined by themselves. The nominees will no longer run for specific roles. For nominees to be endorsed by the Nominations Committee the nominees must have a full year contract, attend an ECC meeting and a board meeting. This year not everyone was able to do all items, so there will be one person who is endorsed and three others who are recommended by the Nominations Committee.

The Nominees are below

- Huyler Marsh is the current ECC treasurer and if officially endorsed by the Nominations Committee.
- Josh McCauley
- Cara McConnell
- Scott Delhommer

Noah states that these are the people who the Nominations Committee thinks would be a good fit for the officer positions, but if a member feels that they would be a good fit or think someone who is a current member of ICC Austin then they can nominate themselves or someone. Tyler expands that the board made this change so that there would always be people with experience on the ECC, but that there will still be the titles of the officers. The titles will be determined later by themselves. Noah explains how the voting process will take place. Noah turns the conversation over to the candidates for their introductions.

2:58 Board Officer Candidate Introductions.

Huyler Marsh – Has been the current ECC treasurer has been on the board since summer of 2015 when he was the French House Rep. The last treasurer that was elected at the Fall GMM had complications and was not able to complete her term. The board had a conversation and urged Huyler to take on the role of treasurer because he's an accounting major. Huyler thinks he'd be a good candidate to continue with his current role. He is running for a year long term.

Luca from Seneca Falls asks if he can nominate someone after each candidate speaks because there is someone he'd like to nominate. Giancarlo agrees that the floor can open for nominations after each candidate is introduced.

Cara McConnell – Has been on the board for the past year as the Royal House rep and wants to be a board officer because she holds all the co-op principles close to her heart and wants to continue grow the newly formed Committee for Combating Oppression and see ICC Austin flourish for many years to come.

Scott Delhommer – Current treasurer of Helios and has been able to add to the savings of the house. Scott believes that this is not just from saving money but also a positive outcome from effective communication with people he works with. He's only been a member of ICC Austin since summer of 2015 and wants to see it grow and continue to be a positive place.

Josh McCauley – Moved into ICC Austin in June of 2015 has been on the board since the beginning. He enjoys being part of the board and seeing all the working that happens in the

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background. He wants to do more with ICC Austin. Josh wants to work on the affordable housing for more people to make ICC Austin more inclusive.

Noah opens the floor for people who would like to nominate themselves or would like to nominate others.

Luca from Seneca Falls nominates Roxanne Zech.

Roxanne introduces herself – She lives in Seneca Falls, has lived in Helios and is going to live in French House. She thinks that this gives her a different perspective on house different houses operate. She truly believes in the Committee for Combating Oppression, and thinks she can bring a unique view to the committee because of her studies that deal a lot with disability and the role that plays on inclusivity.

3:09 Elections Information by Noah (Charlotte could not attend GMM)

After all the candidates have given their own introduction Noah reiterates the voting process. Each member will be allowed two votes for each term and you can't vote for the same people for different terms.

A member ask for clarification on if a member can vote for the same person for different terms. Noah explains that there will be two different categories that have different nominees and you can vote two times for the person you'd like.

Dawson asks for the nominees to state if they'd like to run for a year or six months. All raise their hands to say they are willing to run for a year and for six months.

A member asks if there is any time for members to ask questions to the candidates. Giancarlo says there is time for the candidates to answer questions. The same member asked Scott if he sent an open letter to the members on ICC Austin and if he stands by those views or if they have changed. Scott says that his views have not changed and believed that it was important to have a contrasting view from the open letter that Dawson sent out. Scott asked is the member had questions about the letter specifically. The member just wanted to know if Scott felt the same way. Scott explains that he wrote the letter in response to another open letter based on the views of the majority of his house. There were 8-10 members of his house who signed the letter and he also received emails from other members agreeing with his statements. Scott believed the most important part of the letter was the opportunity of being able to send an open letter that expressed different views from other members of ICC Austin. Having the different opinions is good because it starts a debate and opens room for discussion. Even though there are different opinions doesn't mean it has to be a bad thing because there is one ultimate goal and different ways/ views to achieve those goals. The member responds that he has the concern that is Scott is on the board and there is an issue with a member who is being a misogynist or white supremacist that he would refrain from taking action because it would open up a dialog of different views. Scott responds that there is always a line between someone who has a different opinion and not someone who is rude. Scott believes that it's important to have different opinions but ones that are constructive. Ideas that aren't unconstructive are not helpful or useful.

Giancarlo reminds the members that this time to ask questions to the candidates not to start a conversation about other issues.

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A member asks Scott if he was on the ECC and a policy came up for approval that allowed anyone, with any view, any beliefs, and any way of thought versus another policy that would stick with the safety of ICC Austin which would he choose. Scott respond that is a complex question that a little vague. The member says he thinks it is a very specific questions. Scott replies that the term safety is a broad term. At the board meeting Scott attended one of the board members pointed out that the people who are in ICC Austin are people who we live with, share a space with, and coexist with and that can really make members want to be couscous. Scott says obviously he does not want to bring someone in who would harm other members but inhibiting free thought and speech is a separate issue.

