

FRIENDS OF SPY POND PARK

MEETING MINUTES

July 25, 2023

INTRODUCTIONS: Karen Grossman, Adrienne Landry, Lally Stowell, Julie McBride, Betsy Leondar-Wright, Susan Saw. And Megan Chrisman joined after introductions.

APRIL MEETING MINUTES ADDITIONS & CORRECTIONS: The meeting minutes were approved with the corrections submitted to Karen in advance by Adrienne and already attached to the agenda.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Bank Account Balance as of 04/28/2023: \$14,059.17			
Bank Account Balance as of 07/15/2023: \$15,487.77			
Income		Expenses	
Contributions via NFG (Network For Good)	\$172.50	Website/domain and software	\$(286.34)
Membership dues	\$1,055.00	Sign lamination / liability waiver prints (Work Day)	\$(28.74)
Donations	\$640.62	State filing fees	\$(71.64)
Plant donation	\$25.00	Miscellaneous	\$(77.80)
Total Income	\$1,893.12	Total Expenses	\$(464.52)

Susan reported that the PC filings have been completed. Federal and state filings were completed in April and accounted for in this report. The CDs are for two-year terms and are still accruing interest. Susan will report how much interest has accrued at year end; the current interest is not included in the report, yet. Karen reported that the Network for Good button on our website can be used for donors to fill out their info. and get credit for donating in the park when they do not have cash. Our Zelle account should now be set up and linked to the bank account; whoever is at the outreach table can give Susan's email address to potential donors for their donation to reach our bank account. Susan does not think we have seen any online donations yet, but Karen will check with Lauren about any money donated at the last Work Day. Details about upcoming FSPP initiatives will appear in the next report.

BEAUTIFICATION

Anne Ellinger continues to update the bulletin board; Karen has given her longer staples to help keep the newsletters secure when it's windy.

On the park maintenance front, Karen is thrilled with the work that Adrienne, Lally, and Sharon Greene have been putting in along with the other volunteers.

The group briefly discussed the possibility of providing dog waste bags in the park; previous concerns have included the cost of upkeep/stocking and vandalism.

Adrienne Landry from the Beautification Committee submitted a written report in advance of the meeting:

“There were four Work Days in ten weeks between April 15 and June 10. One was organized by Eco-Fest Day on April 22.

This report covers the last two Work Days, a meeting with the landscaper, Parterre, a meeting with Joe Connelly of Parks and Rec, signage for the beds and a new section of the Newsletter called “Volunteer Spotlight.”

May Work Day There were 17 volunteers. We had a full agenda of taking out invasive plants and finished most of it. Most notably, three volunteers cleared half of the invasive plants, mostly vines, from the bed to the left of North Beach (near the playground); Sharon Green led a group that took out several bags of multi-flora rose cuttings and Bill Stalcup did the same in another area on his own; Several volunteers took out mug wort clusters in several beds as well as a cluster of Queen Anne’s lace.

June Work Day There were 23 volunteers who mostly removed invasive plants. Three families from the Arlington Family Connection participated and took on various jobs that both adults and children could handle. Sharon Green, Linda Clark and another volunteer removed black swallow wort from the beds; three volunteers cleared debris from under previously planted native plants and mulched the around them; Bill Stalcup planted two chokeberry plants.

Linda Clark planted two bearberry and Adrienne Landry planted two asters on non-workdays in June.

Meeting with Parterre Adrienne Landry met with Miles Connors and Alexi Dart-Padover of Parterre on May 16 at the Park to discuss work to be done in each of the beds. They walked the length of the park and Adrienne pointed out the native plants that had been planted over the last three years. At the end of the meeting, Miles said “I like what you are doing here.”

We have been allotted \$7,000 for a contract with Parterre that includes removal of invasive plants and planting native plants. There has been discussion about the use of herbicide for some of the larger plants. If Parterre is going to use herbicide, no matter how little, we will have to get a MESA permit for which there is a fee. David Morgan is working on this. Adrienne will buy the plants from Native Plant Trust for planting in the Fall. Funds for plants will come from the \$591 Arlington Land Trust grant and monies allocated for plants in the FSPP budget. There has been discussion about how much should be allocated for planting and/or invasive plant removal.

Scroll down to continue

Meeting with Joe Connelly of Parks and Rec. Adrienne Landry met with Joe Connelly in the Park to show him problems of concern. They are:

- Watering source in the park - We have 7 new plants this spring and expect to plant 12-15 in the Fall.
- Identification Numbers for the planting beds - I have purchased samples to show you. They will need to be securely adhered to the fences. I showed Joe samples of metal numbers purchased at Shattucks and aluminum sheet metal to put them on and he liked it. To be done in the Fall.
- Cleaning up the beach area
- Holes in new pervious pathway need at least temporary filling.
- Have the lawn-mowing crew weed wack the GRASS ONLY along the bottom on the fence. Joe found out that was part of the contract, and it has been added to the list of work to be done each week.

