

**FRIENDS OF SPY POND PARK
MEETING MINUTES
March 20, 2022**

INTRODUCTIONS:

Karen Grossman, Betsy Leondar-Wright, Adrienne Landry, Anne Goodwin, Sarah Zadova, Alicia Russell, Megan Chrisman, Susan Lees. Lally Stowell, Marshall McCloskey, and Jenny Babon who joined the Zoom meeting later.

JANUARY 23 MEETING MINUTES ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS:

The January meeting minutes were approved with three changes:

1. In the Beautification section, “an invasive plant” was replaced by “invasive plants”
2. In the Beautification section, “getting rid of roots and composting” was replaced by “getting rid of roots and adding compost”
3. Julie McBride was removed from the Beautification Committee in the slate of officers as per her request.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Bank Account Balance 11/5/21: \$29,570.82; \$28,024.91 after outstanding reimbursements			
Bank Account Balance 03/19/22: \$32,794.57; \$32,030.37 after outstanding reimbursements			
Income		Expenses	
Contributions via NFG (Network For Good)	\$1,026.00	US Postal Service (mailbox, etc.)	\$226.00
Memberships & Donations	\$4,010.00	GoDaddy (website)	\$40.34
		Portapotties: Spring '21 - Fall '21	\$487.48
		Tools & supplies re plant control	\$276.72
TOTAL REVENUE	\$5,036.00	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,030.54

There was less activity in the winter quarter; there were no sales, but that is because there were no events. Some of the reported income goes toward late 2021. The total balance is currently in a bank account, but as interest rates increase, we may want to purchase a certificate of deposit (CD); Sarah will aim to investigate this for the next meeting and welcomes input from anyone who has insight. She still needs some database access but has been able to manage acknowledgements from what she currently has. Now that she has list access, she is optimistic that she can do the next Gmail auto-merge acknowledgement letter and will work with Daniel to test this.

Karen mentioned that there are several candidates for the open Assistant Treasurer role from Volunteer Match over the last two months who could potentially take on some of the acknowledgement responsibilities, but some are out of state. The group discussed how it would be good to have someone for this role who can commit for at least a year and who can also be trusted with confidential information. Karen may approach Stewart Ikeda. The next solicitation will happen at the beginning of May, so it would be ideal to fill this position by then.

Sarah will check into Lally’s and Karen’s reimbursements and get back to them.

BEAUTIFICATION:

Karen reported that Anne Ellinger has posted notices for the newsletters and other FSPP business on our side of the bulletin boards and cleaned up the community side.

On the volunteer front, Lally reported that a small group of alumni from BU’s Global Days of Service is coming in April, and she will discuss needs with Adrienne separately for the first Workday. People Making a Difference® is also signed up for July, just like last year. Before the first Workday Rachel Oliveri will bring the Green Team group during the week to pluck out the tiny plastic bits that float in off the water and get caught in plants, preventing the dead leaves from being composted. Adrienne learned that the DPW lends out grabbers for the plastic waste to volunteer groups as needed, so we may be able to borrow them. We assume the bulk of volunteers this year will be students who come through our registration with the high schools’ guidance departments, our main source for the last few years.

Parterre is a landscaping consultant who did plantings at Spy Pond Park two years ago as part of the Conservation Commission's (ConComm's) Edge Protection and Erosion Control project supported by community preservation funds. The new Parterre proposal to help FSPP with invasive plants in the lower planting beds referred to cutting and pulling, which was a concern because it would result in the plants' coming back; Adrienne worked with David Morgan, the ConCom's liaison with the FSPP and Karen/Lally to draft a new proposal. The updated proposal would cover 4 days at around \$1000 per day. Adrienne would be happy to be the liaison between the FSPP and Parterre to make sure we're working in concert with one another. The lower beds are where Parterre did their work the last time, and the upper beds are behind the black fence before it dips down toward the water (level with the park).

