

**FRIENDS OF SPY POND PARK  
MEETING MINUTES  
JULY 11, 2021**

**INTRODUCTIONS:**

**Karen Grossman** has not been at the park much in the last few days.

**Marshall McCloskey** observed a lot of people working in the park when walking through and is impressed by how lush and green everything is now.

**Betsy Leondar-Wright** has had great birdwatching and general wildlife viewing from kayaks on the pond this summer, especially the closest eagle of her life on top of the Boys and Girls Club.

**Sarah Zadova** is interested in helping with the finances assuming the FSPP's Treasurers position and has met with Karen.

**Rachel Oliveri** works with the Arlington public schools on sustainability programming and is excited this summer to be part of a project called remembrance of climate futures, which we'll tell you about a little bit later in the meeting.

**Juliette Bennett** is an intern working on the climate project and likes how green Spy Pond Park is now.

**Margo Awad** is also working with the climate futures project and thinks her favorite thing about Spy Pond Park is the steps to go down to the pond and the stones around it.

**Nishaad Vinayak** is also a member of the climate futures project who noted that last time he went to the park it was under construction. However, he likes the great view of the pond from the path that's right along Route 2.

**Lally Stowell** noted a highlight and a problem at yesterday's workday were two birds' nests with fledglings and warm eggs discovered in the process of weeding that created some excitement and concern for their safety and survival, hoping the workers around hadn't disturbed the parents' return to care for them.

**Colin Blair** can't do much bending due to a bad hip issue and is sorry he can't get to the park and help, but he's trying to walk 5,000 steps a day. He thinks the park looks clean and lovely and the water edge is much cleaner than it was. He thinks the edge protection project is beginning to bear some fruit.

**MAY 2 MEETING MINUTES:** approved as submitted.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Karen L. Grossman, Treasurer, Pro Temp

Joanie recently back filed annual reports for 2019-2021

1) Annual Report all set until 2022.

2) Joanie filed 990 by 5/31/21

3) Joanie filed PC form by 5/15/21

**July 11 Treasurer's Report:**

**Bank Account balance 4/30/21**            **\$28,227.96**

**Income:**

Contributions    NFG                    **\$257.50**

Contributions                        **\$2380.00**

Return Go Daddy                    **\$129.09**

**Total Revenue**                      **\$2766.59**

**Bank Account Balance 7/11/21**    **\$29,185.03**

**Expenses:**

Printing                                **\$149.31**

Fees                                      **\$ 70.00**

Postage & processing            **\$ 48.22**

Office Supplies                      **\$ 41.99**

Park Bench                            **\$1500.00**

**Total Expenses**                    **\$1809.52**

**\$419.70** still owed to Fred Moses as reimbursement for past FSPP Go Daddy hosting expenses he paid.

Karen introduced the FSPP candidate for the Treasurer's position, Sarah Zadova, an experienced financial professional. She has a background in international development and quite an extensive background with her undergraduate degree from Boston University and a law degree from there, also. Sarah is very well qualified and interested in assuming this position. The final step before she takes the position is for Karen to talk to her co-workers to verify that she would be a great fit for our organization. Sarah said she's flattered and excited to be here. She has come from non-profits in the sense that Harvard is a nonprofit, although very different. Her interest is in a lot of operational things and is very familiar with budgeting, financial monitoring, the analysis, and making the reports. She discussed meeting with Karen yesterday and getting the lowdown on everything for the year, was happy with the great documentation. So, even things that aren't super familiar to her, she'll be able to pull things together. Sarah was happy to meet those who attended the meeting virtually. She looks forward to learning mailing responsibilities from Marshall and attending fun Day in September with her husband and her son who's 6 years old. Sarah left the meeting at 7:30 p.m. since it was her son's bedtime.