Signage Karen Grossman and Adrienne edited a draft for a sign to be placed in the park planting beds. Adrienne sent it to David Morgan for approval. It encourages folks to not enter the beds.

Volunteer Spotlight - Because we have had several loyal volunteers, we decided to highlight a few for the FSPP Newsletter. This time it was three women from Wakefield who have come several times: Alicia Brennan, Kaitlyn Sample and Anna McCormick; Monet Rosenberg, and Bill Stalcup. Adrienne is hoping to make this a regular column.

Adrienne will meet up with Alexi after the FSPP meeting and ask Parterre to get started on the last bed behind the stone wall to attack some invasive plants. She also reported that one of the benches in the center of the park near the fragrant sumac had been vandalized. Betsy and Adrienne also noted there are two big potholes developing on one of the stone steps, which Adrienne has already pointed out to Joe Connelly during a walkthrough. Adrienne is thinking of filling the potholes in with the pile of gravel near our shed. Karen asked if the two big metal objects had been moved away from the right side of the shed; Adrienne and Lally couldn't remember but suspected they had. There are now yard waste bags from the previous Work Day that hadn't been collected but Lally believes they will be collected soon.

Draft of the text for the revegetation area signs:

REVEGETATION AREA

Please do not enter this area.

Walking here causes shoreline erosion. We are restoring this area because overuse has damaged it.

We are replacing harmful, invasive plants with healthy native ones. They need space to grow and get established.

Since the result will be a healthier, more beautiful Spy Pond, we thank you for not entering this area.

Find out more: < A QR code will direct people to a special section of the FSPP site for more information.

Draft of the text for the new revegetation section of the FSPP sit

INFORMATION FOR THE QR CODE ON THE SIGNAGE FOR THE PARK

2020-2023

The current round of work at Spy Pond Park started in 2020 with the Conservation Commission obtaining Community Preservation Funding to secure the Spy Pond shoreline and curb erosion. A roll of coir fascine (organic matter wrapped in twine) was placed at the shoreline. This will allow future plantings to develop extensive root systems and secure the soil there. The coir fascine will disintegrate later and the root systems of the plants will take over.

Another goal for the FSPP volunteers has been to clear out invasive plants in the park planting beds and to replace them with native plants. Invasive plants add very little to the local environment. They take over quickly and vie for nutrients that all plants need. They supply minimally nutritious seeds that wildlife depend on.

In contrast, native plants support wildlife native to the area. It has taken native plants and animals millions of years to evolve to a system of mutual support - otherwise known as an ecosystem. Since 2021, the volunteers have planted fragrant sumac, winterberry red sprite, buttonbush, yarrow, viburnum dentatum (arrowwood), red-twig dogwood, bearberry, asters and chokeberry. A bright spot occurred after removing a large area of invasive plants, milkweed, aster, ferns and a chokeberry began to grow there!

2022 was a tough season for plants and volunteers. The heat waves, drought, over-growth of invasive plants and poison ivy in several beds made work more difficult. We learned that productivity depends not only on man/woman power, but nature as well, and nature is unpredictable!

We can always use help. Check the Friends of Spy Pond Park website for contact information.

Adrienne Landry for
Friends of Spy Pond Park
July 2023

Karen opened discussion of where the revegetation signs should go. Logos for the Conservation Commission (ConComm), Town of Arlington, and FSPP will appear on the top of the sign. We may try a plastic sign the first year and move to a more permanent sign type later, similar to the ones we used for the Work Day—attaching a laminated sign with velcro to corrugated cardboard. Adrienne suggested putting one sign somewhere in the center of the park that explains the whole thing, with smaller signs in each planting bed. Since the park commissioners will decide where to put the signs, Karen will ask to add the signs and their location to the next Park Commission meeting agenda on September 12.

Regarding the Parterre funding, Adrienne will buy the plants and Parterre will plant them. We're not sure how the money will be divided up; Karen thinks it will be billed as Parterre puts in the time. Susan asked if the plant costs will be reimbursed to us. Adrienne responded that the money will come out of last year's \$591 grant as well as an additional \$250 allotment from FSPP. Adrienne will ask Arlington Land Trust/FSPP for reimbursement if it goes over those amounts.

On the topic of park renovation, Karen is concerned about the new sand at North Beach and its maintenance. The DPW cleaned up the beach area at Linwood Circle, but Karen is unsure about maintaining the path to keep the sand from North Beach blocking up the porous path and having the path vacuumed. Loose pebbles from the path can be carried into the pond with stormwater runoff. Karen will keep asking David Morgan what will get

done by either DPW or the contractor, and she may also ask to add that item to the next ConComm meeting agenda.

