

**FRIENDS OF SPY POND PARK
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 6, 2024**

INTRODUCTIONS:

Karen Grossman, Adrienne Landry, Lally Stowell, Megan Chrisman, Diana Maggini, Sharon Green, Anna Doctor, David Nejezchleba

JULY 14 MEETING MINUTES ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS:

The meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Bank Account Balance as of 06/30/2024: \$20,233.34; \$19,966.39 after an outstanding plant expense check			
Bank Account Balance as of 10/01/2024: \$21,418.81			
Income		Expenses	
Membership dues & donations (including Ice Business Booklet sales) *	\$1,330.00	Windows Host Renewal	\$(239.76)
Contributions via Network for Good	\$362.50	Email Domain Renewal	\$(101.87)
T-Shirt Sales	\$165.00	Summer Newsletter Printing	\$(63.45)
Total Income	\$1,857.50	Total Expenses	\$(405.08)

*The donation income of \$50 from the Ice Business booklet sale was reported in FY2023 Annual Report.

Walter Fey has retracted his interest in assuming the Assistant Treasurer’s position. We will continue to post the position to look for candidates to replace Susan Saw starting in 2025.

STEWARDSHIP TEAM:

We thank Anne Ellinger for keeping the bulletin board organized. Karen reported that there is white paint on the FSPP side of the bulletin board and we will need to look into finding a way to remove it.

Adrienne Landry and Lally Stowell reported:

“We continue to have very productive monthly Work Days at Spy Pond Park. The Stewardship Team meets the Wednesday before the Saturday Work Days and does a bed-by-bed survey to see what needs to be done. We decide what tools and how many volunteers are needed for the tasks, such as digging out mulberry saplings and clearing around recently planted shrubs.

Along with the Team, hard-working volunteers have planted 38 shrubs throughout the Park since 2020. They are all native to this area. Some are wetlands plants that grow best near the shoreline such as buttonbush. Some need a regular, level land formation such as red-twig dogwood, and winterberry. Others are those that do best on a slope like rosa Virginiana. We have planted all those types as needed in the planting beds.

It helps to keep track of the rainfall when working with plants. According to the Boston Globe, in April, we had over 200% of the regular rain fall for the Boston area. As a result, there is an abundance of plant growth, both with the

invasive plants and the native plants. However, we proceeded to have very dry weather for next few months and the volunteers needed to water through the summer.

We want to thank the many individual volunteers who did such a great job digging holes, preparing the soil and helping to plant these 38 shrubs along with uprooting and removing invasives. These volunteers included scouts and their parents from Troop 306 who also helped weed between the cobblestones that line the path through the park. Elementary School members of Kids Saving the Earth and their parents also helped with the weeding and with sweeping the main path through the playground. In addition, volunteers from People Making a Difference® trimmed and pruned a row of overgrown hedges at Linwood Circle that were blocking a popular and beautiful view of Spy Pond for the many visitors who enjoy this and the many other beautiful views of the pond.

Despite the unpredictable weather, the asters and goldenrod are doing magnificently. Goldenrod is not only booming in the park, but all over, as can be seen on the bike path. We hope they will still be in bloom on our last Work Day on October 19.”

Karen observed that we usually get new volunteers from the website, VolunteerMatch, and the newsletter.

Karen noted that Diana has been helping Jenny Babon at the registration check-in for Work Days and then has been assisting the Stewardship team for the rest of the day. Adrienne proposed that Diana join the Stewardship team to help lead the effort in the planting beds. Depending on the flow of arrivals, Diana may be able to let Jenny handle the registration solo. Adrienne, Lally, Diana, and Jenny will discuss logistics. We appreciate Diana’s help!

On the topic of Parterre involvement in further work in the lower planting beds, Karen reported:

“We have been unable to get a response from Parterre to enact the work that David Morgan, Environmental Planner + Conservation Agent | Department of Planning and Community Development has indicated we are due to receive. As a review, the following was the suggested proposal to Parterre for 2024:

Day 1 Mid-July say 12, 15, 16 to clear out as many invasive plants as possible. I would specify the beds that need the most work.

Day 2 Late September, finish off invasive plant removal, purchase, and plant 6 - 8 shrubs.”

Adrienne commented that we can do some invasives removal ourselves. Karen pointed out that we have \$1500 in our budget to pay Parterre. Adrienne will attempt to walk through the park with Alexey to figure out what’s appropriate for them to do. If they don’t respond, there isn’t much we can do to add more shrubs at this point in the year.

Karen mentioned that Lisa Reynolds was able to remove a lot of poison ivy so that it might be more possible to get into the beds to remove invasives, if there is anything left in October. Adrienne said we’re already down to at least 40% of where we started.

Karen asked any active members requiring funding for next year to submit requests to her and Susan, keeping in mind what was spent last year. Adrienne asked if we can carry the \$1500 over to next year; we’re not sure yet if it would be added to the same amount for next year. The original \$1500 was intended for two days but we can look at how many days we used Parterre in past years for reference.

Karen notified the group that FSPP submitted our punch list to Joe Connelly who has since resigned as Director of Parks and Recreation, but we never had a meeting with Friends of Parks so some of the list was not addressed. Natasha Waden has been appointed the new Director of Parks and Recreation. Please email Natasha at nwaden@town.arlington.ma.us on all Recreation matters.

Karen has been in touch with Natasha about replacing dead and dying trees in the playground; this is time-sensitive, as we are attempting to beat the warranty deadline from the playground contractors, who would be responsible for this task. FSPP is also considering planting a tree in the grassy border around the playground as part of our sprint planting.

