Minutes
Cherry Blossom, Inc. Race Committee
October 24, 2011 Meeting
Westin City Center Hotel
Washington, DC

The first meeting for the 2012 race began at 7 pm following dinner and distribution of random prizes. A New Balance representative was available to size footwear before the meeting. A packet of information at each seat replaced material distributed with last year’s notebook: a race weekend timeline, proposed budget, course maps and site plans, and a list of committee members with contact information. Please contact Becky Lambros if you did not receive a copy. Also contact her with any changes to the timeline.

The following committee members were present: Phil Stewart, Becky Lambros, Denny Steinauer, Irv Newman, Susan Green, Alex White, Chan Robbins, George Banker, Rick Freedman, Kathy Freedman, George Tarrico, Polly Porter, Betty Wang, Peter Verasin, Steve Broyles, April Jones, Eve Mills, Ken Donovan, Eric Sinkeldam, Nancy Betress, Bruce Lung, Drew Woodrich (minutes), Muffet Chatterton, Arlene Solbeck, Steve Solbeck, Susan Debad, Jean Arthur, Michelle Carter, Leslie Williams, Marsha Way, Patti Lieblich, Chris Tatreau, Jill Washecka, Bill Orr, Phil Pommerening, Rob Wolfe, Candice Mothersille, Timi Rogers, and Charles Walker.

Phil Stewart told an anecdote about a long backup of runners waiting to cross the finish line at the 1978 Cherry Blossom race. The race has come a long way since then.

New member introductions were made: Susan Debad, treasurer designate, who will work with Irv; Polly Porter, medical coordinator (with Betty Wang); and Jill Washecka, elite athletes (with Bill Orr). A quick introduction by name was made by everyone in the room.

Phil Stewart opened the annual meeting of the corporation for Cherry Blossom Inc, a non-profit 501(c) corporation, and member of the RRCA. Every two years, elections are also held to approve a Board of Directors and Officers.

The following committee members have resigned from the board: Greg Dalrymple, Lea Gallardo, Nina Trocky, and Mark Wheatley.

All committee members who regularly attend Cherry Blossom meetings are eligible to be nominated to the board. Current board members are Jean Arthur, George Banker, Anna Berdaahl, Nancy Betress, Michelle Carter, Muffet Chatterton, Ken Donovan, Steve Esmacher, Tom Filippone, Kathy Freedman, Becky Lambros, Bruce Lung, Frank McNally, Candice Mothersille, Irv Newman, Peggy Posey, Chan Robbins, Arlene Solbeck, Steve Solbeck, Dennis Steinauer, and Phil Stewart.

The following new board members were proposed: George Tarrico, Betty Wang, and Marsha Way. By motion unanimously adopted, George Tarrico, Betty Wang, and Marsha Way were elected to the Board of Directors.
Next, there was an election of officers for the Executive Committee (all incumbents), and they were unanimously approved by voice vote: Dennis Steinauer, President; Anna Berdahl, Vice President; Becky Lambros, Secretary; Irv Newman, Treasurer; and Phil Stewart, Event Director.

Phil Stewart presented the Management Policies Manual, which is available online at the Cherry Blossom administrative site. A motion was made and the Policies Manual was unanimously adopted. (Becky Lambros passed around a sheet to each board member for signature. Copies will be kept on file by Phil Stewart.)

A motion was made to approve, which was adopted unanimously, to continue accounting services provided by the firm of Kaiser Scherer & Schlegel. A motion was made to approve, and passed, to designate those able to sign checks: Phil Stewart, event director; Becky Lambros, deputy director; Irv Newman, treasurer; and Susan Debad, treasurer designate.

The meeting continued on general topics for the 2012 Cherry Blossom Ten Mile, which will celebrate its gala 40th running in 2012. There will be an expanded program of running clinics. The race will reach out to key past winners, including Greg Meyer (men’s American 10 mile record 46:13, 1983) and Colleen DeReuck (women’s course record-holder 51:16, 1998). Gar Williams, who initiated the event in 1973 for the YMCA, will also be invited.

Special mugs (“I would have won this race in 1973!”) will be awarded to all males who finish the race in less than 51:22, the 1973 winning men’s time, and to all female finishers faster than 1:11:19, the 1973 winning women’s time. All entrants will be offered a commemorative race poster at the health and fitness expo; Muffet Chatterton and Arlene Solbeck will coordinate distribution.

An update on sponsors for 2012: the credit unions have signed a five year contract that continues through 2016. The credit unions enjoy fundraising for Children’s Miracle Network (CMN), and have become one of the top CMN contributors. They are currently working on a sister race in Sacramento, CA, the Credit Union SACTOWN Ten Miler, to be held on April 1, 2012. The credit unions want to eventually expand to a race series across the country.

Other returning sponsors include Potomac River Running, Navy Federal Credit Union, New Balance, and GatorAde. Kaiser Permanente will not be returning; they had sought title sponsorship.

Committee members should wear the New Balance warm-ups received in 2011 for next year’s race. Contact the Cherry Blossom office if you need a replacement. The new garment for 2012 will be a hooded sweatshirt.

The “Fall Kickoff and T-shirt Debut” reception will be held Friday, November 18 at the Westin City Center hotel. Becky Lambros, Alex White, Keira Carstrom of Potomac River Running, and the New Balance representative (Kevin McHale) have been planning the event. 38,000 invitations will be sent via e-mail, and 300 RSVPs will be accepted. Keira will DJ; beer and wine with appetizers will be served; and there will be a fashion t-shirt show. Children’s Miracle Network, New Balance, Potomac River Running, and
Teens Run DC will have booths. Two winners of the Social Runner Contest will be announced; Becky wants to promote online engagement of runners via social media (Facebook, Twitter) to generate buzz about the race.

