

FRIENDS OF MARSHALL SQUARE PARK  
MINUTES OF MEETING ON JANUARY 14, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Jeff Beitel. In attendance were Anne Walters, Linda Scott, Lane Randall, Jim Salvas, Betsy Woodrow, Eric Miller, Pat Loew, Phil LaRue and Veronica Balassone.

--Phil LaRue was welcomed as a new member of the Membership Committee.

--MINUTES of the meeting on November 11, 2015 were approved.

--Linda Scott gave the TREASURER'S REPORT. The balance sheet comparing the years 2015 and 2014 show a significantly large increase in the checking account balance and accounts receivable due to the drive for fountain restoration fundraising. On the Receipts and Disbursements statement comparing those two years, the amount shown under 2015 donations for memorial benches and coping stones is a total calculated on the accrual basis and should not be interpreted as a cash asset. Fundraising fell behind from 2014 events for several reasons. The Fall Party 2015 was cancelled, the race in the Fall did not produce its hoped-for results and the Progressive Dinner receipts were \$1000 lower than 2014. Betsy did point out, however, that the net from the Fall Party in 2014 was not that significant due to the high costs incurred for catering. Linda brought attention to the Fountain expenses total and emphasized again that this number was determined using the accrual basis. Last year's costs for printing were higher than the previous due to marketing materials created for benches, stones, etc. An increase in trees and landscaping included the bulb installation completed last Fall.

On the Balance Sheet as of January 14, 2016, Linda pointed out that there are a significant number of donors' checks sent to Friends of West Chester Parks and Recreation that have not been deposited. Linda will do what she can to follow up on this delay in cashing checks received for benches and fountain restoration. On the Receipts and Disbursements statement for January 1-14, 2016, it was noted that receipts for the Progressive Dinner fundraiser are coming in much earlier this year likely due to the postcard marketing strategy, and membership dues as well are being received earlier likely due to the emails sent by the Membership Committee.

It was suggested that the funds raised by the Millers at their gathering in lieu of the Fall Party be recategorized from general contributions to the Fall Party receipts.

--Jeff gave an update on the memorial bench orders. There are six firm orders with the possibility of a seventh. He is hoping for a free shipping deal within a month or so and would place the order at that point. If no deal is forthcoming, he will likely go ahead and place the order and pay the shipping costs.

--Jeff reported on the Swiss Cottage roof repair. The borough has budgeted \$4000-\$5000 for the repair. Jeff has supplied drawings to the borough for the repair. He believes the roof rafters need to be reinforced and another layer of plywood should be installed prior to new shingles being installed. The rafter work needs to be done before the memorial benches are placed in the cottage for storage. He would like to see FMSP allocate \$3000 to hire a contractor to reinforce the roof prior to the borough beginning its shingling work. A discussion ensued regarding FMSP's liability when it is responsible for such repair work. Jim Salvas made a motion, Eric seconded, to allocate up to \$3000 to fund the Swiss

Cottage roof repairs. The president (Jeff Beitel) would be given discretion as to the allocation. The motion carried.

--At Jim's request an update on the summer concerts was added to the agenda. The Music at Marshall Committee met to plan their sixth year's event. In previous years the funds that go to FMSP – half of the net proceeds – were earmarked for the fountain restoration. This year the committee decided that the net proceeds should go the park's playground project. Last summer's net was \$2200. This amount has not yet been received from FWCP&R. Jim requested help with securing sponsors this year. A sponsorship brochure is available for this purpose. It was also determined that the location for the marketing banner will be moved to the corner of the Civil War monument this year due to the fountain construction.

--Betsy Woodrow gave the Events Committee report. The response to the Progressive Dinner on February 6th has been excellent as 84 people have already signed up. She attributed this to the postcard mailing. Jim Salvas has been asked to donate his photo of the gazebo with "mystery" lights for a raffle to be held during the dessert course when everyone will be together. He has generously agreed to provide an 18 x 24 print. Betsy asked if we might get 4 small prints of the photo to display at each of the four houses for the first two courses and then raffle those off as well. The cost of the raffle tickets has not yet been determined. Luminaria will be available from Jeff for the host houses. Participants will be assigned their first house, will draw assignments for the second house, and all will gather at the final house. Linda and Betsy will determine the first house assignments.

