

**FRIENDS OF SPY POND PARK  
MEETING MINUTES  
November 7, 2021**

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Karen Grossman, Adrienne Landry, Lally Stowell, Julie McBride, Jenny Aurielle Babon, Marshall McCloskey, Sarah Zadova, Colin Blair

**SEPTEMBER MEETING MINUTES ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS:** Rita Yuh, Recording Secretary, Pro Temp has resigned. The September Meeting Minutes were approved as submitted.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Bank Account Balance as of 9/7/21: \$29,044.82			
Bank Account Balance as of 11/5/21: \$29,570.82			
Balance after late reimbursements: \$28,024.91			
Income		Expenses	
Contributions via NFG (Network For Good)	\$40.00	Printing expenses: newsletters and envelopes	\$925.77
T shirt sales	\$240.00	Fun Day expenses	\$478.11
Memberships & Donations	\$246.00	Supplies to remove invasive plants	\$115.91
		Other expenses (library display, etc.)	\$26.12
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$526.00</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,545.91</b>

There are 84 households contributing so far in 2021 with a total of \$3,330 according to the database. So far, Sarah has sent out the acknowledgements for dues and donations individually.

While there are fewer contributing households for this time of year (84 vs. 131 last year), the total number for the year is expected to increase after the end-of-year solicitations have gone out. Daniel Jalkut usually provides the Treasurer with the database figures. Dues and donations are not tracked separately, but as total contributions. The solicitation categories may be able to be extracted from the mail merge. Sarah Zadova hopes to have definitive info. on this for the next meeting and will let Karen know if any assistance is needed before end-of-year activity picks up. Once the end-of-year solicitations go out, more checks will come in. Sarah will be able to pick up the checks from Daniel.

The block format for the Treasurer's report was created by Rita and is working well. Sarah will use the details for the end-of-year report and Karen's spreadsheet to break down what is in each area. She is happy to make changes to the format, as suggested by group feedback. Last year's EOY report (attached to Jan. 21 annual meeting minutes on the FSPP website) will be compared to this year's EOY report for statistics.

Sarah is still waiting for Lally's receipts, and she dropped off a reimbursement check at Karen's home earlier on 11/7/21. Everyone else should have received their reimbursements by now.

Marshall McCloskey provided an update on the mailing status for this year. Requests for dues and contributions go out to anyone who has been active (i.e.: joined, expressed interest, or been involved in some way) in the last 5 years. Marshall pulled the Nov. 4 list from the database and passed it to Melissa Data, a firm that cross-referenced the mailing lists with a post office database of address changes to note if anyone has moved. This is important because FSPP can be penalized for envelopes that can't be delivered or need to be rerouted due to old addresses. About 20 people in the Nov. 4 database pull appear to have moved since the last mailing. Marshall can provide these changes to Daniel to be updated in the database. Marshall will work with a contact in Burlington to make sure that there is no problem with getting a postage statement and then submit the corrected Melissa Data list to the business mail entry unit at South Station to double check that there are no discrepancies. There might be some additional addresses added after Nov. 4 that could be hand-addressed or re-extracted if needed. There are approximately 548 contacts, barring any discrepancies. This is a similar number to last spring, when an additional 26 or so envelopes turned out to be needed. Marshall hopes to confirm the exact number by Friday Nov. 23, after which point Karen will have the letters printed up. Karen will line people up to stuff envelopes for the week after Thanksgiving (Nov. 28-Dec. 4). Usually, the communications are done in early November to beat the

holiday rush, but we hope that people will still receive the solicitations in time to respond by end-of-year. Marshall will continue to manage this process and/or train someone else to do it, as needed.

### **BEAUTIFICATION:**

Anne Ellinger has been doing a great job of posting the bulletins for the Fall/Winter 2021 newsletter and managing the community space. The boards are in good shape and will, hopefully, stay where they are during the reconstruction of the SPP playground area nearby.

On the park maintenance front, Karen is not sure whether Parterre can participate at the same level as last year, or what kind of funding may be required. She has not heard from Joe Connelly of the Arlington Park & Recreation Commission, yet, but the fact that the Conservation Commission (Con Com) is on hold until Emily Sullivan's replacement is hired means that this probably is tabled for the time being. There is money in our treasury that could potentially subsidize any financing the Park & Recreation Commission or Con Com would otherwise provide.

Workdays and Fun Day since September have involved a total of 154 volunteers, which is a record! The last two Workdays were well attended, especially by high schoolers seeking community service hours and people wanting to get out after the pandemic. Karen and Lauren Bonilla removed the plywood boards for the peek-through photo board from the shed, which have warped/curled. Any suggestions on straightening them out without breaking them would be appreciated.

On the day before Workdays, Lally, Adrienne Landry, and Sharon Green go through each planting bed and decide how many people/tools are needed in advance so that they can get started on the day a.s.a.p. with some verbal instruction and demonstration. Adrienne thanked Lally for taking that time. Adrienne read a section from the newsletter that explains the goals of eradicating invasive plants and replacing them with native plants; 11 new native plants have been integrated into the cycle over the September and October Workdays. Hopefully, this will continue for the next few years without leaving bare soil open to invasive plants. Adult crews have dug out massive areas, including a large mulberry tree trunk. Milkweed has been added to the bed with the new winterberry. About 10 mulberry saplings and false indigo have been sprouting close to the fence and mid-distance to where Parterre was planting earlier, and Adrienne asked if we can approach DPW or Joe Connelly about them; Charlotte Milan also has a contact. Karen approved asking on FSPP's behalf anyone who can assist with them. Erosion control for the lower level is a concern, especially for plantings close to the water. Poison ivy has been marked and Lisa Reynolds pulled some toward the end of the season before the Workdays. The Beautification Committee has used the volunteer teams constructively and kept the heart of the efforts going. Lauren, FSPP's new Outreach Vice-President, can coordinate staggered volunteer beginning work times, which could be helpful, and would result in extending the Workday by half-an-hour. The Beautification Committee will determine if this works and apply it to next year's schedule. Someone would need to take over the last half hour to wind down the teams and get the tools back in the shed; this will be discussed further.

