

**FRIENDS OF SPY POND PARK
MEETING MINUTES
JULY 13, 2025**

INTRODUCTIONS: Karen Grossman, Sandip Agarwal, Lori Tsuruda, Lally Stowell, Megan Chrisman, Adrienne Landry, Christopher Stetson Wilson

MAY 4, 2025, MEETING MINUTES ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS:

The meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Sandip Agarwal will fully assume the Treasurer's position with Citizen's Bank following receipt of Megan Chrisman's notarized paperwork and guidance from Susan Saw when necessary.

Bank Account Balance as of 04/30/2025: \$24,429.94 Bank Account Balance as of 06/30/2025: \$26,636.12			
Income		Expenses	
Contributions via NFG (Network For Good)	\$366.25	Newsletter and Work Day Schedule Printing	\$(532.07)
Dues & Donations (Checks)	\$2312.00		
T-shirt sales	\$60.00		
Total Income	\$2,738.25	Total Expenses	\$(532.07)

¹ Federal and state tax return filings have been completed.

² \$465 Contributions deposited 7/11

³ \$101.87 debited for Go Daddy security renewal 7/10

⁴ CD \$22,268.29; \$5 Metro Credit Union

Relative to the fourth footnote, Karen asked if we could have a reserve account to do maintenance as Robbins Farm or Menotomy Rocks may have. Sandip will research our options for this type of account.

STEWARDSHIP TEAM:

Anne Ellinger posted the Summer Newsletter on bulletin boards on 6/26 and 7/9.

On the topic of park maintenance, Adrienne Landry reported:

On the May 17, 2025, Work Day at Spy Pond Park, we had 12 volunteers, and 6 FSPP members in attendance. All were busy for the two hours. We filled six bags of invasive debris and eight bags of compostable debris.

We worked from excellent notes taken by Sharon Green on the pre-Work Day walk through on Wednesday, May 14. What follows is a summary of work done and in which bed.

- Bed 8 Four volunteers lead by Diana Maggini cleared out invasive plants from Bed 8 (behind the stone wall near the parking lot) and cleared around the three red-twig dogwood planted in 2023.
- Bed 6 Volunteers led by Sharon Green dug out clematis vines from the fence and then transplanted a red-twig dogwood that was getting ragged from some interference from the right side of the bed to the left side.
- Bed 5 With the help of volunteers, Bill Stalcup cut suckers off the cherry tree and bagged them.
- Bed 4 A large patch of Japanese honeysuckle, as well as garlic mustard, was cleared out and four saplings pulled out by volunteers. They also cut down a large, dead plant on the right side of the bed.
- Bed 3 Volunteers cut down a large oak sapling but kept the roots intact.

On the June 21, 2025, Work Day at Spy Pond Park, we had 18 volunteers, 6 of whom were FSPP members. We filled 14 bags of invasive plants, and none of compostable debris. Again, we worked from excellent notes Sharon Green took on the pre-Work Day walk-through with Lally Stowell, Diana Maggini and Adrienne Landry, Stewardship Team members.

Although rainfall so far in 2025, has not been drastically higher than the 30-year average, May's rainfall was 6.92" (30-year average is 3.64"), almost twice the average. It finally started to warm up in June, and invasive plants and native plants grew rampantly. Vines with their long tendrils took off and began to consume other plants.

Several volunteers worked in bed 6 (left of the beach near the playground) as well as bed 3, pulling or digging out the vines. All the other beds had some vines removed. Bittersweet is always a threat to take over. Volunteers clipped new bittersweet vines and put them in small vials with plastic tops (like those used when buying a single rose) filled with distilled white vinegar, an herbicide, to kill them off. They found a lot of Black swallow wort* and took it out of beds 1, 6 and 7.

New plantings so far this year are two more fragrant sumac low grow in bed 3, to replace two fragrant sumac that were transferred to bed 4. There are two Christmas ferns waiting to be planted in plenty of spots.

The Town is looking for a new landscaper who we are hoping will plant 10 - 15 new native shrubs in the planting beds in the fall.

***Information Note - Black swallow wort**

Another particularly problematic invasive plant is black swallow wort.

