

# SWPACC Community Meeting Notes

A community meeting of Southwestern Pennsylvania Climbers Coalition (SWPACC) was held on Wednesday, April 22, 2020 at 6:00pm Eastern Daylight Time via Zoom Meeting.

## COVID-19

SWPACC recommends that local climbers continue to follow information presented by national organizations such as the Access Fund, American Alpine Club, CDC, as well as local and state ordinances.

## SWPACC History

A brief oral history of the formation and history of SWPACC was provided by current board members. The group initially formed late in 2014, soon after which the group mobilized the SWPA climbing community to respond to changes to State Gamelands rules which would have greatly restricted climbers' access to State Game Lands. The initial team consisted of prominent leaders within the SWPA climbing community, assembled by existing relationships and word of mouth. From there, SWPACC began meeting to discuss additional items such as, access issues, area development, information dissemination, and fundraising. Gradually, SWPACC evolved into a more complex organization with expanded needs and a broader scope. Due to this evolution, it is now time to restructure the organization in order to become more effective and more broadly representative of the climbing community.

Note: ASCEND is not affiliated with SWPACC, though ASCEND assists the organization and is a close partner. Additionally, some board members are also employees of ASCEND. This relationship formed organically over time, but in light of the optics and a desire to better include other climbing gyms and other businesses, an effort will be made to draw a clearer line between the organizations.

## Board

SWPACC bylaws are currently under review with the assistance of a non-profit specialized legal professional, and will be rewritten to reflect the structural modernization of the organization. A selection of current board members will go up for reelection in late 2020, to begin serving in 2021. Specific seats and board members are still being determined. The goal is to encourage a more diverse board to regularly suit the needs of an ever-changing community. More on this topic was planned to be presented at this meeting, but the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted that progress. This aspect is central to the current board's immediate efforts and will be presented to the public as soon as possible.

## Committees

SWPACC wishes to become more effective and extend its reach. Acknowledging that this is a volunteer organization and that not all board members wish to participate in the day-to-day operations of the organization, committees or working groups will be formed. Ultimately, this is largely how the community will get involved with the organization. Tonight, three broad committee groups formed to start this process:

1. Fundraising/Grant Writing
2. Membership/Marketing
3. Crag Stewardship

As we move forward, we expect that additional areas will show themselves to deserve specific attention and work, and will warrant the formation of additional committees. We expect and welcome an on-going discussion within our community to identify those areas and to add committees as is appropriate. For example, there was a good discussion regarding expanding SWPACC's mission to include a social component to incorporate affinity groups, outreach programs, and regular member outings. Up until this point, SWPACC has largely served as an administrative body, but recognizes and the community's desires to move in this direction.

## Community Meetings

This meeting serves as the first official community meeting, which was supposed to occur in person and facilitate social connectivity. We're hopeful that this can happen later this year, but regardless, community meetings, where anyone in the community is welcome to join, will become a more regular occurrence.

## Climb Pittsburgh

*Climb Pittsburgh* was independently formed and is not currently officially a part of SWPACC, notwithstanding the participation of SWPACC board members in the initiative. At the last SWPACC board meeting, it was agreed that SWPACC believes in and supports *Climb Pittsburgh* and that we, as an organization, would continue the conversation to determine the best ways to take tangible action to support the initiative. It is worth noting that given the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic, *Climb Pittsburgh* has decided, for the time being, to NOT be reaching back to the city or to be putting any kind of pressure on our city officials to address the initiative at this time. The expectation is that as soon as it feels prudent to do so, *Climb Pittsburgh* will continue moving forward.

## Future Action

We'd love for interested people to visit [swpacc.org](http://swpacc.org) and complete the [Volunteer Form](#) and join the [Volunteer Google Group](#), which will assist in the formation of the committees and help disseminate information to the right people.