

FRIENDS OF MARSHALL SQUARE PARK

MINUTES OF MEETING

APRIL 18, 2013

The meeting was called to order by Jeff Beitel at 7:05 p.m. In attendance were Mike South, Michael Civita, Lee Miller, Eric Miller, Holly Brown, Steve Gallo, Christine Bryan, Veronica Balassone.

No minutes were available to review the last meeting's proceedings.

Treasurer Linda Scott sent her report via email as she was unable to be present. Jeff summarized the contents, indicating no major changes since the last meeting. He did mention that the expenditure for the gazebo electric work was a wash as it had been reimbursed by the Friends of West Chester Parks and Recreation and that \$300+ had been spent for the tree labels. It was also explained that funds earmarked for the fountain are considered restricted (\$7705), while the balance (minus "inventory") is unrestricted. Michael Civita indicated that the proceeds from this year's concerts would be earmarked for the fountain. A discussion ensued regarding the choice of 1st National Bank for the park account in light of the fact that National Penn is willing to sponsor the park concerts.

Announcements:

Jeff reminded the group of the park clean-up scheduled for April 20th, led by Jerry Wisneski.

Summer concert series' flyers will be available for distribution the weekend before each event. A print budget is needed as well as volunteers for distribution. In addition "Save the dates" will be printed. Michael Civita will get a price for the printing jobs. He also indicated that one sponsorship is still needed for the August concert at \$1000, or two sponsorships at \$500 each. The marketing plan for the series includes not only the flyers, but a banner, posters in town, online and radio spots. The idea of printing t-shirts has been tabled.

Veronica (Ronnie) Balassone has agreed to replace Jim Salvas as secretary.

Old Business:

1) Jeff reported that costs for the Fountain Restoration Project are being projected at somewhere between \$100,000 and \$150,000. The next step for this project will be a presentation to the Borough Council. Bill Scott was asked to be involved in formulating the presentation. Major concerns that need to be addressed are safety and liability issues as there is water involved, and costs of and responsibility for maintenance. It is clear that certain conditions will have to be spelled out in the proposal in order for the Council to consider the project. At this point only permission to do the exploratory digging has been granted.

2) The Franklin and Biddle Streets entrance improvements project was reviewed by Jeff. The drawings were presented and specifically discussed was the limit of the borough's project, or Phase I. The length of the first phase is 75 feet, and it is another 220 feet to the gazebo. A price for this second phase for

the additional 220 feet which is needed follows an existing roadway of sorts toward the gazebo. A discussion ensued regarding pathways through the park. There is no intention long-term of re-establishing all of the former Victorian strolling paths, but it would be desirable to establish a diagonal path from the monument as well as other major walkways.

There are funds available from the Borough's Park and Recreation Department for Phase I. We hope to keep the Phase I costs under \$14,000 to permit non-union labor workers' involvement.

3) Michael Civita gave the Fundraising Events Committee report. The committee had discussed the purpose and allocation of any funds raised and its authority to make those determinations. Jeff indicated that the committee can certainly formulate any requests in that regard for approval by the general membership.

Michael then reviewed the committee's proposal (per Bob Teti) to add a fifth house to the 2014 Progressive Dinner in order to create the following structure: Reduce the number of courses to three, creating two houses for the first course accommodating as many as 60 people in each house, two houses for the second course for the same groups (kept intact, not creating new groupings) and one house large enough for a dessert course accommodating as many as 120 people. The committee calculated this plan could conceivably raise \$9400 at maximum capacity. It also would allow more time at each home so participants don't feel rushed through each station. In addition the committee recommends abandoning the free entrance for previous year hosts, although they still have an advantage of assured invitation to attend. Also waiver of dues for hosts should be dropped. Additional revenue should be brought in by bringing back the 50-50 raffle during the dinner.

Christine Ryan discussed the proposed 5K run. She has talked with Kevin Kelly (The Running Store) who enthusiastically supported the proposed date of Saturday, September 21st, the day before the Restaurant Festival. Perhaps it could be advertised jointly with the festival ads. Holly Brown made it clear that the borough has placed limitations on the number of runs it will permit as they place a strain on police overtime availability. The cost for police participation (\$250) is not so much a problem for our proposed run as the unavailability of police for assignment to the run. For this reason (and possibly others) approval for the Marshall Square Run is not guaranteed, particularly as large number of police will be needed for the next day's Restaurant Festival. In order to even be considered by the borough, a detailed plan on the route, timing, number of volunteers available, etc. must be put together. Kevin will do that for FMSP for a fee of \$200. Other costs would be \$250 for a permit, \$250 for police. Runners would be charged \$25 each, \$5 for children. Michael added that 144 camelback reusable bottles (provided by an anonymous donor) will be imprinted with the park's logo and sold for \$15 at the summer events and the run if it takes place. Again, Holly reiterated the need for a specific plan for the run and that she will check the current schedule for runs in the borough. Jeff moved to authorize a payment of \$200 to Kevin Kelly to plan the run, Eric Miller seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

The Fall Garden Party with an Oktoberfest theme is scheduled for Saturday, September 28th. Ronnie is waiting to hear back from Barb Voltz who had indicated her willingness to provide her place for the event.

The Fundraising committee will be working on a mission statement to clarify its role within the FMSP.

4) Eric Miller reported on an informal meeting he had with Bill Scott regarding membership. A mission statement of the goals of the membership committee is needed. As he sees it now, it is to “maintain or increase membership for the purpose of civic/public support, participation and fundraising”. A discussion ensued as to the maintenance of the membership list and dissemination of information to members via email blasts, etc. Apparently members’ names are never purged from the list. Lane Randall, as webmaster, has control over email central, and access to that is limited in order to avoid abuse. Eric would like to develop communiqués with members and potential members in a number of ways to reach more people (email, usps, door-to-door, media, at events, etc.). He would also like to develop a membership “benefits” list in order to promote the attraction of becoming a member. Michael and Eric will produce messages and get Jeff’s approval prior to release. A discussion ensued regarding the focus of FMSP and how it has transitioned over the years. Maintenance was the first focus, and now improvements and enhancements are being added to that vision for the park.

5 and 6) The Lafayette Street stairway railing replacement and trash receptacle replacement projects are on hold. With regard to the latter, Jason Brennan met with Obie Lang, Acting Director of Public Works, who feels that if we replaced the first four cans, the borough would be more inclined to purchase the remaining four.

New Business:

1) It is crucial that FMSP produce a priorities list for the Dept of Parks and Recreation in a timely manner in order to be considered for funding. Currently there are multiple priorities lists from years past. These need to be reviewed and integrated into one updated list. It was agreed that Jeff will send the lists to those present at the meeting for review and input. The list thus created would be voted upon in May at the general meeting. Jeff emphasized that the Borough’s priorities will always be safety and ADA compliance first. That would place a priority on the stairs and sidewalk first. Mike South suggested a format used by corporations in structuring a priorities list. Prioritize Safety and Environmental Issues first, then General Maintenance and Repair and finally, Growth and Improvement Issues. He volunteered to review the current lists and pull them together for Jeff.

2) Jeff asked that FMSP consider compensating him as well as Anne Walters for payments they make to their paid employees/consultants in order to provide their professional services on park projects. Anne and Jeff are willing to continue to donate their personal time. The services they get from others, e.g., drafting, can be secured at “bargain” rates. He is specifically requesting reimbursement, going forward, for such costs incurred for the Franklin and Biddle Street Entrance Improvement project. He will put together a reasonable expense proposal for this work to be submitted for approval for reimbursement.

3) The Master Plan should be reviewed again as the current one dates from 1989.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Veronica Balassone