Wikipedia outlines its ecological impact:

Black swallow wort: It reduces biodiversity, negatively impacts monarch butterfly populations, and can alter plant communities. Monarchs are attracted to it because of its similarity to milkweed, but the larvae cannot survive on it.

Milkweed: Monarchs have a unique and essential relationship with milkweed, as their caterpillars only eat milkweed leaves, and female monarchs only lay their eggs on milkweed plants.

Karen and Adrienne confirmed that Adrienne will contact Minuteman Tech in August to install metal numbers on the planting beds' black fences.

Karen reported:

David Morgan is seeking a new landscaper with LEC Environmental Consultants oversight for further work in the fall in the lower planting beds since Parterre did not follow through in the spring. Hopefully, they will install previously listed 14 shrubs and a few other plants: flowering perennials and switchgrass, do all plant purchases, planting and cleaning Linwood Beach and area in the water nearby. We are waiting to hear the Landscaper's name and what the cost would be to do all the requested work, including the raingarden at Linwood. Seth Anderson and another volunteer named Christine indicated they might trim the dead fronds in the Linwood rain garden in the meantime. (Lally and Adrienne will check if the invasive plants still appear there first; Lally mentioned that they are no longer sticking up but will confirm on Wednesday.)

We'll pay \$3,000 minus the cost of the plants Adrienne already purchased and planted and the Con Comm will foot the bill for the rest, we hope, since they've budgeted \$45,000 for Spy Pond.

We could do this planting in the fall and find another way of watering, i.e., outside volunteers or pay someone. Karen reported to the Park Commission that the temporary

Revegetation signs are still in good condition. They need higher posts since the plants have grown up around them. (Adrienne noted that the post height appears to be standard, so she'll explore either cutting the plants around the posts or moving them to a different location.)

Karen continues to explore having QR codes with reference to a space on our website for the rain garden designs with Emily Snyder's help from the Garden Club. A new FSPP volunteer may help with the graphic design.

Christopher Wilson spoke to the group about his experience with clearing and disposing of discarded fishing line. He cleared fishing line at the pond's edge on the May & June Work Days. Only two members of the fishing line group that Joe Connelly established were interested in reconvening; Natasha Waden has indicated that the town wants to ramp up an educational program and reinstitute fishing line waste receptacles. Christopher has been in touch with people at Hills Pond and other ponds on Facebook. He wants to create a Facebook page or Slack to connect others in the area who can help with discarded fishing line clearing. He finds a lot of fishing line every time he goes to clear. Based on the apparent discarded lure and tackle, he suspects that children and shore fishermen especially may be getting their lines caught in the trees. There has been a movement to pause fishing at Hill Pond and other places; maybe Arlington Con Comm would want to take this on. Christopher has seen a swan at Spy Pond that currently can't extend its neck or fly because it's snagged in a fishing line and lure. Karen asked if Christopher would be willing to join the fishing line group established by the town and he accepted. Lori Tsuruda asked if you need to be in a boat to clear the fishing line and Christopher replied that if on shore, it's best to focus on big masses of line right on the shore (rocks/docks) where people tend to fish the most. Wading also works with water shoes or good sandals. You need something to be able to cut small branches and ideally long tools such as boathooks or tree pruners. Lori noted that People Making a Difference has telescoping pole pruners and will have someone wading in the water this weekend, so they'll work on this. Christopher will bring his kit to an upcoming FSPP Work Day to show tricks/techniques. Karen asked if he would be willing to demonstrate fishing and fishing line best practices on Fun Day (Sept. 13) and he thinks he can be available for this. Karen will put him in contact with Betsy Leondar-Wright, the Fun Day organizer.

Christopher recently saw encouraging signs of baitfish in the pond and shared videos of this with FSPP:

- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rlyYq7-viBhSplLLfIHL0K6AS-IC-y6/view?usp=sharing>
- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rIQKp7L4-X - LWDhdYABqJ53jKxM0y /view?usp=sharing>

Baitfish indicate health and tend to attract bigger fish and birds, so this is a good sign!