Karen made a motion: Pending a favorable discussion with one or two of Sarah's co-workers when they return from vacation that the **FSPP accepts Sarah Zadova's assuming the position of Treasurer for the Friends of Spy Pond Park. The motion was approved unanimously with congratulations conveyed to Sarah the following day.**

#### **BEAUTIFICATION:**

The bulletin boards continue to be maintained well by Anne Ellinger who posted our Summer 2021 Newsletter and tidied up the community sides of the boards, too. Thanks, Anne for your commitment to this task.

Lally reported that there have been two very good Workdays since our last meeting. There were 30 volunteers in July and probably just short of that number in June with lot of high school students, most of whom had a good work ethic, working consistently from 8-10 a.m. and the bulk of them arriving on time, some even earlier. People were initially assigned to weed the cobblestones, an ongoing job and then, as other tasks came up with folks working in the beds, groups of them were called to help work in the beds, do other pruning jobs or bag for people working in the beds. So, a lot of invasive growth got cut back. We have lots more to go because it's been two years of not working in those beds due to the shoreline construction and new planting. The invasive plants have been very happy about that, unfortunately. The young people did a great job; a lot of productive work got done. People Making a Difference® trimmed the hedges at Linwood, a welcome improvement. Betsy's Jewel weed is back in abundance. We're hoping for a good crop of it this year, a lot of flowering, little beautiful buds coming up there; things are looking good!

Lally, Karen, Adrienne and Sharon took a useful walkthrough with Alexi Dart, an employee for Parterre, the contractor that did the actual new planting in each of the beds, mostly at the water's edge, but scattered in some places in areas that were dug up and planted with native plants. The idea being the new plants would replace the invasive growth and over time develop strong enough roots to create a strong root system there to counteract erosion, hopefully as strong as the invasive plants. There are some smaller, beautiful flowers there now and the walkthrough was to show us some of the additional invasive plants along with the ones that we're familiar with that are growing in there. Arlington has contracted with Parterre to go into the beds three full days to do some work on the invasive growth and to check out the progress of the new plantings. Hopefully, we will join Alexi the last time he's there in August, as well. He gave us some additional ideas about the areas that Parterre did not plant that contain invasive overgrowth, such as the box at the top of the boat ramp. He said to replant that area, you must remove all the soil there and replace it to eliminate the roots of the invasive plants that are firmly throughout that space. Elaine Crowder has some ideas for that area.

Karen reported that the plan of having the workers, pre-register with her for the Workdays, sending electronic copies of their liability waivers for her to file beforehand is working well. They're getting detailed instruction from her, but it's been very time-consuming due to the back-and-forth email communication needed in the process. However, it facilitates the Workday because when volunteers arrive, Lally just checks off their names

on a list Karen has sent her via email. That afternoon Lally tells Karen who has shown up and who did not so that Karen can give appropriate credit when x2VOL.com sends her verification requests.

Karen reported that she has not heard anything from Mr. Benn from the Arlington/Belmont Crew Team board who had called her about wanting to clean up the area where the crew team has their boats and behind that area that is full of assorted dumped debris. So, for now, that remains a tabled idea that could include their asking to move our shed.

#### **WEBSITE:**

Daniel Jalkut is doing a good job of keeping the database up to date. And Julie McBride, after a little glitch was resolved in accessing the ftp site, has been able to post the minutes and newsletters on the website. Thanks to Julie for doing that for us on a regular basis. She reported to Karen that she has gradually been making some behind the scenes website changes that she has not posted, yet.

#### **OUTREACH:**

Jenny Babon has been doing a great job of publicity for the Workdays that have been published in the Arlington Advocate. Karen thinks people are responding because of that, as well as to Facebook, volunteermatch.com and postings in Belmont, Arlington, and Arlington Catholic High Schools.

Betsy reported on preparations for Fun Day, September 25 10 a.m. -1 p.m., rain date the next day 1-4 p.m. Habitat Belmont representatives who will have a table asked if we preferred bug catching as one of their activities, sweeping through the bushes, put the bug into box and draw it, or do we want to see their turtles? Meeting attendees voted for the turtles to be the focus this year. If they're able to do so, they'll send three educators so participants can do both activities.

