

FRIENDS OF SPY POND PARK

MEETING MINUTES

MAY 24, 2026

INTRODUCTIONS: Karen Grossman, Lally Stowell, Christopher Wilson, Sandip Agarwal, Diana Maggini, Sharon Green

MARCH 22 MEETING MINUTES ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS:

The meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Sandip Agarwal

Bank Account Balance as of 02/28/2026:	\$31,306.70		
Bank Account Balance as of 04/30/2026:	\$28,279.74		
Income		Expenses	
Contributions via NFG	\$25.00	Reimbursement to Sandip Agarwal	\$(520.00)
(Network For Good)			
Dues and Donations (Checks) ²	\$355.00	T-Shirt Printing	\$(360.05)
		Planting Beds	\$(1105.71)
		New Checkbook	\$(91.14)
		Work Day Flyer	\$(58.76)
		Annual Solicitation Printing	\$(97.48)
		Portable Toilet (2025)	\$(416.50)
		Website	\$(757.32)
Total Income	\$380.00	Total Expenses	\$(3406.96)

* Sandip Agarwal made two payments while a new FSPP account was being created: \$500.00 to Swifty Printing in Jan 2026 and \$20 as a deposit to new account in Feb 2026

** T-Shirts from Hemlock Inks; 80 T-shirts ordered for \$720.10. Half was paid in Jan 2026. We have received the T-shirt shipment, and the other half of the payment was made in March 2026

*** A payment of \$1,105.71 (25% of the total bill) was made in March 2026 to Wild Indigo Gardening for the work in the planting beds at Spy Pond Park. Ultimately, we will be paying half of the total, and the Town pays the other half on completion.

**** Portable toilet payment of \$416.50 was made to Arlington Recreation for 2025

***** We renewed our website with GoDaddy for 5 years and added SSL to protect from phishing attempts.

***** Do we want to create another CD with the cash we have? Do we want to purchase fencing with some of the money?

***** Sandip established a FSPP Venmo account so people can make donations and payments to FSPP in the park or on Town Day using that method

STEWARDSHIP TEAM:

Thanks, Anne Ellinger for your dependable work tidying up the bulletin board and posting the newsletters!

Christopher Wilson (CSW) reported:

- “In early May, Adrienne Landry began transitioning out of her role as steward team lead. She will remain as one of the four stewards of the park. Christopher S. Wilson (CSW), who has been working with FSPP since last year as a volunteer, agreed to transition into the role over the coming

weeks. He has already begun taking over several projects in progress. Stewards now include CSW, Adrienne Landry, Lally Stowell, Diana Maggini, and Sharon Green.

- On May 11, nineteen new plants were planted in the beds by Wild Indigo Gardening, including native shrubs, grasses, and juniper. A watering schedule was built online. [Here's the link](#) and more than a dozen volunteers and members signed up to keep the nineteen plants hydrated through August, watering three times per week. All new plants are marked with a bright pink ribbon for easy identification.
 - The Stewardship Team had its first walkthrough of the year on Tuesday, May 12. Important non-native species in the beds were noted and earmarked for removal, including garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), white mulberry (*Morus alba*), Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) and black swallow wort (*Vincetoxicum nigrum*). Small (2' high) Oriental bittersweet plants were noticed in two of the beds during the Work Day the following Saturday and one of the volunteers offered to take them out on her own time.
 - Small remnants of poison ivy were noticed, though most has been removed by volunteer Lisa Reynolds on her own time.
 - It was also noted that with so much of the work of non-native removal completed in the beds, there may be a declining need for as many volunteers as we have seen in the past. The stewards are agreeing that trampling in the beds should be minimized to improve the quality of the duff layer for soil health and moisture retention.
 - Discussion is underway amongst the stewards about the possibility of trimming or removing some of the larger non-native species bordering the park on the northwest side along the MBTA embankment. As the health of the beds improves rapidly, there may be opportunities for improvements on that side of the park. This is an in-progress discussion. Updates to come.
- Our first Work Day of 2026 was extremely successful. We had at least 22 volunteers, including 11 who signed up in advance, and several who noticed the work in progress and joined up that same morning—2 were AHS students and 4 were minors. A few volunteers joined the stewards to assist in the non-native removals mentioned above, as well as general park cleanup (though there wasn't a great deal of that work required). However, most of the volunteers spent the entirety of the two official Work Day hours on Linwood Beach clearing leaves, sticks, large branches, trash, and other various debris. At least 16 volunteers participated in this huge project. Leaves and debris were carried in wheelbarrows to the embankment and unloaded—two volunteers carried scores of wheelbarrow loads away from the beach. They disposed of a great deal of plastic and other waste, as well as a decaying possum carcass. The cleanup was successful, clearing most of the leaves and debris. There may be some residual debris remaining to clean up at a future Work Day, but this undertaking transformed the beach in a matter of two hours. This, also, potentially saved the FSPP thousands of dollars for a professional cleanup. There remain very large branches in the water just off-shore, which we may deal with at a future Work Day.
 - Additionally, we cut a large multiflora rose bush from bed 8 (behind the stone wall), thanks to the work of four of our volunteers. They noted two large buckthorn saplings during that work. These will be removed at a future Work Day.
- The stewards have been discussing options for transporting trash to an available dumpster provided by the city, at some distance from the pond. We have partly discussed yard waste pickup by possibly hiring a driver to transport trash to the designated dumpster three times during the season. The DPW will pick up yard waste every month from the site. This is a developing situation.

