

FRIENDS OF MARSHALL SQUARE PARK
MINUTES OF MEETING ON APRIL 16, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Jeff Beitel. In attendance were Anne Walters, Holly Brown, Jen Long, Gordon Woodrow, Betsy Woodrow, Tony Stancato, Jennifer Seaver, Eric Miller, Lane Randall, Jim Salvas, and Veronica Balassone.

--Unfortunately the minutes of the last meeting were neither approved nor corrected. This procedure was delayed in order to clarify an item, and it was not returned to in the course of the evening. The minutes will be revised as needed and distributed for approval at a later date.

--Jeff gave the Treasurer's Report in the absence of Linda Scott. He encouraged anyone with questions regarding the financial statements to email Linda. Receipts for the bench order balance have been collected for the most part, although the funds from Parks and Recreation have not yet been received. Current assets are \$49,510, of which \$7,674 is temporarily restricted for the fountain restoration. A discussion occurred regarding membership dues and it was reiterated that members are not "billed" for dues, but rather the Progressive Plates event is the vehicle for collecting dues at the beginning of the year. Some concern was expressed that no effort is made to reach out to former members to urge them to renew their membership. Jen Long indicated that this might be addressed through her social media efforts.

--Jeff reminded all that the Park Clean-up was scheduled for Saturday, April 18th, 9-10:30 a.m. Wood chips would not be delivered from a donor as there will not be enough volunteers to spread them. Anne and Jeff and Dean Diehl may try to find a few scout troops to assist in a future attempt.

--Jim Salvas reported on the Music in Marshall Summer Concerts scheduled for June 18th, July 16th and August 20th. The main sponsor is Kit Anstey. An individual sponsor has been secured for the first concert, but are still needed for the second and third at the \$1000 level. In addition \$500 sponsors are still needed for face painting and the picnic. This sponsorship is advertised with a sign placed on the grounds. The band line-up is Sin Brothers for June, John Grecia for July, Back to Life for August. The lead sponsor is advertised on a gazebo banner, individual sponsors and the band on a second gazebo banner, and all sponsors on the large banner at the fountain corner. Volunteers are needed to hand flyers out in advance of the concerts.

--The MSP Tree Walk is still scheduled for Saturday, July 18th, 10:30 a.m. Eric Miller is to get information to Lane for an email to members.

--The first order of commemorative benches has been received; they are stored in the Swiss Cottage awaiting installation. Also, new trash receptacles are ready for installation with Jeff's assistance in locating them.

--Lane Randall began the By-Laws discussion. It was felt by most present that because of Rose Stancato's absence, the item should be tabled until she was available. Lane indicated that further progress on the By-Laws could not take place until the list of questions she distributed were answered. Copies of FMSP OPERATING GUIDELINES, which had replaced FMSP BY-LAWS, were also distributed. Questions regarding the nature of the organization, whether formal by-laws are needed, etc. have been

posed. Tony Stancato urged a formal structure in keeping with the amount of serious expenditures and fundraising taking place for the fountain restoration. By-Laws have the force of formality. There was not a lot of support from those present for creating Operating Guidelines as opposed to By-Laws.

Jeff was of the opinion that FMSP should have By-Laws, an Annual Meeting at which the members can vote for a board and officers and bring up issues; that there be a minimum number of meetings of the board and officers per year with a business meeting held beforehand. Also that the board include the officers.

Jim thought the board should include officers and committee chairs.

There were questions about transitioning boards. It was suggested that the annual meeting be in March and that on the agenda would be any by-law changes as well as election of officers. Since this did not occur in March 2015, perhaps a special meeting can be called in the fall.

Tony Stancato suggested that a board, to keep it small, typically would include a chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer.

Lane asked that all suggestions regarding the By-Laws, Operating Guidelines, be sent to her by Wednesday, April 21st.

--The Fundraising Committee made no report as it has not met recently.

--Eric Miller reported for the Membership Committee. It was initially thought that new members could be found through real estate offices; however, not enough new residents are moving into the park's surroundings to warrant this effort. Eric would like to work with Jen Long to develop a social media approach to former FMSP members. Linda Scott has five years of member lists with emails and house addresses that could be used. Jeff commented that there is no existing structured approach to contacting former members. Tony Stancato commented that within a four block radius of the park there are several apartment complexes and that all occupants are registered at the borough hall. Incentives for twenty-somethings to join may include a free introductory membership to FMSP.

--Anne Walters reported on the Fountain Restoration Committee's progress. Donor Levels have been defined and proposed ways to honor them at the fountain site have been developed. Tony Stancato explained that naming rights would be secured by a principal benefactor with a \$50,000 donation. The committee is seeking \$10,000 donations from three additional major benefactors. These four donations will be acknowledged with bronze name plaques on the four compass points of the fence surrounding the fountain. On the perimeter stone border outside of the fence there will be thirty-six stone sections available for inscriptions of donors. A \$5000 donation will be acknowledged on a stone inscribed with that donor's name alone in a larger font, two names per stone at \$2500 per donor, and four names inscribed on a stone at \$1250 per name. This fundraising strategy honors contributions at all different levels.

Heritage Metalworks will restore the fountain for approximately \$25,000. It was acknowledged that Tony Stancato's son works with the company. The fountain basin may cost around \$75,000, and the fence restoration may cost around \$16,000. A new fence will be fabricated to replicate the existing which is severely damaged. Additional brickwork and landscaping costs will likely bring the total to approximately \$200,000 for the project.

The committee would like to proceed with the restoration of the fountain by Heritage Metalworks. They expect the process to take 3 months' time. Their quote dated September 14th of last year will be honored - \$25,822. A deposit of half is required to begin. Gordon made a motion to release \$13,000 for a deposit to begin the cast iron restoration, Ronnie seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

It was acknowledged that the Friends of Marshall Square Park are indeed the owners of the fountain but not the ground on which it will stand or the brick basin. As a result FMSP is committed to its upkeep.

A meeting is scheduled for May 4th with the Vice President of Borough Council and the Chair of the Public Works, Recreation and Environment Subcommittee. On May 12, Jeff and Anne will meet with that subcommittee of council and on the 19th attend the working session of council.

Ronnie expressed concern about the risk of vandalism at the fountain site and suggested a security camera be considered and included in the plans and budget.

--Jen Long distributed her proposal for Social Media and is interested in gaining more recognition for FMSP. She suggested creating contests on park "happenings" which might include uploading or submitting pictures from your favorite park events, and the one with the most "likes" wins a prize, perhaps an end-of-summer picnic in the park. Another suggestion was posting a you-tube video every other month of a park tour, or interviews with people using the park, as well as videos showing the progression of the fountain restoration. In the fall, a contest prize might be tickets to Progressive Plates 2016 or a one-year membership.

Jim suggested that a budget be created for social media. Eric wants to see outreach beyond current membership, and Tony suggested linking it to The Lofts apartments. Jim moved that FMSP budget \$200 for social media. Gordon seconded the motion and it passed.

--No further progress has been made with regard to MSP Playground improvement; however Gordon would like to contact Heather Gallo to discuss his ideas for a timber-framed play castle for the playground.

--The next meeting is scheduled for May 14th. It will be the last meeting until the fall.

--The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Veronica Balassone