Although Betsy said that if the Arlington Land Trust can use the crew team boat(s), they will give tours of Elizabeth Island, as they have done in the past, she learned after the meeting that won't be possible. Maybe the ALT will still come and have a presence. We are going to have everybody's favorite, the bark boats, Lally and Kathy Modigliani are going to help kids make and launch them. Betsy will do her usual scavenger hunts and puzzles, but she needs helpers for those activities. A volunteer from volunteermatch.org, Silvana, is going to lead making leaf prints, but we usually need two people for that. So, we also need another leaf print person. Elaine Crowder is going to read a book about an Eagle and give kids a chance to dress themselves as eagles and act out the story. She could use a helper. We only have one face painter for one and a half hours, Ellen, who is just going to do that, but we need more face painters because we need two at a time, the whole three hours, Lisa Reynolds has done it in the past and Betsy needs to follow up with her. Karen will be at the FSPP information table. There will be bands playing music, 2 brass bands and the Mimi Band. The poster is being produced and Betsy has a publicity crew.

However, Betsy needs a minimum of six, preferably 10 more active volunteers helping kids with activities, or we're going to have to be smaller this year. We haven't heard back from Tinkergarden, so we don't have anybody for the toddler table. Betsy suggested that when volunteers come to our Workdays, we solicit for Fun Day helpers. Rachel Oliveri said she'd seek out helpers from her high school and Ottoson Green Teams. We'll need strong help with setting up on Fun Day and will borrow another canopy from Judy Weinberg and maybe another Park Friends group. Thanks to Betsy for all her hard work getting all the details to come together and advertising for volunteers as a community service opportunity!

Sally Hempstead and Karen will be revamping the FSPP display board with more recent photos and posters. Sally has volunteered to set up the display on August 2 at the Robbins Library. There will be a signup sheet there so, hopefully some people will be interested in volunteering for Work and Fun Days to get community

service credit or becoming members. This is a wonderful outreach opportunity!

## COMMUNICATIONS:

The FSPP Summer 2021 Newsletter was published and sent out electronically. For the first time in over a year, Karen was able to put hardcopies at the Robbins and Fox Libraries for distribution. The photo of the rabbit and the turtle that was posted on our website and copied in this newsletter was a big hit with the meeting attendees.

Climate project: "Remembrance of Climate Futures", a public art project coordinated by Arlington's Public Art Curator, Cecily Miller, the Arlington Commission for Arts and Culture, Rachel Oliveri from Arlington's Green Teams and artist, Tom Starr. The project is being funded by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council. Rachel Oliveri and three interns attended this meeting to hear about FSPP endeavors and present their project to us.

Juliett described that the project will result in aluminum, circular discs 6" in diameter placed around Arlington, regarding future climate change events and how they're going to affect the areas where the plaques are placed. So, it'll be envisioning what the area will look like in the future or, future decisions made by the local government or communities in the area, not strictly in environmental aspects. These metal circular plaques will have engraved descriptions of what will occur, hypothetically. Rachel shared her screen and showed examples from other locations where Tom Starr has placed other plaques. Let's say, for example, the Arlington Tree Committee talks about their planting goals far in the future. So, what captures attention is that people read the plaque, see the date on it and say, "Hey, that hasn't even happened yet!". However, it makes them think of what could potentially happen far in the future. At the bottom of the disc, there will be a QR code that people can scan with their phones to go a website, with more information about the project and about that specific marker.

Margo explained that this project, in other MA communities and elsewhere, strives to bring awareness of specific locations that are in danger of climate change; it's the project's goal to educate the public with these signs. One of the big themes of their whole project is climate resilience, the capacity of a community business or natural environment to prevent, withstand, respond to, and recover from a disruption. Nishaad said that the whole purpose of interviewing each of the community groups is to see how each group deals with climate change in their park or in their sector and determine how they might be dealing with it now, or how they plan on dealing with it in the future. From that, the interns could create a relatively simple message for a plaque. They'll interview some of our members and maybe nearby residents.