Adrienne ordered a weed wrench from theuproooter.com to help dig out whole woody plants and tree saplings. Lally and Adrienne will meet with Joe Connelly, Director of Parks and Rec., to talk about the fencing at the ends of the beds, as people tend to slip behind it; this would have to be coordinated with the DPW. Adrienne looks forward to selecting native plants for the beds and may approach Linda Clark and Cheryl Miller, both of whom are very knowledgeable. Karen mentioned that ConCom Associate Commissioner Myra Schwartz has contacted FSPP to see if we could provide some funding for Parterre's work in the lower beds. Adrienne made a motion to have FSPP provide \$1000 toward the Parterre contract, if need be, and the motion was approved. Lally made a motion that FSPP provide additional monies beyond other town agencies, as needed, to purchase plants that Adrienne and the Parks Department approve for installation in the planting beds, and the motion was approved.

On the topic of the upcoming renovation to the playground and handicap ramp, Karen mentioned that modifications to the plan on the Town website have been approved that limit the amount of the pervious surface path within the confines of the playground fence. Strollers will still be able to enter the play area and avoid tree roots. Tulip trees, which are less messy than the originally selected trees, have been added near where parents and supervisors will be sitting. The bid for the actual work has gone out and Joe Connelly hopes that the renovation will begin this spring. The contractors have yet to state guidelines for where visitor park access will be limited. Jenny has been following the meetings and covered them on social media; she mentioned that there hasn't been an update on the bidding on the town Twitter as of today. Sealing the path throughout the park will be done separately when the above renovations are complete.

Susan Lees, Alicia Russell, and Anne Goodwin, representing the group Quiet Healthy Arlington, spoke about an article they are bringing to Town Meeting to phase out gas-powered leaf blowers, which is a topic of interest to FSPP as it affects park maintenance. This motion was introduced nine years ago and resulted in a law that did not ban these tools. Quiet Healthy Arlington proposes this ban because of gas-powered leaf blower noise (which can reach 100 decibels), health effects from the noise, and the pollution--a gas-powered leaf blower can produce the same emissions in one hour as a Toyota Camry driving 1100 miles. Their proposal is to phase them out over two years and replace them with electric leaf blowers, and they are approaching FSPP for support because parks can play a role in showing communities the way forward. Support can include publicizing these efforts in newsletters, calling town meeting members prior to Town Meeting, and writing endorsement letters. They have literature with links to sources and can also draft something to send to town meeting members. Karen asked how the warrant article affects town workers. Alicia said that the workers would be affected by whatever the vote is; if gas-powered blowers are banned, DPW would comply. Electric leaf blowers are already in use around schools, which are less detrimental to plants, so they could be a potential replacement. The warrant article would contain exceptions to ensure that sidewalks are still cleared for safety reasons. Karen asked about the costs of switching over to electric blowers in terms of speed of service. Alicia replied that the literature mentions landscapers who are fully electric are available to take on jobs; furthermore, Jim Feeney has stated that he thinks that electric blowers will be as good as the gas-powered ones over the two-year phaseout period and is on board with moving to electric blowers only. Places like Portland, OR, Washington, DC, and Concord, MA say that their maintenance prices have not had to rise after switching to electric and are comparable to others. The Facilities Department is already committed to replacing gas-powered leaf blowers with electric, and the DPW has already switched from gas-powered string trimmers to electric ones. Bruce Molton, another member of Quiet Healthy Arlington and one of the chairs of Sustainable Arlington, is floating the idea of an Eco-week with an electric leaf blower "petting zoo"; Lally and Karen suggested that having them demonstrated in use (such as in parks) could help in neighborhoods with higher resistance. DPW currently hires contractors for grooming SPP, but DPW could require contractors to use electric. Electric leaf blowers require batteries to be on hand and charged, but they still aren't prohibitively expensive. As a non-profit, FSPP cannot endorse politicians, but may speak up on issues. This warrant article could benefit the park and people who go there. Megan moved that FSPP collaborate with Quiet Healthy Arlington on community outreach and offer our support, as needed, to move toward the phaseout of gas-powered leaf blowers, and the motion was approved. Lally volunteered to work with Quiet Arlington. Karen mentioned that Larry Slotnick, Zero Waste Arlington Co-Chair, is bringing a proposal to Town Meeting to ban

