

FRIENDS OF SPY POND PARK ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 10, 2010

In attendance: Eric Baatz, Eric Berger, George Berberian, Doris Birmingham, Liz Blumenthal, Sarah Conn, Bill Eykamp, Karen Grossman, Carol R. Johnson, Elizabeth Karpati, Jacki Katzman, Betsy Leondar-Wright, Gail Leondar-Wright, Gail McCormick, Fred Moses, Ellen Robertson, Myra Schwartz, Lally Stowell, Cynthia Thompson, Kate Thompson, Gregory Watt.

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

Speaker: Carol R. Johnson, who designed the renovation of Spy Pond Park.

- Carol noted that this site had more diversity and ecological complexity, and also more neighborhood support, than any other historic site she had worked on.
- For the beds where plantings are now skimpy she suggested two possible causes: too much shade and not enough soil. Add loam and compost where needed, evaluate the trees and trim back some of the branches that cast too much shade; repeat every few years. Add some more plantings, the same species or try a few different ones like blueberry sod. Something exuded from the roots of Norway maples may hinder the growth of other plants, but this is probably not the major problem.
- As for the erosion on the paths, some but not all of it may be caused by plugged catch basins. The manufacturer of the “stabilized aggregate” is worried that if his product doesn’t work here (and in other Arlington parks where it was used), bad publicity will cause him to lose business, so he is motivated to find a solution and he thinks he now has an improved product. Carol will meet with him about this and report to FSPP. We are concerned that the new product should not cause environmental problems.
- If repairing the paths with the new product doesn’t help, replacement with bituminous pavement on the main path would be ugly, but would last 20 years. Side paths could be raked and weeded regularly. Sod could be tried on one path as an experiment or using deep gravel would make the paths act like dry wells. (DPW now has only enough money to “repair” the paths with stone dust; it should be asked to hold off until we hear more from Carol.)
- We should also check with Heimlich, the construction company, about the underpinning of the path. It should have a slight “crown” but does not seem to have any.
- Another problem is erosion on the slope near the historical marker (near Linwood Street), probably due to people taking shortcuts instead of using the path. Planting some bushes on the slope would discourage foot traffic.
- We need to make sure that the Town cleans all catch basins, including the “stormceptors” near the boat ramp, regularly and correctly.

Officers Elected for 2010:

President – Karen L. Grossman

General Vice-President – Elizabeth Karpati

Treasurer – Jane Whitmore

Recording Secretary – Gregory Watt

Membership Secretary – OPEN (Cynthia Thompson was elected, but later resigned)

Vice Presidents for Communication – Eric Berger & Jamie Ciocco

Co-Chairs for Publicity – Jacki Katzman & Lally Stowell

Co-Chairs for Beautification – Doris Birmingham & Gail McCormick

Website Chair – Fred Moses

Co-chairs for Outreach/Park Events – Anne Ellinger & Betsy Leondar-Wright

Town Day Coordinators – Gregory Watt

Grant Writer/Fundraising – Gail McCormick

Accomplishments 2009:

• Treasurer's Report:

- Eric Baatz presented a detailed report showing income of \$4,070.50 and expenses of \$3,626.28, with a final balance of \$9,321.10. The CD at Citizens' Bank stands at \$2,034.31. Printing and postage expenses were down considerably due to switching to on-line distribution of the newsletter, but this was largely offset by a catch-up payment to Fred Moses, the webmaster, reimbursing him for more than a year's worth of fees paid to our website hosts.
- Dues-paying members/households numbered 111 with 30 first time contributors.
- T-shirts sold totaled 40, including the ones given to the two teenagers we hired to weed this summer, and the one presented to Kate Thompson at this meeting to thank her for all her help (Carol R. Johnson had received one earlier).
- The required annual report to the state has been submitted.

• Park maintenance and beautification:

- The bulletin board has been moved from inside to outside the playground; it still needs some repairs.
- The playground has been resurfaced with material that doesn't attract sand wasps, paid for with CDBG and Town funds. Much weeding was done both by volunteers and by two young men paid with FSPP funds. Volunteers also spread mulch supplied by DPW in the spring. Doris Birmingham and Ilse Oliveira coordinated. Volunteers included families and girls from the Germaine Lawrence School.
- Doris and Ilse also purchased tools for mulching and weeding; they are stored nearby in Anne Slepian's garage between working sessions and brought to the Park by Eric Berger when needed.
- Bill Eykamp led the pruning of excess growth, especially of false indigo. He also spread some lime at Linwood Beach.
- Eric Berger led cleanup sessions and cleared the tops of catch basins.

• Website:

- Fred upgraded the database and it can be used to send emails and produce lists by interest.
- The website has information and newsletters.

• Outreach:

- Doris, Ilse, and Karen used phone calls and e-mails to remind members about meetings and Park events.
- Cynthia Thompson spent much time entering membership information into the database and sending acknowledgements.
- Betsy Leonard-Wright led two days with fun activities for children.
- We had another successful Town Day booth (but more volunteers are needed).

• Newsletter:

- Four issues published by Eric Berger and Jamie Ciocco; now on-line.
- Ellen Robertson compiled an archive of all available newsletters and public communications since 1992, with four copies for the Library, the Historical Society, the FSPP president, and John Gearin, who edited the newsletter for many years and who will get a citation for his efforts. The current editor needs to keep these series up-to-date by adding copies of each new issue.

- **Grant applications:** Karen's application to the New England Grassroots Environmental Foundation (NEGEF) was rejected but the Arlington Cultural Council (ACC) gave us \$750 toward the planned activity day(s) next summer.

Goals for 2010:

- Increase *active* membership, enlarge the core group of volunteers
- Recruit more future officers including a future President
- Have fewer meetings (every 2 months unless needed for planning events)
- Include main topics to be discussed in notices of meetings
- At end of year do a “scorecard” on goals
- Sell more T-shirts
- File annual reports to the state
- File for Mass. tax exempt status
- Finish repairing the bulletin board
- Library display in March
- Pursue remedying path erosion
- Maintain the park
- Continue Park activities, have at least one educational activity
- Increase awareness of FSPP and Park events
- Increase use of the Pond
- Enhance website with more photos
- Enhance reporting capabilities of website
- Implement on-line dues payment
- Update and maintain database, get wrong e-mail addresses corrected
- Have Town Day booth again
- Publish newsletter four times, keep archive up-to-date
- Create archive of newspaper items about Spy Pond and Park
- Reapply for NEGEF grant, explore other grant opportunities
- Getting gasoline-powered motors banned on Spy Pond. The warrant for this year’s Town Meeting closes on January 22. After much discussion it was voted to adopt this goal.

Next meeting: 7 p.m. Sunday, March 7, 2010 at 32 Hamilton Road.#402, in Arlington, MA 02474.

Respectfully submitted,
Elizabeth Karpati