Tyler interrupts and sates that this seems like this is becoming a conversation for a different time. Giancarlo agrees and asks the members who are on stack if any anyone has a question for the other candidates.

One member asks Roxanne what kind of things does she think could open the opportunity for the diversity of future ICC Austin members. Roxanne says that one of the main reasons she is at this meeting is to talk about the marketing of ICC Austin, and she was excited to hear Billy talk about the importance of marketing. Roxanne talks to a lot of different people and not very many people know much about the organization. Roxanne says that people aren't aware of the affordability, the role in the community, or the things ICC Austin teaches about social justice. She believes if ICC Austin can target the kinds of group we feel like we're lacking through a specific marketing plan or to the groups that aren't being represented.

3:30 Giancarlo calls for a stretch break since there are no more questions for the candidates.

3:40 Giancarlo calls the meeting back and hands the floor over to Dawson to introduce the Small groups discussion

3:41 ICC Austin: The Drawback, The Benefits, and How We Can Do Better by Dawson Weehunt

Dawson explains that the large group is going to break into small groups and have very broad conversations. The conversations will be about the drawbacks of ICC Austin, the benefits of ICC Austin, and what can ICC Austin do better. Anything that comes to mind for benefits and drawbacks.

Dawson breaks up the large group into the small groups and assign them to different board reps.

3:43 Small Group Discussion

Membership breaks up into six groups to discuss the questions/prompts

Questions/Prompts for the Small Group Discussion:

1. Drawbacks:

Think about the aspects of living at ICC Austin that have not been ideal, or have perhaps even been really bad. Some of these things may be inherent to group living, and some may be things that can be improved upon in the future. This is a good time to air out the dirty laundry.

Notes from groups

- *Rodents and pests*

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- *Some apathetic members in the houses*
- *Phallogentric legacy at FH*
- *Stalker/ foot traffic outside the houses and all over West Campus*
- *Different standards of cleaning throughout the members of the houses*
- *Lack of privacy*
- *People not respecting the quite hours that are set in place*
- *Some irreconcilable differences with in houses*
- *Passive aggressiveness behavior*
- *Disagreements on food; taking all members dietary restriction into consideration*
- *People not taking labor seriously*
- *Use of offensive or inappropriate language*
- *Senseless drama; personal conflicts becoming house conflicts*
- *Lack of accountability*
- *Poor communication*
- *Resistance to participate during house meetings*
- *Not being very equipped to handle mental health issues*

2. Benefits:

Think about all the benefits you get from living at ICC Austin. What is the single best thing about living in our cooperative? What do you get from living in an ICC Austin house that you would miss out on otherwise?

Notes from groups

- *Meeting new people and different types of people*
- *Stimulating social environment*
- *Wide variety of creativity*
- *Learning how to be respectful of others views and space*
- *Learning how to maintain houses*
- *Diversity in cuisine*
- *Member review process teaches conflict resolution*
- *Subsidizing each other lifestyles*
- *Having a voice and outlets to communicate*
- *Not having to be responsible for a whole house*
- *No landlord cooperation*
- *WE OWN IT*
- *Learning different responsibilities*
- *Dollar goes a lot farther when living in a co-op vs living on own*
- *Saving money*
- *Accessibility to campus and other activities*

3. How can ICC Austin be better?:

Keep in mind both the good and bad of what you just discussed. How can the negatives be mitigated and the positives made even better? Also think about *what isn't even happening at all right now*. In other words, imagine new possibilities for what ICC Austin could do to be a better cooperative. For ICC Austin to be relevant in the future, members right now need to think ahead.

Notes from groups:

- *An even more diverse community of people*

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- *Subsidizing double room rates*
- *Being even more affordable housing*
- *Repairs to kitchens*
- *Creation of a safe space within each house*
- *Trustee accountability to take care of situations ASAP*
- *Improve training*
- *Have a set procedure for houses to use during conflict resolutions*
- *Emphasize alternative options that involve talking to the office*
- *Don't isolate the people who are making complaints.*
- *Have more inter-co-op events*
- *Have an ICC Austin online forum?*
- *More education for conflict mediation*
- *Providing subsidized rent for low income students*
- *Encouraging more energy efficient habits*
- *Economic equality*
- *Enthusiasm to promote a positive co-op culture*
- *Promote inter-house events*
- *Berkeley co-op themed houses*
- *Better communication between houses*
- *Implement termination fees for those who leave in the middle of the semester*

4:02 Giancarlo asks members to form a big circle with everybody in it

4:04 Ashleigh facilitates and introduces the large-group discussion.

Ashleigh tells the groups that for the large group discussion we're going to go in order, the drawback, the benefits, and what we can do better.

Noah starts with his group. The drawbacks they came up with were lack of cleaning up after yourself especially in common area. A solution to this could be communication. The group also talked about affordable housing. ICC Austin may not be the cheapest but we are affordable for West Campus. It is hard to draw in people who need the affordable housing because there are cheaper options even if they are further away.