--Eric Miller reported on the Membership Committee. Phil LaRue and Jen Long are on the committee. The membership gathering at the Side Bar in December went well. Those attending would like to see a bocce court included in the plans for a new MSP playground. The committee discussed targeting a new audience for membership – 30-45 year olds who live in the area around the park. Suggestions included an event similar to that at the Side Bar, perhaps a happy hour at Sprout or the Split Rail Tavern, in addition to the opportunities presented at the Music at Marshall summer concerts. YMCA members with children also often use the park and may be potential members. Jen suggested a Little Buddies of MSP campaign. Also considered is a reworking of the existing brochure to target this demographic. Phil is planning to meet with staff at Andy Dinniman's office to pursue possible funding to help with marketing material cost. Jim noted FMSP has 500 followers on Facebook and that the fountain video has had 7000 hits on that site.

Membership dues collection is currently being done through email and payment goes into Paypal when dues are paid on the FMSP website. Linda then follows up with an email. In future Wild Apricot software will send invoices to members and link the payment to membership records. It was asked if currently anyone was tracking which communications are working. No formal tracking is being done.

Different ways to attract new members were discussed, e.g., offering free memberships, emphasizing benefits such as FMSP events, and making the area surrounding the park a better place to live.

Jen's cost for a vistaprint trifold brochure is \$350 for 1000. A mockup of the brochure will be produced for approval from the group to proceed with the full printing.

--Anne Walters reported on the Fountain Restoration Committee. Anne and Jeff were interviewed by Bill Mason of WCHE radio about the fountain restoration history and project; the interview will be made

available as a podcast. The basin is partially filled with water to protect the concrete. A shed for the pump equipment is being built by Ron Rosenberry. Plumbing and electrical permits have been secured and bids are being solicited for the brickwork surrounding the fountain and the pathway leading to the street. The granite coping stones are expected to be laid around the third week of March and the metal fencing will be installed immediately afterward. The fountain could be operational in the spring but will be behind a fence because of the brickwork expected to be done in mid to late April. The committee is hoping to erect a stone "monument" to tell the story of the fountain. They envision a laser-etched bronze plaque set on stone. This will require the borough's approval. Because the brickwork around the fountain is in such disrepair, this aspect of restoration will have to be moved into Phase I from Phase II. Jeff expects to need \$35,000-\$40,000 more than budgeted for this extra work. Jeff urged the group to find donors for the coping stones as not even a third of the 36 available have been purchased. There is a fourth \$10,000 plaque still available as well.

--Pat Loew reported on the Playground Improvement Committee. They would like to see the playground moved into the park a little more and away from the street intersection. The perimeter near the street would be a good place to plant woody shrubs to create a vegetative barrier to the streets. The committee will meet again in two weeks. Jeff added that the borough has budgeted \$80,000 for a new playground in MSP.

--Any changes to the By-Laws approved last September need to be proposed as individual amendments; therefore the proposed re-write as distributed by Eric Miller prior to this meeting could not be addressed. Jeff believes that what was needed was a decision about staggering the officer elections since that is not addressed. This March is the month for nominations and April the election of officers. Any amendments are welcome if on a limited scale and not complete rewrites of the adopted bylaws. Linda Scott made a motion to propose an amendment that the President and Treasurer come up for election this year (2016) and the Vice President and Secretary come up for election in 2017. Veronica seconded and the motion carried.

--Eric Miller expressed his concern about liability insurance coverage for FMSP especially with regard to our liability when hosting food events and hiring contractors for work in the park. Discussion ensued with regard to our group's protection under the Friends of West Chester Parks and Recreation. Apparently the borough does have an insurance policy for general liability and Marshall Square Park is specifically named. Perhaps a Directors and Officers Liability Insurance policy can be expanded to cover FMSP. It was agreed that we only have verbal assurance and no written documentation confirming our coverage by the borough and FWCP & R. Linda offered to contact the Borough Solicitor Kristin Campbell to get more information about this issue.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Veronica Balassone