Karen reported to Joe Connelly that some benches and tabletops in SPP were vandalized a couple of months ago and the DPW quickly replaced the damaged slats. There are still candle spots on table tops in a few places. The new bench has been installed in SPP due to the previously reported \$500 donation from Bithika Khargharia's family and FSPP's \$1500. We have agreed that FSPP will maintain it for eight years; Karen has a photo that she will share with Bithika and, perhaps publish in the next newsletter. On Halloween the shed and portable toilets were also vandalized; Karen sent an email to Joe and copied DPW with photos on the following Friday to see whether he could facilitate removing it since the damage was done on Town property. Painting over it may not be the best solution because of the potential for peeling paint (Marshall will check on effects of painting over plastic). Cotton balls and solvent might be used to clean it off (Adrienne will confirm what she has used for a similar situation in the past). FSPP will have these solutions available as backup plans for the shed in case the Town doesn't handle this; the goal is to fix it before the winter.

The Project Architect for the SPP playground renovation, KZLA, will be seeking feedback/ideas at a Nov. 16 Zoom meeting. The FSPP's meeting agenda publicized this info. and Jenny posted it on Facebook. This renovation will happen next year, but FSPP will attempt to find out what the impact will be on the path surface and whether FSPP will still be able to work on the weekends (and potentially during the week for small groups in the planting beds). The path surface will be resealed since pebbles from the path have become dislodged. The surface needs to be stabilized before vacuuming, and the sealing won't be done until the playground is renovated. It would be helpful to know what precautions will be taken to help the path near the handicapped ramp and the playground to maintain its previous nature. Cathy Garnett's public outreach concerning the erosion control project is on hold until there is a replacement for Emily Sullivan.

### **WEBSITE:**

Daniel has caught up with many additions to the database and done a good job; he picks up the new addresses approximately once a week to once a month.

Julie McBride has been working on redeveloping the website to modernize and make the codebase easier to maintain while retaining the general look. She has enlarged the text size and created a new highlight panel for News & Events, as well as updated navigation with a new clickable image carousel featuring great images from the park photo album. Julie welcomes feedback and suggestions on the new layout. Lally confirmed that her new email address can be used for the group volunteer contact link. Lauren will manage the [fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org](mailto:fspp@friendsofspypondpark.org) email address going forward to get waiver forms and communicate with individual volunteers. The News page is organized by year (including meeting minutes and newsletters) going back to 2008. Julie added more history since 1992 on the History page and will investigate making the Membership page more colorful while keeping it printable on one page (Julie and Karen will discuss further). Julie will update the Officers Bios page and links on the photo album. She will test the Contact Us page functionality when the new site is launched to ensure that the form still goes to Karen. Julie and Karen will coordinate on the timing of the launch.

#### **OUTREACH:**

The Fun Day was wildly successful. Betsy Leondar-Wright wrote articles for the newspaper and newsletter that mentioned the increased volunteer and attendance count (~450). The weather cooperated and a good time was had by all. The Arlington Land Trust, unfortunately, was unable to give tours of Elizabeth Island because the crew team boats were in use elsewhere, but they were still able to have a presence. The FSPP booth was in a good location for engagement with the attendees. T-shirts sold well (14) and the amount of incoming money via sales and donations (\$163) nearly matched the day's expenses. Lally will count the remaining shirts, but she believes we will need to order more as part of next year's expenses. Adrienne has used Square (a phone app/accessory) in the past to process payments and suggested using it for FSPP fundraising efforts such as membership, donations, and T-shirt sales. Square collects a small fee on each processed payment. Sarah will do a little more research on Square and Karen will ask Fred about it. Sarah prefers the monthly bank statement to stay in paper format, for now, until she has a chance to confirm that everything is properly set up.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

The Fall/Winter newsletter has been published and Karen placed 50 copies each at the Fox and Robbins libraries, along with brochures in both libraries. Jamie selected photos from Mithilesh, Fred, and Jenny and they were great. The newsletter has been posted to the bulletin boards for the next few months and the work that went into it is very much appreciated. The deadline for the Winter/Spring newsletter won't be decided until after the annual meeting; it will likely be published sometime in February. Susan Corey has resigned from the FSPP Outreach and Communications Committee. Lauren will take over managing the volunteers, waivers, and Mailchimp outreach; Jenny will update communications to the local high schools etc. to redirect volunteers to Lauren instead of to Karen and Lally.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS & ANNUAL MEETING DATE:**

The FSPP annual meeting will be held via Zoom on Sunday, Jan. 23, 2022, at 6:00 PM. The notice of the meeting will be inserted into the end-of-year solicitation. The agendas from previous annual meetings are available for reference on the FSPP site. Karen will send out the invitation after the beginning of the year and have Julie post it on the website. Karen will also give Marshall the memory stick with the November meeting Zoom recording on it, if necessary.

Respectfully submitted,  
Megan Chrisman  
Recording Secretary