

FRIENDS OF MARSHALL SQUARE PARK
MINUTES OF MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 29, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Jeff Beitel. In attendance were Jim Salvas, Lane Randall, Eric Miller, Lee Miller, Anne Walters, Linda Scott, Mary Jane Rogan, Jen Long, Kathy Talley, Betsy Woodrow, Pat Lowe and Veronica Balassone.

--MINUTES of the last meeting were approved as revised with the addition of "e-blasts, website blog post" to the marketing plans for the Run/Walk as requested by Lane.

--Linda gave the TREASURER'S REPORT. She pointed out that on the balance sheet the checking account is split into two parts; the general fund and the fundraising fountain funds. At this time the fountain funds are running low due to the pace of pledge collection and the costs of the start-up of the fountain project. A little over \$35,000 of pledged funds have not been collected/deposited and current accounts payable due within 30 days is \$43,000. Linda reported that funds will need to be taken from the general fund to pay the bills. This had been anticipated and was "part of the plan" anyway. The current balance in that general fund is \$33,619.

What is not shown on the balance sheet is about \$30,000 currently being held by the Friends of West Chester Parks and Recreation. \$27,000 of that is included in the \$35,000 pledge figure mentioned above. FMSP is waiting for the check from them. It has been discouraging to wait as long as 60 days for receipt of funds that are to flow through this 501c3 organization to FMSP. The current FWCP & R treasurer is a CPA and it is hoped that the funds earmarked for FMSP will be received in a more timely manner.

The Receipts and Disbursements report shows donations year-to-date far exceed the prior year. Donations for memorial benches and coping stones total \$102,500 which includes recognized pledges. It was pointed out that fountain expenses exceed donations.

The 2nd Annual Run/Walk expenses totaled a little over \$700. The event was adversely affected by the rescheduling of the event to later in the day due to a wedding event in the park that afternoon, and possibly by the Pope's visit to Philadelphia that weekend.

With regard to the fountain fundraising, Linda at this time expects about \$130,000 in pledges. In addition, there is \$30,000 in the general fund available. Linda is keeping records of pledges made, and funds which "flow-through" from Friends of West Chester Parks and Recreation.

--The summer concerts in the park were well attended. Fundraising results were not yet available. Steve Gallo has indicated he would like to find someone to take over his lead role in this event. More help is needed for next year's concerts and in particular finding more sponsors for the concerts. Kit Anstey has been a core sponsor, Thrivent Financial & Jerry Wisneswki have been important supporters.

--Unfortunately, the large sugar maple that damaged the Swiss Cottage is removed. Other trees in the park are under watch. A burr oak near the maple has dieback. Jeff is on the Shade Tree Commission which looks to assess cabling and pruning needs. The sweet gum near the playground is of concern. It is showing signs of decay when tested with the resistograph tool. It may need to be removed.

--All trash receptacles have been replaced in the park and fully paid for by the borough. All new benches ordered and installed in the park have been sponsored to date. One more sponsorship is needed to place a new order of 4 benches. We plan on ordering them in February to get free shipping if it is offered again.

--The Hickman building proposal is proceeding through the Planning Commission process. After heeding the concerns of the community, its revised plans are for a lower building set further back from the sidewalks and with a gable roof design.

--An insurance claim has been filed with the borough to repair the Swiss Cottage roof damaged by the fallen maple tree. Jeff wants to see a reinforcement of the roof framing and sheathing before the wood shingles are installed. He will price that option. FMSP may have to subsidize the borough's contribution for the repair. In former days, this building had been used for story book readings. At this time it is used by FMSP to store the grill and tables for the concerts.

--The FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE report was given by Betsy Woodrow. Four members met the week prior to discuss concerns about communication and leadership of the committee. It was felt that the Fall Party could have been salvaged if the group had been called together to address the situation. A meeting is scheduled for October 6th to address reorganization and regrouping of the committee.

