

In attendance: Eric Baatz, John Bean, Eric Berger, Frances Cameron, Jamie Ciocco, Sarah Conn, Anne Ellinger, Bill Eykamp, Karen Grossman, Elizabeth Karpati, Betsy Leondar-Wright, Gail Leondar-Wright, Gail McCormick, Fred Moses, Gail Neff, Tomi Ann Nolan, Riva Poor, DP Powell, Eileen Power, Ellen Robertson, John Worden, Patricia Worden.

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

Treasurer's Report 2007: Eric Baatz distributed a month-by-month report. Highlights:

- The bank account rose from \$7825.66 at the end of 2006 to \$8463.24 at the end of 2007, with income of \$4,147.00 and expenses of \$3509.42. Major changes compared to 2006:
 - Just over \$1000 spent on new T-shirts (but these will produce income as they are sold).
 - An almost equal amount saved by having newsletters mailed by volunteers instead of the printer.
 - No bulb plantings and lower accountant fees (in 2006 we had to catch up on some financial reports owed to the state).
- The CD earned \$86.71 interest and grew from \$1,858.88 to \$1,945.29
- Dues-paying membership stands at 199, down a bit from a previous high of just over 200.

Guest speaker: John Bean, DPW Director since April 2007.

- Mr. Bean spoke briefly about his four guiding principles and answered questions.
- The four principles are: (1) Customer service (within the limits of available resources), (2) Cost effectiveness, (3) Fairness (no political favors), and (4) Safety.
- He is currently studying all divisions of his department for cost effectiveness.
- Maintaining the necessary infrastructure of the Town, such as water and sewers and keeping the roads open, is a top priority, but sustainability is an important consideration.
- Funding for park maintenance is an ongoing issue. Some money was left over from the capital budget for the renovations and transferred to the operating budget, but that has been used up for lawn maintenance. Volunteers did weeding and pruning, but they can't be relied upon for everything.
- FSPP members emphasized that it is not cost-effective to spend money on renovations and then let them deteriorate. Mr. Bean invited representatives from FSPP to meet with him to discuss this issue further.

Accomplishments 2007 (not in order of importance):

- Bulletin board installed at south end of playground, led by Bill Eykamp and Andrew Fischer (shingling needs completion, not repair as stated in previous minutes).
- Plastic coyote to scare off geese bought by Ellen and Betsy, installed along shoreline and moved periodically by four volunteers. There seemed to be fewer geese this year than in the past.
- Weeding, organized by Sarah: About four working sessions with several volunteers each time; removed a lot of invasives and weeds but did not get to all areas. More work to be done in spring.
- Pruning, organized by Bill: Several sessions removed or pruned back excess saplings. Karen and Adrienne Landry got the Boy Scouts from Troop 302 to help; they are willing to do it again this year.
- Educational workshops: Kate Thompson of CRJ:A and Carol R. Johnson herself met with the weeders to show them what to pull and what to leave. Kate provided large charts of the planting plan. Elizabeth used these to make smaller charts for use in the field; these still need to be completed to show what's really there (some plants turned up in different beds from what is shown on the plan).
- Website: Fred put a lot of work into this. The membership database is now on the Web. It can be updated by those who have the password. It can be used to send e-mails to all members and to produce mailing labels and lists by interest. Fred wants to add enhancements so that members can pay dues and update their information on-line.
- Outreach: Ellen made many phone calls to remind members about meetings, needs help making calls.
- Database updating to correct obsolete phone numbers etc. and add missing information like e-mail addresses made limited progress.

- Park activities, organized by Anne: Three events on the last Saturday of June, July, August with activities mainly for kids such as face painting and a scavenger hunt. The first one was well attended, but the second one had to be moved to Sunday because of rain and the third was on a very hot, muggy day, so that fewer people came to those. Still, probably about 100 people were made aware of FSPP and a few joined.
- Spy Pond Splash in September was part of Arlington's 200th anniversary celebration, organized by Vision 2020 with the cooperation of FSPP (Anne). We had a booth there. The Splash was a big success, with hundreds enjoying themselves in perfect weather. The canoe rides were so popular that canoe rentals on several occasions next summer will probably be arranged by the Town..
- T-shirt sales yielded \$299. Eric now has the supply of T-shirts.
- The Town Day booth (Kathy Modigliani) was successful again, with the usual activities: T-shirt sales, Betsy's puzzles for kids, and signing up new members.
- Friends of Parks is an initiative of Joe Connelly, Park & Rec Director, bringing together people from various "Friends of..." groups to plan for fund-raising for parks, playing fields, and other open spaces. Karen and Elizabeth represented FSPP.
- Newsletter: John Gearin put out three issues but will resign after the next newsletter.
- Publicity for the park activities (information to the Arlington Advocate) was handled by Agnes O'Donnell.
- There was no Library display this year: each group can do a display only every other year.
- Liaison with Vision 2020 is handled by Elizabeth.
- The listing of accomplishments ended with applause for Karen for her leadership.

Goals for 2008 (also not in order of importance):

- Complete the bulletin board in the playground.
- Move Marilyn the coyote weekly.
- Weed and mulch in spring (mulch before weeds grow, or weed and then mulch).
- Prune.
- Maintain the path.
- Website: enable on-line dues payment and donations.
- Enhance database content.
- Newsletter available on website – make paper copies optional (ask on membership form).
- Have a spring and summer presence in the park, coordinated with canoe rental days.
- Library display
- Town Day booth
- More T-shirt sales
- Liaison with Friends of Parks for fund-raising
- Get park maintenance funded: liaison with Town, apply for grants for 2009
- Make a list of where our materials and equipment are kept.
- Newsletter – 3 or 4 issues
- Get more people involved in leadership and committees

Election of Officers:

- President: Karen Grossman (looking for a co-president).
- General Vice-President: open
- Treasurer: Eric Baatz
- Recording Secretary: Elizabeth Karpati
- VP for Communications (Newsletter): Eric Boyer to collect content, Jamie Ciocco to edit.
- Publicity and Outreach chair: Eric Boyer
- Beautification chair: Open; Anne willing to chair an activity but not to be overall chair.