

**FRIENDS OF SPY POND PARK
MEETING MINUTES
September 17, 2023**

INTRODUCTIONS:

Karen Grossman, Marshall McCloskey, Lally Stowell, Adrienne Landry, Sharon Green, Anna Doctor

JULY MEETING MINUTES ADDITIONS & CORRECTIONS:

Approval of the meeting minutes was tabled until attendees have a chance to review and send comments to Karen.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Website donate button for payment in the park with documentation at the outreach table, Venmo and now PayPal to: ssaw.fspp@gmail.com

Bank Account Balance as of 07/15/2023: \$15,487.77			
Bank Account Balance as of 09/15/2023: \$16,047.05; \$15,991.41 after outstanding balances			
Income		Expenses	
Contributions via NFG (Network For Good)	\$122.50	Sign printing / lamination / stands	\$(596.73)
Membership dues	\$260.00	Fun Day poster printing	\$(207.64)
Donations	\$873.00	Miscellaneous	\$(13.49)
T-shirt sales (Fun Day)	\$66.00		
Total Income	\$1,321.50	Total Expenses	\$(817.86)

Karen was pleased to report the following proceeds from Fun Day: \$66 t-shirts+\$25 membership +\$113 cash donations= **\$204**. This may be slightly down from last year, but Karen will confirm with Susan.

Susan drafted an excellent, detailed letter to an FSPP member who had concerns about the donation acknowledgement process, explaining the role that volunteers assume in carrying out donation pickups, recording, deposits, and acknowledgements and thanked him for his understanding and patience. Karen thanked Susan for this communication.

Susan has created a PayPal account for donations in the park. The person needs to use Susan’s email and Susan will move these payments into the FSPP bank account.

BEAUTIFICATION:

Next Work Day Sept. 30

Adrienne Landry of the Beautification Committee reported:

“This report covers the July and August Work Days, work done by the landscaper, Parterre, holes in the pathway, a possible candidate for “Volunteer Spotlight”, renaming Beautification Committee.

July Work Day - July 22

We had 20 volunteers for the July Work Day. Work most notably done was clearing out several bags of Japanese honeysuckle vine from Bed 8 (behind stone wall) by three volunteers, Connor, Nicole and Chris. Bed

8 is now ready for transferring Joe-Pye-weed and goldenrod. Other tasks included Sharon Green clearing the Solomon seal patch in bed 2, removing black swallow wort in several beds, and cutting down a rather large buckthorn near Viburnum on the slope. They collected 8 bags of invasive plants and 8 bags of yard waste. Also, three volunteers mulched plants in Beds 3 and 5.

A parent and child team, Jen and Claire, offered to be part of a watering team for the fall plantings. The child attends St. Agnes School and would like to get volunteer hours for herself and the Jr. National Honor Society. The parent put me in contact with the school and we are waiting for Parterre to plant so we can make a schedule.

Aug. Work Day - August 19

We had 16 volunteers for the August Work Day. We continued work in Bed 8, removing Japanese Honeysuckle and Queen Anne's Lace. Alicia and Kaitlyn continued removing vines and phragmites from Bed 6. Bill S. and Ben removed three large False Indigo plants from Bed 3. Sharon sawed off a large branch from the black walnut tree and cleared out more from the Solomon seal patch.

Everyone participated in removing the debris and carrying all the bags to the shed. This has become a practice. They collected 11 bags of invasive plants and 1 bag of yard waste.

Parterre

FSPP relations with Parterre have increased this year. I can work directly with Kayleen and Alexi. Kayleen is doing most of the physical work at the Park. She has worked in Beds 6, 7 and 8. Bed 6 is overrun with invasive plants. Alexi is helping select proper plants and buying them. The plants will also be planted by Parterre.

I have learned that planting is best done in the Spring and the Fall. However, no one told me plants are impossible to find in the Fall. Parterre has access to more plant outlets and will buy Rosa Virginiana to replace the False Indigo taken out in Bed 3. I purchased three more Red-Twig Dogwood for Bed 6, to the left of North Beach.

Holes in the path

There are two holes in the new pathway near one of the steps leading down to the pond. I met the President of the Arlington/Belmont Crew Team while at the shed and asked her about the pile of gravel near our shed. She said we could take a few buckets full to fill those holes as a temporary fix.

We are still dealing with small bits of rubber separating from the path surface and sand from North beach potentially negatively impacting the pervious path.