Gaby goes through the list that her group made together. Some drawbacks are the different standards of cleaning and how those standards could affect the houses cleanliness. There are some draw backs because of some lack of participation during the house meetings. Only a few people can negatively impact the house culture and how ICC Austin hasn't figured out how to handle mental health situations. Abuse of freedom in the houses could be a problem. There is still sexism in society and sometimes you can see it in the houses and the group wanted to figure out ways to combat that issues throughout the houses.

Dawson says his group talked about their house has a history of gender imbalance and trying to equal out the genders. Another issue people have is with the rats, roaches, and dirty dishes.

Cara talks about under the umbrella of what her group talked about the lack of fostering cooperative ideals and people being excited about it. Part of that is accountability. Some seniority issues when some people push their ideas because of seniority. ICC Austin is a co-op and people should feel free to speak up because everyone has just as much power as the next person. One

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issue that this group talked about was the lack of standing up to oppressive language being used in the houses. The issue of personal conflicts becoming a house conflict because the conflicts are not being mediated properly or within a reasonable time.

A member talks about her group talking about passive aggressive behavior instead of mediation skills being utilized. Another issue is loudness in the houses when people aren't respectful to the quiet hours or other people's schedules.

Ashleigh recaps the drawbacks with people having issues with labor, seniority, gender imbalance, rodents, passive aggressiveness, loudness. Ashleigh asks if anyone wants to add to those drawbacks.

Dawson said one of the things some people in his group had an issue with was the fact that there isn't a specific set of guidelines that explained how to deal with difficult situations. Sometime the process that is already in place doesn't happen as soon as it should to stop the conflict from getting worse. Roxanne gives the idea that there needs to be that commitment to the betterment of the house and organization. Cara says that one thing there is not enough information on has to do with sexual assault. The member won't get to a member review until they go through the proper procedure that is already set in guidelines.

A member asks if ICC Austin has a policy about sexual assault. Ashleigh says that there isn't a specific standalone policy about sexual assault, but in the member contract there is very specific information about sexual assault will be grounds for immediate termination. The member asks how that process works. Does someone get immediately terminated if another member comes to the staff and say they were sexually assaulted. Ashleigh hands that question over to Billy. Billy explains that the contract says if you commit or are accused of sexual assault then you are in breach of contract and are immediately terminated. The threshold for this is for a member to come in and fill out a paper, an affidavit, signing that they are willing to sign. This is the same procedure that would be equivalent to filing out a police report. Erin asks if it matters if the victim is an ICC Austin member or not. Billy says that it actually doesn't matter.

Ashleigh directs the conversation over to the benefits of living in ICC Austin. She asks the floor to popcorn the ideas they've come up with.

Scott says that his favorite aspect is the community and being able to live with people who he actually likes. Scott lived alone before he moved to ICC Austin and thought he was going to go crazy and it's amazing to be able to walk into a room and being to talk to people.

Giancarlo loves the fact that he's been able to observe people come into the houses and grow exponentially. That is a great benefit for the members because it of the diversity in views, beliefs, and opinions will truly help people grow. He personally feels like he was a very different person from when he first moves in. The experiences he has gone through has allowed him to see different views from other and be able to communicate effectively.

Josh exclaims that the ICC Austin has labor hours. Not all members have to cook, clean, grocery shop, and you can rely on other so that the house can work together as a whole.

Valeria is from out of state and didn't know anyone when she moved to Texas, and she is mostly an introvert who likes to keep to herself. The experience of living in ICC Austin has made her come out of her shell and force her to change her comfort zone for the better.

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Ashleigh asks the floor what can ICC Austin improve on?

A member thinks that is very important to increase diversity and rely a little more on marketing or ambassadorship. There are simple solutions that can be done but she thinks it's something that needs to be tasked to the board or a committee to work on.

Giancarlo says that a few GMM ago there was a great idea that came up which is to see more inter-house activities that could have mini workshops to have discussions and information that wants to be discussed. These sessions could be open to more than ICC Austin and includes West Campus or other universities in the city.

A member wonders if there is a way for other departments or fairs that ICC Austin use to get more diverse applicants. The international office does give students ICC Austin's information because of the proximity, the member wasn't sure how to get other places involved with speaking about ICC Austin.

Erin said that one thing they talked about in her group was communication because there isn't a lot of room for conflicts to be talked about. To her it seems that there isn't much middle ground between no resolution versus the entire house being very angry which makes it difficult to find common ground for a resolution.

Ashleigh wraps up the conversation by highlighting some of the topics people brought up. Having ambassador, more outreach, marketing, connecting to the housing fair, connecting to the financial aid office, reaching out to other groups that might be serving low income students, inter-house activities. It seems that there is a big desire to increase knowledge of mental health and conflict mediation, as well as communication between the houses and within the houses themselves.

4:40 Giancarlo officially wraps up the meeting and announces the winner of the attendance trophy – Seneca wins

4:43 Group picture with T-shirts

5:00 Pizza and donuts