

FRIENDS OF MARSHALL SQUARE PARK

MINUTES OF MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 16, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Jeff Beitel. In attendance were Anne Walters, Mike South, Linda Scott, Gordon Woodrow, Betsy Woodrow, Lee Miller, Eric Miller, Kathy Talley, Jim Salvas, Lane Randall, Bob Teti, and Veronica Balassone.

--MINUTES of the last meeting prior to the summer break were corrected with regard to the 2013 membership survey regarding park priorities. Jeff moved that the following sentence be added to that paragraph: "The group feels that the original results should be re-evaluated and that possibly a new survey should be initiated." The motion carried. Comments prior to the vote pointed to the difficulty of interpreting Survey Monkey results and having such a small pool of respondents.

--The TREASURER'S REPORT was reviewed by Linda Scott. The Susquehanna checking account balance is \$27, 894. Temporarily restricted assets for the fountain total \$4618.82. Eric Miller asked where the cash collected in the jar at the summer concerts is reported. Linda was not sure if the cash ended up in "Miscellaneous Revenue", "Donations" or "Contributions" and that she would check on this. Upon review she thought that the line item of \$903 in the Profit and Loss statement was the total of music in the park donations. The Profit and Loss statement (May 7 – September 16) did not yet reflect receipt of the summer concerts check from the Friends of West Chester Parks. This should total around \$2000. The third statement provided was the Garden Party Receipts and Disbursements (August 16, 2014 – September 16, 2014) which showed a comparison of current period to same period last year. To date, the response to the Fall Party has not met expectations.

--Eliza Mohler was unable to attend to talk about the Hickman's "The Art of Caring" event on September 26 and 27. The Hickman is a member of FMSP. Jeff encourages support of their events when possible.

--The 97th Regiment Encampment reenactment will take place in the park on October 5th. FMSP will have an informational table set up at the event to promote our fundraising for the fountain. This needs to be staffed from 10:30 to 2:00. Gordon Woodrow mentioned that Gene Gagliardi's wife Joan Chandler Gagliardi's great-great-grandfather, a Chandler, had served in the 97th Pennsylvania Regiment.

--The Hickman is planning a community meeting sometime in October to discuss its expansion project. Jeff will let FMSP members know when it is scheduled. Bill Scott is working with Mike Perrone, West Chester Borough Codes Enforcement, on Zoning Code issues since the Hickman needs to have amendments to the Zoning Code in order to build this project. Jeff reiterated that FMSP is not taking a stand on the project, but that the group should stay informed about it.

--OLD BUSINESS: The summer Music in the Park series was once again successful. It is expected that the series will net about \$2000-\$2500 for FMSP. Sponsorship "recruiting" was successful, the weather was good and they were all very well attended. Eric questioned whether we should be concerned about open beer bottles. Jeff reminded everyone that FMSP is not responsible for the event. It is put on by the Friends of West Chester Parks, and in order to enforce the no alcohol rule, a policeman would have to be present during the concerts. It was suggested that an announcement should be made at each concert, and also that "No alcoholic beverages" could be printed on the flyers. It was decided that this issue should be brought to the attention of Steve Gallo at our next meeting.

Anne Walters has asked Denise Dunn-Kesterson several times when we can expect mulch to be spread in the park. She has not received a response. The maintenance plan calls for leaves to be mulched this year as opposed to removing the leaves from the park. Anne also has received confirmation from the PA Department of Natural Resources and Conservation that we do have a Blue Ash tree in the park that can get registered as a State Champion tree. She reported that the borough is being proactive in treating trees in the park for ash borers.

The Franklin and Biddle Streets Entrance improvements are finally completed. All was done as planned with the exception of purchase and placement of a medallion inscribed "Marshall Square Park established 1848". The cost for a medallion would be about \$1500. This can be purchased and placed in the future if funds become available. The paving was actually extended an additional 45-50 feet longer than planned, at the contractor's expense, because it provided improved drainage.