New planting bed signage

I worked with FSPP President Karen Grossman, Publicity Chair Jenny Babon, Website Developer Julie McBride, and Arlington's Environmental Planner and Conservation Agent David Morgan over several months on the sign design and a page associated with the Work Days on our website. This signage explains the basic elements of the Conservation Commission's Spy Pond Erosion Control Project and our subsequent work in the SPP planting beds. Karen attended the Sept. 12, 2023 Recreation Commission Meeting and presented our proposal to place 2 of the signs in beds 3 and 6. The Commissioners voted unanimously to accept our proposal, expressing gratitude and praise for our great work along the shoreline and in the park, in general.

Volunteer Spotlight

I am thinking that Linda Clark would be a very good candidate for Volunteer Spotlight in the newsletter, as she has helped this year in instructing us in how to plant shrubs properly and helping to plant them, coming to all Work Days, purchasing and planting two plants near the Viburnum, transplanting Ground Ivy to fill in the area, and working on her own time removing invasive plants at the bed near Linwood Circle.

Renaming the Beautification Committee

Lally, Sharon and I have considered changing the name of the Beautification Committee as it does not describe what we do. Some names we came up with are:

Upkeep Committee (or Team)
Revitalization Committee (or Team)
Stewardship Committee (or Team)
Gardening Team
Green Team
Greening Team”

Karen thanked Adrienne for strengthening the FSPP relationship with Parterre. Adrienne will inform Joe Connelly, Director of Parks and Recreation, about the plans for filling the holes.

Joe said we should expect the signs to be pulled out of the ground by passersby as they are on wire structures that can be easily pulled out. As this is considered a pilot posting, we will meet with the Park Commissioners in March to report on how it's going. Adrienne can add some U-shape staples to the sign wires to help prevent pulling on them, but the sign may still be able to be pulled from the top. Karen and Adrienne will discuss strategies offline. Lally made a motion to fund the revegetation sign and purchase however many signs make sense for the duration of the trial period, and the motion passed.

Adrienne proposed showing the Park Commissioners the work we have done since we have put in over thirty shrubs over three years, perhaps after seven more plants go in during the October Work Day.

Karen and Adrienne will discuss the Volunteer Spotlight for the February newsletter offline and Adrienne/Jenny will coordinate getting a picture of our spotlighted volunteer.

On the topic of renaming the committee, David Morgan told Karen that Stewardship for the town is property not owned by the town. She will run the suggested name by him to see if it works to also append “for SPP”. We can also consider synonyms for “stewardship”. The renaming would be in place for next year.

Adrienne corrected a part of the July minutes about Parterre using a weed wrench instead of herbicides. Adrienne also bought a shovel. Lally paid for it, so she will submit a request for reimbursement with her other items at the end of the season.

On the topic of park renovation, Karen and Adrienne talked to Joe Connelly about the path surface through the park. Karen will touch base again before the park commissioners meeting. The “flotilla” of bicycles and strollers at Fun Day was impressive. Karen asked if anyone has used the new entrance to the playground and Adrienne thought she had seen people using it. People using wheelchairs are now able to get into the playground, which is great.

The group will discuss the location of portable toilets at the next Park Commissioners meeting, considering Lisa Reynolds' objection to the present locations. There is currently one portable toilet at the playground and one at Scannell Field (there are no longer two at the playground). Sharon observed that the toilets used to be not as

accessible for people with wheelchairs, but Karen noted that the crew team may want to move one back towards the tunnel in order to have easier access.

WEBSITE:

Daniel Jalkut reported: "I'm keeping watch over the PO Box and managing the database and MailChimp as usual."

Julie McBride reported:

"2022 photo album added; revegetation project page added"

Karen worked with Julie to caption the most representative photos for the website gallery. The revegetation page will be linked to the sign from the discussion above via a QR code on the sign.

OUTREACH:

Jenny Babon reported:

"Facebook postings as usual and will be sending Work Day reminders for the last two Work Days of the year. Also following up with AHS, they haven't updated the volunteer contact info. on the Community service offerings. I sent an email previously, but it might be better to give them a phone call." (Karen volunteered to do the phone call)

Karen reported that (Lauren Bonilla) submitted \$20 to Susan Saw for a membership and donation that had been made in the park. We continue to solicit on volunteermatch.com for an assistant for Lauren's communication on Town Day and with volunteers before and during Work Days. In the meantime, Lauren is replying to volunteer emails sent to the FSPP gmail account. The primary need is for someone to do the paperwork and communication with volunteers. Lauren is preparing for Town Day and looking for people to help her; Sharon, Adrienne, Karen, and Adrienne have signed up, so Karen will ask Lauren if she needs more. Adrienne may also check if Monet is available.