Karen suggested asking Natasha if she would like to be the speaker at the Annual Meeting. Lally noted that it might be good for her to also briefly touch on potential points of FSPP collaboration (i.e. new projects/initiatives) at the meeting. Karen suggested we could make a punch list for her to review ahead of the meeting. Karen will send a copy of the previous punch list to Adrienne for review.

WEBSITE:

Daniel Jalkut will update the database with any new names signed up since Town Day and Fun Day once he returns from traveling.

Julie McBride continues to do a great job with the website and Karen will follow up with her on posting 2023 photos to the gallery.

OUTREACH:

Karen thanked Jenny for all her fabulous work on Town Day/Fun Day.

Georgina, the new designer who redesigned our Fun Day poster, will design a catchier outreach look for MailChimp and listserves.

David Nejezchleba, new to the Outreach and Publicity Committee, has instituted a site and postings on Instagram. David and Jenny have ideas about “on this day” history posts for the Instagram handle. He hopes to have something to show the group for the next meeting. Welcome, David!

Many volunteers have signed up for Work Days. A hardy group on September 21 endured the rain to serve FSPP at our Town Day booth: Thanks to Lally Stowell, high schooler Maya Chakrabarty, Jenny Babon, Julie McBride, and Sharon Green. Jenny and Karen Grossman packed their cars to transport materials and the canopy to our assigned space on Mass. Ave. and back to our shed on Pond Lane

The police department was unable to obtain a police detail for Fun Day, so officers on-duty came to Pond Lane to monitor parking and attendee safety there. Betsy reported:

“For the 22nd year, the Friends of Spy Pond Park hosted a large nature-themed festival in the park - and for me, it was my 20th anniversary of coordinating Fun Day. Once again, more than 500 kids and adults enjoyed the activities and the music.

Fun Day was a success due to more than 35 hard-working volunteers:

- Teresa Keh and Sharon Green painted faces for over 3 hours without a break, with long lines of kids waiting for their creative services - and Sharon also did both set-up and clean-up, a super long day.
- Diana Maggini and Lally Stowell came early, stayed for clean-up, and in between helped so many kids make leaf prints.
- Leah Cincer-Stark was assisted by her parents Rachael and Michael as well as Aiman Zehra, but still couldn't keep up with the massive demand for fairy house decorating.
- Steve Greer, Lynn Horman and Michael ran out of bark, there were so many boat-creators - and the creativity of the varied bark boats seemed to be an all-time high.
- Brad Barber always had lots of people with him at the pond's edge learning about the water quality and aquatic plants.
- Jan Lonžarić (creator of two super-creative new paper activities, animal sudoku and de-coding environmental threats), Sarah Hager and I never had a slow moment at the puzzles and scavenger hunts table, with a record number of families doing the leaf hunt.
- Jenny Babon and Maggie Carey kept scads of toddlers happy with coloring and toys and gave away a record-breaking number of stuffed animals.
- Karen Grossman (FSPP President) was often solo at the information table, but managed to sell t-shirts, collect donations, and log volunteers.
- Gail Leondar-Wright spent all year gathering prizes, and all morning helping everyone set up.
- Byron Yi and Ross Pogoda as well as Danielle Popyk did heavy lifting of furniture and materials.
- Sandip and Avi Agarwal set up the canopy and the bubbles-and-squirry-fish wet activities.
- Mithilesh Sharma and Fred Moses took tons of photos, and Ana Marques graciously got everyone's names and permission signatures.

The musical performers were stellar. Big appreciation to the 6 members of the LBE Brass Band who played such rousing classic brass tunes; to the tight rock combo Aunt Mimi that threw some of us back to 70s memories; and to the delicious blues and jazz of Cousin Louis.

Equipment loans made all the difference: Judy Weinberg again graciously offered her canopy to shade the musicians, and Robin Shaw and Nelson Tetrault lent their big van that transported everything.

Fun Day got great publicity this year, with Georgia Hoffmann designing the very bright, colorful, and eye-catching poster, and lots of PR and outreach by Jenny Babon, Karen Grossman, and David Nejezchleba.

As the photos show, it was the children who were the stars of the show.”

Note: Many thanks to our fantastic FSPP Activities Chair, Betsy Leondar-Wright, for organizing this year's Fun Day and to all the volunteers who made this event so spectacular once again!

Anna Doctor, Bulk Mailing Coordinator, will work with Karen and 4 volunteers to prepare and do the November end-of-year solicitation mailing.

Anna noted that we'll start in a couple weeks to get the mailing out for early November. We may need to replenish funds for the next bulk mailing job, but Karen will look to confirm. We need people to stuff the envelopes. Adrienne has a Helping Hands group at church that could assist us with this and can put them in touch with Karen. Karen will provide Adrienne with the details of organizing and stuffing the envelope materials. Karen and Anna will coordinate with Daniel Jalkut on the names to add from the database.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Karen solicited volunteers from our established list and others to write articles and send photos for the Fall/Winter 2024 Newsletter. Although previously it was assigned to Diana to do this, Karen put out the request in the interest of time and had the submissions sent to Jenny in error. Jamie will receive the content this weekend for layout.

Karen asked if Diana would like to take this over for the February newsletter and Diana accepted.

NEW BUSINESS AND NEXT MEETING DATE:

Dec. 17 PM Zoom TBA

The January meeting date will be either 1/12 or 1/26. The final date will appear at the end of the Fall Newsletter.

Respectfully submitted,
Megan Chrisman
Recording Secretary