Continuing items for the Stewardship Team:

- Contacting the Volunteer Coordinator at the High School to get a watering rotation going via Jenny Babon who will set up a google doc.
- Offering citations or other acknowledgement for folks who volunteer for 4+ Work Days: Adrienne will design something for this purpose. She has picked up ribbons and certificate cardstock as examples to show to the group for discussion. Certificates of achievement may be best for young adults and up, and Lori noted that they can also be used for official demonstration. Karen has drafted some certificate copy and could also sign them. We may even want to make digital versions using Canva/Quark Express/InDesign or a similar tool, and then recipients could print them out on their own. Karen will ask Jamie Cioccio if he can design something with a border and signature lines that uses the FSPP logo.

Karen reported on her communication with Natasha Waden:

- Sent Michael McVey's report of broken equipment near the playhouse in the playground on 6/27.
- Sent details of problems with the path through the park, and possibility of vandalism involved.
- Requested more police oversight in the park.
- Asked status of the fishing committee and contact information on 7/7.

Adrienne asked if we would consider having cameras in the park and Karen thought she remembered that the last time this came up, there were concerns of them being vandalized.

Natasha's response:

I will be meeting with a contractor tomorrow (7_10) to discuss the potholes along the pathway from the park to Linwood Circle. We will need to see what they say and what costs might be before any decisions can be made about how or what repairs can be made. I have walked the area with DPW and they will meet with me and the contractor tomorrow to figure out best steps to fill these area even if it's temporary. Currently, there has been no funding allocated towards this. We will have to see what the cost looks like to determine next steps and explore potential funding sources.

The tree in the playground was removed. It is no longer under warranty, therefore I will work with the tree warden on getting a replacement and figuring out the best location. I believe you had suggested outside the playground along the fence, but the tree warden did not think that would be a good location. (Adrienne suggested transplanting one of the quaking aspen saplings from the bed to the left of the north beach into the playground.)

I have been out to the playground and observed the damaged equipment and will be working to place an order to get replacement parts. Once we get them DPW will install them.

I will look at the location you referenced about the dead branch tomorrow and will work with DPW on getting it removed.

Unfortunately, only 2 of the members of the fishing line group were interested in reconvening, so I am working on an education plan that will roll out this summer that also highlights the reinstitution of fishing line waste receptacles and invite community members to join the fishing line group- as we will need more folks.

WEBSITE:

Daniel Jalkut has brought the database up to date so our notices will reach all who have expressed an interest, including the long lists from the library display and last year's Town Day.

Julie McBride is doing a great job with postings.

OUTREACH:

- **Instagram posting** - No updates from David Nejezchleba or Jenny yet
- **Work Day June 21-** Karen filled in for Jenny
- **Jenny sent Daniel list of volunteers and walk throughs for May and June Work Days on 7/6**

On the topic of Fun Day, Karen reported on Betsy's behalf:

Sept. 13 Fun Day 10 am-1pm (rain date Sept. 14, 1-4pm)

Betsy's plans are shaping up with many volunteers and a new activity of animal origami and a rabbit scavenger hunt. We need more volunteers: 2 face painters, 2 photography assistants, 1 to assist Karen with signups, many for cleanup, a truck or van or big SUV, volunteers to load it up Friday evening and to unload early on Saturday, then re-load and unload Saturday afternoon. If necessary, she'll rent a U-Haul, but we still need multiple strong-back people to fill and empty it at both ends of the festival. (I am less able to do half the hauling than in the years before She got myopathy (exertion intolerance). Putting up and taking down the canopies is another role that needs strong backs and mechanical aptitude. Hopefully we'll get some high school students for face-painting and set-up and clean-up. It's the same 3 wonderful bands as last year, so the music will be fabulous!

In January, the library Board of Trustees voted to rescind the use of library tables for nonprofit organizations. In conversation with Anna Litten, Head Librarian, Karen learned that this was advised by Town Counsel due to liability and financial considerations resulting in possible controversy.

Anna Doctor completed the annual contribution solicitation and will research where we can do our mailings as a nonprofit. We'll need to order more envelopes.

Karen continues to post for a General Vice-President and Outreach help.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Jenny Babon will solicit contributions for the Fall/Winter newsletter with a deadline of Sept. 21.

NEW BUSINESS AND NEXT MEETING DATE: Sept 7 5 PM Zoom

Respectfully submitted,
Megan Chrisman,
Recording Secretary