Nishaad then asked, "How have the Friends of Spy Pond Park seen the effects of climate change on the park right now? And what have you done possibly to mitigate those effects? Also, what will be future results of climate change?" Karen began the response saying, "The project at the water's edge was to counteract erosion occurring around Spy Pond on Town owned properties." She mentioned that with water level rising, we've been experiencing flooding all over East Arlington because a lot of it used to be a swamp. Lally commented on the need to keep phragmites and other invasive plant growth along the shoreline in check. There used to be a meadow with wildflowers near the MBTA station, now taken over by phragmites, just like they used to crowd out Elizabeth Island before treatment to counteract their growth. The plan should be for native plant diversity.

The interns look forward to collaboration in the future. There were comments from meeting attendees about other options to compliment the project such as finding a creative way to visually draw attention to the signs that are created, to catch the eye of passers-by, perhaps drawings or making them colorful. The signs that Mothers Out Front are using in their identification of gas leaks provide an example. Perhaps the discs could be on the bike path where more people would see it/them rather than at the water's edge (even though the inscription may refer to the shoreline). Betsy discussed the minimal interest she generated in using QR codes for our Scavenger and Art Hunts for FSPP's last September's Fun Days. Karen thanked Rachel and the interns for their presentation and said we, too, look forward to our future collaboration.

Elaine Crowder joined the meeting to discuss her seed packet project. The idea is to provide Town approved mixed seed packages to groups that are regularly removing invasive plant growth from Arlington's open spaces, naturalized areas where it would be okay to allow whatever seeds are selected that would really like that spot to grow. Emily Sullivan, Conservation Commission, and Joe Connolly, Parks and Recreation Director, were both interested in this idea. The only requirement is for the packet recipient to give Emily an idea of what kind of growing conditions is in each spot that is selected, for example: sunny and wet or dry, shaded, or edge kind of habitat. She'd need this information because there are a lot of native seed companies that will have pre-packaged mixes to use for various conditions. The idea is that we're sowing seeds in an area that likes that kind of habitat so what comes up, comes up or what doesn't, doesn't. Some of these seeds, or anytime you sow seeds, Elaine explained, they can wait, even a couple of years, before they might germinate to get the correct conditions. There would be no real maintenance or watering, just removing invasive growth, as always needed.

Karen and Lally commented on the possibility of using the walled-in box at the top right of the boat ramp in Spy Pond Park that could be a good location implementing this idea. However, they were told by Alexi, the Parterre worker that all the soil there would have to be removed and replaced to plant there, since the invasive plants have taken hold in that soil. Other spots mentioned were: 1) the big, bare spot where a Buckhorn was removed between the park and the embankment, 2) the embankment near where the crew boats are, 3) near the embankment at Linwood Street onto the bike path where garlic mustard was pulled. Elaine thought how to proceed from here is to find out what areas Emily and Joe think would be good for putting down seeds and would be authorized by the Town to do so, especially since we're unsure about permission for working on the bike path embankment. This project may not happen this summer since Elaine needs to have more discussion concerning the afore mentioned issues. Karen expressed our appreciation for the Town-wide effort Elaine is making for this project.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Marshall has expressed an interest in stepping down from his position as Recording Secretary. We have appreciated his dedication and commitment to the Friends of Spy Pond Park, serving in this and other various capacities over the years. Karen will begin publicizing this opening for a new Recording Secretary for the Friends of Spy Pond Park.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** September 12, 2021, 7 PM, voted by those present to be continued via Zoom

These minutes were transcribed using the Zoom recording of the meeting as a reference and from text derived from an application called Descript, provided by Marshall McCloskey.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Grossman

Recording Secretary Pro Temp