CSW made a walk of the park independently, noting a few remaining non-natives that likely should be removed or controlled to the best of our ability due to their aggressive nature and ability to choke or

shade out other plants, including Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), and more importantly, a small but growing patch of goutweed/ground elder (*Aegopodium podagraria*). The latter appear confined to Bed 8 but will be earmarked for removal/control at a future date. The Japanese honeysuckle is more ubiquitous across the park, and we'll devise a plan for its control and replacement with a compatible native species later as well."

Christopher reported that the Stewardship Team will do the walkthrough two Tuesdays before the Work Day this time, on June 2. They may not need as many volunteers as in the past.

Additional watering rotation volunteers are not needed currently. Karen suggested coordinating watering between team members to avoid overscheduling. The Stewardship Team confirmed that locking and unlocking the supply shed is easier than in the past and there are no issues getting to the buckets/plants. Karen will direct volunteers logging community service time to Christopher for coordination.

Karen mentioned that David Morgan will ask Wild Indigo Gardening if they can provide the plant that wasn't available earlier (she will send the plant name to Christopher for verification with David). Christopher may also want to ask David about fencing plans to gauge whether it might make sense for FSPP to fund fencing.

Karen reported:

"Planned to plant 14 new native plants this year with contractor, Wild Indigo Gardening from Somerville, whose estimate came more in line with our budget after other agreements fell through. They planted the shrubs as outlined by FSPP over several beds along the park's shoreline. Don't know if Jenny contacted the Volunteer Coordinator at the High School for a watering rotation. We established a watering rotation first, once we knew when the shrubs would be planted. We will consider additional Revegetation signs for the planting beds and ask at the next Recreation & Community Services Department Meeting and/or David Morgan about this issue.

Update on communication with Natasha Waden, Director of Recreation and Community Services:

Laura Kiesel-Save Arlington Wildlife

3/30 Considering the uptick already in people going into the fenced off areas adjacent to the softball field at Spy Pond Park to fish and how badly the fishing line litter issue is in this restricted area--I was wondering what is the timeline to have the vandalized plastic fencing replaced with sturdier metal fencing and some signage requesting people keep out?

Related to that, is there any timeline for removing the plastic fencing that has collapsed into the pond? Besides being a pollutant leaching microplastics into the water, the fencing piles in the pond also pose a potential serious entanglement hazard for wildlife. The largest pile of fencing is in the water by the bottom of the boat launch.

Also, are there plans for Parks & Rec. to communicate to/collaborate with the APD about increased enforcement of the fenced boundaries and fishing license checks?

Natasha Waden

4/1 As mentioned in my other email, the Town of Arlington is not the regulatory authority or enforcing agency as it pertains to fishing licenses. The Mass Department of Fisheries and Wildlife is the agency that issues/establishes the regulations and licenses, but it is the Department of Fish and Game that enforces the environmental laws/regulations as it relates to fishing.

I have not had time to check in on the area you referenced below, but I will try to get out there this week to review the area. I am not aware of specific restrictions being placed on this area for loitering or fishing, but I will double check that as well. I believe at one time perhaps that plastic fencing was placed in that location to deter people from that area, but I'm not aware of any official restrictions that prohibit it.