At the reception, Phil Stewart will unveil the searchable database of results from all 39 Cherry Blossom races, which includes more than 200,000 finishers. The database will verify streaker status of participants: runners who have completed ten or more races are eligible for a guaranteed entry in 2012.

Entry into the 2012 race will be conducted by lottery again. The registration Web site will open for runners with volunteer codes after Thanksgiving. The online lottery will be open Thursday, December 1 through Friday, December 9. The lottery results will be posted online on December 13 by 10 am. Charity entries will be available through the credit unions for a $500 fundraising commitment; in 2011, charity entries raised $160,000.

Upgrade shirts and finisher medals will be available for purchase. The Westin Hotel will be the headquarters hotel for three years. Phil said the Grand Hyatt had priced out Cherry Blossom; their room rates offered to runners were $229 versus $179 at the Westin.

The health and fitness expo will be expanded to two days in 2012. Many runners were caught in lines outside the National Building Museum (NBM) last year, during a hail and rain storm. More than half of the participants (59%) who responded to a 2011 post-race survey indicated they would attend packet pickup on Friday if available; a two day expo should reduce crowd size by half each day.

The expo set up will start on Thursday afternoon at 3 pm, and continue Friday morning. The expo will open between noon and 1 pm, and close at 7:30 pm Friday. Saturday’s expo will open at 9 am and close at 5 pm; Saturday hours are 30 minutes earlier than in 2011. The Friday committee meeting will tentatively be held at the NBM.

New Balance will expand its presence at the expo; the standard model for a shoe company sponsoring a race is to showcase its brand at the expo. (Examples would be Brooks at Marine Corps Marathon, Asics at ING New York City Marathon, or adidas at Boston Marathon.) New Balance will handle all Cherry Blossom apparel sales. Mugs, patches, and other non-apparel items will be arranged by Muffet Chatterton and Arlene Solbeck.

There will be no race day packet pickup; Army Ten Miler and Marine Corps Marathon eliminated their race day packet pickup several years ago. The logistics required for moving material from NBM to the race site was considerable, and fewer runners have been picking up their bibs on race day. Registrants will have an option to have their packet mailed for a charge of $40, in case of a late arriving flight for example. Phil wants to minimize packet mailing and encourage expo attendance.

At the race day staging area, the bag check tent will move to the spot vacated by the packet pickup tent. (Construction at the old location necessitates the move.) The race course will be the same as in 2011. Memorial Bridge construction will start after the 2012 race has concluded.
There has been a first meeting with the National Park Service. 15th Street will close at 2 am and reopen at 11:30 am on race day. Other roads will reopen by 10:30 am; this has been accomplished in previous years. Phil noted that the last runner finishes at 10:18 am; Chris Tatreau and his amazing staff are able to get 15th Street opened quickly after the race.

Set up for the race at Washington Monument grounds (WMG) starts on Thursday morning. Mats will be placed on Thursday, and tents will go up on Friday. Saturday will be a catch up day.

There will be an advance start for the women. The race will work to get more female seeded runners to participate. Any woman who has run 63:00 or faster will automatically be put into the advance start, and she can then opt out.

There will again be live video streaming of the race, and jumbotrons will be located at the WMG. The race will begin ten minutes earlier, with the advance start for women at 7:20 am; as in 2011, the last of six waves will start at 8:00 am. The time allowed between waves will be increased, especially for the last waves, to spread runners out during the early miles. (Crowding at the expo and on the course were two of the biggest criticisms received from last year’s runners.)

Three music groups will perform along the course at Hains Point to reduce isolation experienced by runners. The youth run will be the same as in 2011. There will be no presentation of the Credit Union check at the awards stage.

The greening effort of the race in 2011 was rewarded with a silver certificate from the Council for Responsible Sports. It will be renewed in 2013, and the race will strive for a gold certificate at that time. Greening initiatives will continue, and this year’s event will serve as a trial run for gold.

Becky Lambros spoke on the virtual goody bags, which will be offered again. Runners can access the online site both before and after the race. If anyone has leads on interested merchants, please contact Becky. Vendors are given first priority.

The RunPix site was viewed by 80% of the runners, and they spent an average of 4 minutes each online. Becky continues to work on committee job descriptions, which serve as a resource available to new committee members; information provided includes sample volunteer letters.

Irv Newman spoke briefly on the budget; a detailed budget and summary text was included in the 2012 race information packet. The estimated 2012 race budget total is $1.38 million. A modest entry fee increase of $1 is necessary (entry fee $38). There is money for at least one overseas race.

There is a payment to Metro for early opening on race day. The carbon offset consists of donations from runners who use personal vehicles to get to the race; these funds go to environmental initiatives. The race Web site includes information on NativeEnergy and a project at the Greensburg Wind Farm in Kansas. Becky said she visited one such project at a dairy farm, which produces biofuel out of manure.
Phil Stewart encouraged everyone to scan the budget and summary. He responded to Jean Arthur’s question that pods will not be used to store water on the course. There will be three U.S. Park Police officers providing security at WMG starting Thursday, March 29. The budget was proposed for approval, and accepted by voice vote.

Phil Stewart called for questions or remarks from committee members. Betty Wang said that without Kaiser Permanente, the race needs a medical presence on the infield; Michelle Carter agreed with a proposal to place a medical tent near the information and equipment tents in the northeast corner of the WMG.

Phil Stewart gave Chris Tatreau a 65th birthday present as everyone sang “Happy Birthday;” the gift was an bathrobe in the color of dill green, embroidered with the race logo.

The meeting concluded at 8:25 pm. The next meeting will be Monday, February 13, 2012 at the Hyatt Regency in Bethesda.

Respectfully submitted,

Drew Woodrich for
Capital Running Company, Race Administrator