Betsy Leondar-Wright reported:

"Wowie-kazowie, did we ever show a lot of kids an awfully fun time! I estimate there were more than 400 participants. More than 45 volunteers made Fun Day happen!

Gratitude due:

- Especially to all the high school students who pitched in on set-up, clean-up and assisting with every activity - in particular Emma and Janae who stayed until the bitter end. We needed your strength and your energy!
- The music was terrific - many thanks to Cousin Louie for the bluesy sound, and to the LBE Brass Band for the oompa sound!
- I want to give a special shout-out to my neighbors Kelly and John, Deb and Peter, Begabati, and Anne and Christopher who kindly lent their cars and/or their loading/unloading efforts to get all the tables, chairs and boxes from and to my house - on short notice after we realized that other transport options had fallen through. My spouse Gail coordinated all that loading and unloading and brought water and snacks to all the volunteers.
- Leah the Faery Queen and Lauren, both resplendent in their costumes, ran out of boxes to be decorated as fairy houses, and so improvised with folded paper.

- The bark boats were such a huge hit that it's hard to believe it was Lynn's first time in charge of that activity, with Nick and Noelle assisting. A whole flotilla filled the pond's edge.
- The face-painters always had a line of kids waiting; thank you to painters Anne, Annie and the intrepid high school volunteers Cecilia, Carolyn and Mea who kept painting for the entire 3 hrs. despite the heat.
- There was more for preschool toddlers to do than in any past year, thanks to Jenny and Danielle at the coloring table, and to Lauren and Becca from Tinkergarten / Mystic Valley Nature Play, and thanks to an extra abundance of donated toddler toys.
- Sarah and Jan hid their creative bird-clues around the park, and they and I puzzled the minds of dozens of kids about how to care for the pond; we gave out prizes that included more than 30 pairs of binoculars.
- There was always a crowd at the leaf-print table, which was so well-organized by Lally and Nancy.
- Cecily brought the cardboard disks that were built into fanciful towers and walls.
- We had two info. tables, with Ann and Peter staffing the Arlington Land Trust one and Karen Grossman staffing the FSPP one - and the Mystic River Watershed Authority was well represented with a fish photo-cutout board.
- Fred Moses took photographs that no doubt we'll all get to enjoy in the next FSPP newsletter and on the website; Danielle collected the names of the people in the photos.
- How do we get such a big turn-out year after year? Several officers of the Friends of Spy Pond Park pitch in on publicity: Lally Stowell walked posters to dozens of locations up and down Mass Ave; FSPP President Karen Grossman and Outreach/Communications Co-chair Jamie Ciocco got the announcement out to the FSPP list; and Publicity Chair Jenny Babon made the poster and plugged the event on social media. We're a great team.

And the weather cooperated with us! Until the day before, it looked like Fun Day might get shortened by rain, but it held off until the festival was over. Thanks, Mother Nature!"

Karen is pleased to announce that Anna Doctor will be assisting Marshall in the Assistant Bulk Mailing Coordinator role. Anna lives in North Cambridge working in Graphic Design and counts biking and ultimate frisbee among her interests. Karen recommended her as a candidate to work with Marshall to coordinate the next bulk mailing. She will put them in touch with each other to discuss when/where in October to get together, at least two weeks before the mailing happens, and Marshall will report back details to Karen. Karen asked if Anna was interested in doing any further writing or artistic work with FSPP and she and Anna will talk in more detail at a later date. Karen may put Anna's name on the outreach list for the next newsletter. Welcome aboard, Anna!

COMMUNICATIONS:

The Fall/Winter 2023 Newsletter content deadline will be **October 15**. Lauren has already sent out a request for submissions. Karen may use some excerpts from the meeting reports. Lally will communicate with Jenny and Anna about a potential photo op on the Sept. 30 Work Day.

NEW BUSINESS AND NEXT MEETING DATE: November 12, 7:00 PM Zoom TBA

Respectfully submitted,
Megan Chrisman
Recording Secretary