single-use water bottle sales in Arlington and has asked for support from FSPP as far as endorsement and messaging to our members. Discarded water bottles can often end up in Spy Pond Park as litter. The town has proposed putting public tap water dispensers in town for people to fill up their personal water bottles; public schools in Arlington have already set up stations for filling water bottles. Lally asked whether there is literature about single-use water bottles that can be distributed; Karen will check and follow up with Larry if necessary. Karen moved to endorse this article and offer other needed outreach for this effort, and the motion was approved.

WEBSITE:

Karen thanked Daniel Jalkut for entering the email information and keeping the database up to date, and Julie McBride for keeping the website up to date with postings and changes, such as the Workday volunteer notification email established with Lauren Bonilla.

OUTREACH:

Jenny posted the Workday schedules on the Facebook page earlier in the day and will also send them out to the publicity email list, which is mostly contacts at Belmont HS, Arlington Catholic HS, Arlington HS, Ottoson, Gibbs, Hardy, and Thompson Schools. She will likely delete the emails that have bounced back and will also send reminder emails/Facebook postings closer to the dates. Karen will also post the days on Volunteer Match. Jenny asked whether the volunteer site where students put in their time will be the same as last year and Karen replied that it should be the same as before (x2VOL) but Arlington HS can confirm this as they are the primary users. Karen confirmed that we are not currently recruiting volunteers for April 23 as there is not much expected work and the BU group is already scheduled to help; Adrienne, Lally, and Karen can revisit this decision closer to the time to determine whether to also advertise to our membership.

Lauren Bonilla has set up Gmail accounts and will take charge of responding to interested volunteers using Karen's model email. She will also file the waivers sent directly to her via fsppvolyntee@gnail.com for individual volunteers; group leaders will continue to correspond with Lally until confirmed, and then have their members respond individually to Lauren. Lauren is expecting to be in the park when volunteers come. Karen will ask if BU will be giving out T-shirts this year.

Arts Arlington has put forth a request for applications for posters that would be designed by the artist in residence, Kari Percival. Only six non-profits will be selected from the applications. For applying organizations, Arts Arlington is looking for a slogan or catchphrase that depicts the organization that would be incorporated into the poster. The poster would be in use for more than one year so it couldn't include specific Workdays or Fun Day dates, but it might include a website URL or QR code. Karen solicited the group for a catchy phrase and the group will think about it. The application is due March 31.

Earlier last year FSPP partnered with student artists to design decorative metal 8-inch discs around Town that depict Arlington in 50 years. There were two discs related to the park, having to do with the pond and invasive plants. Cecily Miller, the sponsor, wants to walk in the park to discuss where to install one of the discs, which can be posted on poles or other objects. Karen will connect with Lally and Adrienne about this.

We had recruited a candidate from Volunteer Match who would be able to file forms needed when we do our two solicitation mailings to street addresses, but she is no longer available for this work. Karen is scouting another potential volunteer and posting the job on Volunteer Match to prepare for the mailing in May. Marshall will reach out to his previous contact in Burlington and can still take the mailings to the post office if needed.

Bill Rearden has moved away from Spy Pond Condominium and can no longer help stuff envelopes; Karen is looking for volunteers to take his place, especially for the end of April.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The FSPP Winter/Spring Newsletter has gone out and is in libraries for distribution; Lauren will replace them as needed. The Summer Newsletter deadline is June 15. Karen is looking for articles and photos with captions from the spring, including from Workdays, and stories about the playground renovation. The DPW may be able to move present fencing from the playground to the edges of the planting beds, but it's not clear yet. Quiet Healthy Arlington may have something to share from the Town Meeting.

OTHER BUSINESS & NEXT MEETING DATE: May 15, 2022, at 7 PM. Meeting will be virtual.

Respectfully submitted,
Megan Chrisman,
Recording Secretary