Lisa Reynolds has raised objections to the location of the portable toilets on behalf of abutters and visitor who may find them unsightly where they are. Karen referred her to Joe Connelly, who said there were open meetings about the design of the park and that the crew team requested their current location. Lisa has said that the crew team did not notify abutters about changes to the parking lot location, including chopping down trees. Joe will add this to the agenda for the 9/12 Park Commissioners meeting. Lally suggested keeping one portable toilet where they are now and one where they used to be in the crew team's lot. Karen was unaware that there were now two portable toilets; Adrienne suggested going back to just one. Betsy and Karen wondered whether something could screen the toilets from view.

WEBSITE

Daniel Jalkut is keeping watch over the PO Box and managing the database and MailChimp, as usual. Information about who works on the Work Days, other than students, needs to go to him for crediting.

Julie submitted a written report in advance of the meeting:

“Will update the photo gallery when I have a chance sometime this summer.

- Keeping the site updated as I am informed of relevant news/events to post.
- Replaced old photo of playground in photo slideshow on home page with photo I took of new playground.
- Made a few minor visual changes to the site last month to improve website accessibility.”

Karen thanked Julie for her work making the website more accessible. Adrienne has one more edit from Karen to send to Julie for the Work Days page. Julie asked if Jenny was setting up the QR codes and Karen thought she might need the content first. Adrienne will send the content to Julie ASAP; Julie will then check where it fits on the FSPP site and send Jenny the URL for QR code generation. The goal is to have everything related to the sign(s) ready to present to the Park Commission for approval and discussion on size/location at their Sept. 12 meeting.

OUTREACH:

Jenny Babon submitted a written report in advance of the meeting:

“I'm working on publicity for the Work Days (both mailing list and on Facebook) and taking photos when I can during the Work Days. I will be working on this year's Fun Day poster with Betsy and will also be actively promoting it on Facebook once we have all the details set. Let me know if there's anything else I can do to help.”

Karen reported that Phinney Morisson has resigned, and Karen is looking for replacements while also taking over communication with volunteers. Karen reported that we've had 75 volunteers so far on Work Days and other days, putting in a collective 1,707.5 hours! This includes 59 admin hours and 16 meeting hours. Karen encouraged everyone involved with FSPP to tell her how much time they're putting in, which will go into a preliminary report for the Town MS-4 permit.

About Fun Day, Betsy submitted a written report in advance of the meeting:

“Ann LeRoyer of ALT doesn't want to do tours of Elizabeth Island, but we've got Tinkergarten, both fairy-house makers, Jan's scavenger hunt plus my puzzles, Lally and Nancy Gray on a craft, Anne E on face-painting, and one of the brass bands - so it will be lively, definitely!

I could use ~8 more volunteers at stations, plus set-up and cleanup.”

Betsy is looking for volunteers, especially able-bodied volunteers who like kids and nature for the bark boats activity. Our new musical act, Cousin Louie, will bring their own amps, and we will also have a brass band. Betsy will discuss with Lally which craft she wants to lead. Karen suggested that she can get high school students through HS guidance departments; Jenny can assist with this. The National Honor Society from St. Agnes Church will, hopefully, water some of the plants planted in the fall; Karen will email Betsy their contact info. Susan asked if we post our volunteer needs on the Town Facebook page or other community groups in Arlington; Karen directed her to Jenny to find out where we can advertise. Betsy stressed that most volunteers come through networks, so get the word out to your friends! Jenny can also post on the PTO groups at the local schools. We will need people who can do heavy lifting to load/unload from cars and erect canopies. Karen will reach out to Paula Tussler. The local Tinkergarten (Mystic Valley Nature Play) and the fairy dance troupe with Peggy Fenner will team up for an activity, we'll have a "read the leaves" activity again, along with button-making and other crafts, new/old scavenger hunts, and a toddler table.

Karen reported that the Town of Arlington needs statistics from us regarding stormwater management to satisfy MS4 requirements at the end of 2023, i.e., numbers of volunteers and hours contributed to various activities. She also noted that Adrienne was concerned about one of the "There's No Place like Home" discs being placed on the black fence that might invite more signs to be posted.

Karen is still looking for volunteers for the Assistant Mailing Coordinator and Bulk Mailing Coordinator position; Marshall will continue doing this job in the meantime. We have refined the method with some help from a contact in Waltham. The mailing is done twice a year, and although it is involved, someone savvy about computer report filing could do well using his instructions.

COMMUNICATIONS:

The FSPP Fall/Winter 2023 Newsletter submission deadline is October 15. We are looking for observations on the fall and pieces on Fun Day. The next Work Day is Aug. 19.

NEW BUSINESS AND NEXT MEETING DATE: September 17, 7:30 PM Zoom TBA

Respectfully submitted,

Megan Chrisman

Recording Secretary