At this time, despite Heather Gallo's best efforts to make it a success, the Run/Walk is not going to be scheduled again for next year. The committee feels it is being spread too thin. Efforts will be focused on the 2016 Progressive Plates scheduled for February 6th. It is hoped that it can be concentrated on the southeast corner of the park. Two hosts have been secured on Franklin Street. Early save the date and marketing efforts are being planned, and the committee would like to utilize a Wild Apricot template to get the word out. The committee would like direct access to send its announcements out to the membership to drum up participation for its fundraising events. Jeff encouraged the committee to have written plans and timetables for the major events to stay on schedule and avoid cancellation of any event, as happened with the Fall Party.

--Eric Miller reported on the MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE, of which he is the lone member at this time. He utilized Linda's list of past members and sent out reminder notices regarding membership dues and 15-20 new renewals were received as a result. An invitation to join FMSP will be sent out in early January along with the Plates invitation. Eric would like to target new residents in the borough, in particular residents of The Lofts on Chestnut Street and those eventually moving into the large apartment complex on Chestnut and No. Matlack. Linda mentioned that the manager at Sharpless Works had invited her to send membership info. It was felt by Eric that using Facebook and the FMSP website were not really successful forms of outreach and would like to see press releases.

--Anne Walters reported on the FOUNTAIN COMMITTEE, which met in September. Work has begun on the fountain basin. Pebble Pools has fenced the site and surrounding trees, and has excavated the basin. The 3 original brick pedestals have been removed. They are waiting for the fountain equipment. Meetings have taken place with electricians, and soon a meeting will take place with the plumber regarding the water connection. The Fountain Committee is recommending that the interior of the basin be upgraded to the pebble tech finish instead of painted plaster. This upgraded finish has a 20 year warranty. The fence surrounding the fountain will be replaced but the original acorn finials have been salvaged and will be put on the new fence.

Jeff is the general contractor. Bob Service of Pebble Pools is donating his commission for the job to FMSP. Pebble Pools is the lead contractor.

The current work being performed is Phase I of the fountain restoration. The goal for the fall is to install the mechanical equipment, the plumbing and electrical work, and build the pump enclosure structure. The coping stones will be laid and the fence will be installed next March. Hopefully by the end of October the fountain can be set in place. The projected final cost at this time is \$220,000. Plans for the fountain can be viewed on the FMSP website.

Jim Salvas suggested that when all is done, all materials related to the restoration should be gathered and donated to the Chester County Historical Society. Also he mentioned that an article is to be published about the restoration in the West Chester and Chadds Ford Life Magazine.

Ronnie suggested signage near the fountain informing the public how it can donate to the project.

--Gordon Woodrow is working on an estimate for a playhouse for the PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE. Jen Long & Heather Gallo are researching grant opportunities. Heather is looking into ADA compliance issues. Jeff is hopeful that play areas can be redefined as two play areas connected by paths.

--A general discussion ensued about the proposed BY-LAWS. Lane distributed a copy which incorporated previously suggested revisions. Some present felt no need for them and others strongly supported having by-laws. Benefits included organizational direction, clarity regarding election of officers and operating guidelines. It was emphasized that they can always be modified in the future and will function as a general framework to set the principles for FMSP.

Rather than prolong the process, Lee Miller moved to adopt the by-laws as distributed by Lane at the meeting. 6 present voted in favor, 3 opposed, and 1 abstained. The motion was carried.

--Lane Randall requested review and approval of a new resizable logo to be used on letterhead and other printed materials. Lee moved to adopt the letterhead, Betsy seconded and the motion carried.

--Eric wishes to have a general membership meeting on December 1st at the Side Bar. It was agreed that even though it may not bring in funds, and might actually cost FMSP as last year's gathering, it is of benefit to encourage members to get together in a social setting. Progress on the fountain could be presented.

--Luminaries in the Park will be done again this year on December 4th. However, only houses around the park will be included.

--Leaves will not be mulched in the park this year.

--The meeting schedule for the officers and any FMSP members interested in attending will be rescheduled to the 2nd Thursday of the months of September, October, November, January through May. This allows members and officers to attend Uptown Entertainment events on the third Thursdays as well as relevant Borough meetings. The next meeting will take place on November 12th.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Veronica Balassone