Laura Kiesel

4/1 While the state Wildlife & Fisheries Agency issues these licenses and Mass Environmental Police are the primary enforcers--any law enforcement officer can indeed run checks and issue fines regarding freshwater fishing licenses. This includes local police and our ACO. In fact, police and ACO over in Woburn have been doing this semi-regularly over at Horn Pond during warmer weather months for a while now.

While there may be no specific law regarding access to that area at Spy Pond, I believe it's being fenced off is a strong indication public access is restricted. People have vandalized and torn down the fence to access that area. And it (by far) gets the most fishing line litter (and other litter) than any other part of the shoreline of that park save perhaps the boat launch area. At the very least, if APD officers are in the area, I hope they can be consistent in messaging and discourage folks from being there until better fencing can be installed, which I know ConComm is looking into."

Karen asked what to put in the newsletter regarding the cutting down of planting beds. Everything besides the new plants in the rain gardens have been chopped down. We're not sure who did this; Christopher plans to check with town officials. Dead growth in the other planting beds was removed by Wild Indigo as part of a planned project. Karen will decide what to include in the newsletter after Christopher meets with David Morgan. Lally also noted that the hedges that border Linwood Circle and the pond also seem to have been lowered by an unknown person.

On the topic of the fishing line working group, Christopher said that people from the Town, ConComm members, and one City Councilor have met once. Nothing has been done since that first meeting and subsequent meetings have been cancelled. Courtney Duggan, assistant to Natasha Waden, was the meeting organizer.

Saturdays June 13 and July 11 will be Work Days.

Karen noted that one of the fishing line receptacles is improperly installed. Christopher thought that the issue may have been that it was run into by a car.

Karen has told David Morgan that Wild Indigo could be an option for installing fencing to help with the fencing issue.

WEBSITE:

Daniel has done a great job keeping the database up to date so our notices will reach all who have expressed an interest. Julie is doing a great job with postings.

OUTREACH:

Jenny has posted our poster before and captioned photos after the Work Day to make people aware of our activities. Jenny has sent the list of participants for the first Work Day to Daniel to document new volunteers for MailChimp with their contact information and the involvement of people for our database.

Sept. 26 Fun Day 10 am-1pm (rain date Sept. 27, 1-4pm)

Betsy Leondar-Wright reported:

“We're in good shape for toys and stuffies related to the pond ecology for prizes, and I bought plastic binoculars, but we could use more nature-engagement prizes, like compasses, butterfly nets, magnifying glasses, birding books and other guidebooks. And more stuffed bunnies will be needed if I do the rabbit-facts scavenger hunt again (we gave away 50 last year!)

We have lost most of the professionals and organizations, leaving us with just our own delightful local volunteer activities. (We used to have Habitat, Art Beat and Tinkergarten, among others.) Does anyone have any relevant connections? If you go to a fair or festival and see someone doing a creative nature activity, please ask them if they might be interested in Fun Day, and if so, get their contact info to me. (E.g. I just asked the Watershed In a Box folks when I saw them at the Herring Festival.)

In June I'll start recruiting volunteers. What would you like to do on September 26?

Any new ideas for music acts?”

Karen will resend Betsy a list of potential musical acts. Christopher may pass along a potential name as well.

Karen asked Christopher if any new volunteers have come in from the Mystic River Watershed Association. Christopher mentioned that many were walkups but wasn't sure about the specific source.

Karen suggested that the group email Betsy in advance with nature activities they prefer to lead, such as leaf printing, scavenger hunt, face painting, etc. She also asked if FSPP might be willing to pay vendors to lead some of the activities. Sandip asked if this would improve attendance and Lally suggested that we may also want to pay others who currently volunteer their time. This is something to think about for the next meeting.

Anna Doctor worked with Karen starting the end of April and in May with Calvary Church's "Helping Hands" to complete the annual contribution solicitation. Adrienne took the trays to the church and Sandip drove into the Boston Post Office to deliver the bulk mailing. Karen will send out a solicitation letter to people with emails only this week.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Arnav Gupta will solicit for Summer 2026 Newsletter 5_22_26 with a 6_20_26 deadline.

Arnav has prepared 99 2025 photos for our website photo gallery and sent them to Julie to post. He needs to make some modifications to the list before Julie posts them.

NEW BUSINESS AND NEXT MEETINGS' DATES: July 26 and Sept. 13 5 PM Zoom TBA

Respectfully submitted,
Megan Chrisman
Recording Secretary