

FRIENDS OF SPY POND PARK ANNUAL MEETING

JANUARY 4, 2009

In attendance: Eric Baatz, Eva Balazs, Eric Berger, Doris Birmingham, Liz Blumenthal, Bobby Bongiorno, Gerda Brown, Jamie Ciocco, Sarah Conn, Karen Grossman, Elizabeth Karpati, Karen Mathiasen, Gail McCormick, Fred Moses, Ilse Oliveira, DP Powell, Ellen Robertson, Jackie Slivko, Joe Snodgrass; Leslie Mayer.

The **minutes** of the previous meeting were accepted.

Leslie Mayer, Chair of the Park & Recreation Commission, gave a thorough overview of the nature and work of the commission:

- Park & Rec consists of five volunteer members appointed by the Town Manager and approved by the Selectmen. It oversees parks, playgrounds, and playing fields (except those on school property). It sets policies, issues permits for special events, and develops the capital budget. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m. at the Senior Center, and are open to the public.
- The commission works primarily with the Director of Recreation, Joe Connelly. It has liaison with field user groups and is represented on the Open Space Committee by Leslie.
- Recreation programs are run by an enterprise fund so that the operations are self-sustaining (the Town pays for improvements). Playing fields are maintained with the help of user fees. There are no fees for parks, so there is little money (and staff) for maintenance. Routine maintenance by DPW is limited to emptying trash barrels, mowing, removal of dead branches, and repair of equipment.
- Park & Rec develops a 10-year capital plan; Town Meeting has to vote the money for each project, such as the Spy Pond Park renovation. Projects are planned with public input via hearings and working with groups like FSPP. Some projects also need Conservation Commission approval.
- Park & Rec organized the “Friends of Parks,” an umbrella group for representatives of numerous groups concerned with parks and playgrounds, for advocacy and sharing ideas. They have published a fundraising brochure.
- Current Park & Rec activities include considering installing comfort facilities at parks, and working on the “Green Dog” program to establish specified off-leash hours for dogs at parks. A proposal for a one-year pilot program will go before Town Meeting this year. Park & Rec is also trying to find a way to fund “in-between” projects that go beyond routine maintenance but don’t qualify as a capital project, such as the need to replace the playground surface at Spy Pond Park with something that doesn’t attract sand wasps.

Treasurer’s Report:

- Eric Baatz submitted a month-by-month report for 2008.
- Expenses are down more than \$400 compared to 2007 because volunteer members handled the newsletter mailings instead of paying the printer to do it.
- Fred Moses has built and improved our website for free.
- We voted last year to donate \$2,500 for park maintenance but that money has not been used yet.

Accomplishments (not in order of importance):

- Another successful participation in Town Day.
- Four issues of the newsletter (Eric Berger and Jamie Ciocco); many compliments received. Future newsletters will be e-mailed only.
- Library display in the spring (Ellen, Elizabeth).
- Eric Baatz's work as treasurer.
- Fred Moses' work on the website; posting newsletters and minutes.
- Support of Anne Ellinger's project to get a Spy Pond mural painted on the back of her garage.
- Participation in the Friends of Parks (Karen).
- Bulletin board erected in playground (needs some finishing touches).
- Park maintenance:
 - Walk-through with Kate Thompson to identify good plants vs. weeds to be pulled.
 - Several weeding projects, led by Uta Low and Ilse.
 - Mulching (spreading loads of mulch supplied by DPW), led by Agnes O'Donnell.
 - Pruning, led by Bill Eykamp and assisted by some Boy Scouts.
 - Cleanups, led by Eric Berger.
 - Karen met with Mike Rademacher, Town Engineer, on problems with path maintenance and with the Conservation Commission about the muddy beach at Linwood.
 - We got the Town to find and fix an irrigation leak that caused a permanent puddle.
 - We have some tools, bought with the first NEGEF grant, in Anne Ellinger's garage.
- Outreach:
 - Uta made phone calls, Karen sent e-mails, e.g. to recruit people to weed.
 - FSPP tent in park on canoe/kayak rental days.
 - T-shirt sales of \$244.
- Betsy Leondar-Wright and others moved "Marilyn" the coyote until she was vandalized.

Goals for 2009 (not in order of importance):

- Complete the bulletin board.
- Additional fund raising / grant writing (NEGEF).
- Continue support for mural project.
- Establish file of back newsletters (see below); continue to keep it up to date.
- Continue park maintenance (weeding, pruning, cleanups, etc.), monthly in season.
- Use updated software for database management.
- Three or four issues of newsletter.
- Support effort to change playground surface.
- Continue liaison with Town Departments; with police to deter vandals; with Friends of Parks.
- Continue recruitment of members and for leadership positions.
- Participation in Town Day (Doris and Ilse will coordinate).
- Enhancement of database of members.
- Continue outreach efforts; use canoe/kayak days if any.
- Purchase more tools as needed (Doris).
- Reserve Library display space for 2010 (Ellen).
- Dues/membership/donation solicitation.
- Investigate cleaning of filtration system.
- Park activities.

Officers Elected for 2009:

President	Karen L. Grossman
General Vice-President	→ <i>Still Needed</i> ←
Treasurer	Eric Baatz
Recording Secretary	Elizabeth Karpati
Corresponding Secretary	Doris Birmingham
VP for Communication/Newsletter Editors	Eric Berger & Jamie Ciocco
Co-Chairs for Beautification	Ilse Oliviera & Uta Marion Low
Website Chair	Fred Moses
Co-Chairs for Outreach/Park Events	Anne Ellinger & Betsy Leondar-Wright
Town Day Coordinator	Doris Birmingham
Grant Writer	Gail McCormick

NEXT MEETING (tentatively): February 1, 2009, 7 p.m., 32 Hamilton Road #402, Arlington

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Karpati

P.S. Newsletter File, or, Calling All Packrats:

We have the issues listed below. We are looking for a second copy of the starred issues, and for any issues not listed. If you have anything to add to our file (or, for missing issues, at least lend it for copying), please contact Elizabeth Karpati (781-643-4172 or ekarpati@juno.com).

Thanks!

2000	*February, May, *Summer	2005	*Spring, Fall
2001	*February	2006	January, April, Fall
2002	*Winter, Spring, *Fall	2007	February, Summer, Fall
2003	*Winter (2002-3), *Summer, *Fall	2008	Winter (2007-8), Spring, Summer, Fall
2004	*Spring, *Fall		