Lee Miller gave a report for the Fundraising Events Committee. The first Marshall Square 5k Run/Walk on September 20th was now being planned by Heather Gallo. T-shirts have been ordered for participants. We are hoping to sign up 40 participants for this first race event. Betsy Woodrow reported that the Fall Garden Party event on September 27th is not bringing in the response we were hoping for. She requested that an email blast be sent out, as the food needs to be ordered and we need a head count. Jim Salvas has placed a Facebook ad which has gone out to 2400 people and which has received 30 "likes". Arrangements have been made with the borough for the block party style event. Eric Miller asked for clarification that funds from the Fall Party are to go to the fountain. Jeff mentioned that one person signing up for the party does not want their ticket price to go to the fountain, but rather to the general fund.

A question came up regarding donations, such as the wine being donated by the Millers, and whether that entitles the donors to free entry to a fundraiser. Linda had sent an email prior to the meeting addressing "gifts-in-kind" and past practice by FMSP in this regard. It stated: "Past practice for Gifts-in-kind: Valued over the price of admission to an event should grant the giver free tickets...This is only for actual items of value and would not apply to time donated...if you produced architect's plans and were donating those plans that we then used, then that could be construed as a gift-in-kind." It was suggested that this policy may need parameters and further definition. Perhaps the Fundraising Events Committee can make a recommendation to the board. Anne Walters questioned whether this exchange pertained only to events, or "across the board". Gordon Woodrow commented that it is customarily expected that members of the board of a non-profit organization make monetary contributions to the organizations, and the extent to which this is done is of interest to outside contributors. A discussion followed about the fact that FMSP is not a non-profit organization and that we use the Friends of West Chester Parks and Recreation as our umbrella organization. Jim Salvas mentioned that we should consider using the Chester County Community Foundation for tax-exempt contributions. Jeff and Anne explained that we had been in contact with them several years ago and the dollar amount of contributions at that time were not significant enough to work with them. There was also a discussion about how much of our funds could be used for the fountain without leaving an adequate operating balance. Linda explained that we did not need a very large cash reserve since our operating expenses are so low. Following this discussion, a motion carried to give the Millers free entrance to the Fall Party in light of their significant donation of wine to the event.

Eric Miller gave the Membership Committee report. He began by observing that the committee had been formed to address a decline in membership, but that appears to not be an accurate assessment of the membership trend. Jason Brennan has "retired" from the committee and Eric is seeking additional

members to serve on this Committee. The Wild Apricot software is now being used by Lane Randall and Linda Scott. Eric met with each of them to familiarize himself with its facilities. Linda noted that the program will allow for smoother transitioning when committee leaders change. She looks forward to using it for membership renewals in January. Not all members have email, so those who don't will still require printed notices that will require delivery. It was clarified at the meeting that Lane Randall is the administrator of Wild Apricot. Jim Salvias expressed disappointment that it is an "online" system which presents some difficulties, e.g., printing and technical support but he and Lane were working through the issues. Jeff mentioned that he needed to be trained to use the email function and Lane agreed to meet and get him up and running on Wild Apricot.

The need for more FMSP members to join the committees and assist in park activities was expressed, as it seems a small number of members are responsible for events and operations.

The Medal of Honor Plaque was discussed. Borough council formally voted to approve the ground marker as designed and presented by Jeff Beitel. The Sons of Civil War Veterans was contacted by Bill Scott and Jeff Beitel regarding Borough Council's approval and were informed that FMSP will assist them with the project if they wish to pursue the marker, but we will not take the lead on the project.

Anne Walters gave a progress report on the Fountain Restoration Project. Currently two bids have been received for stone and brick work, and two bids for the iron work. Solicitation of bids is ongoing.

Gordon Woodrow reported on the Fountain Restoration fundraiser to be held on October 25th from 6-8 p.m. at the Abbott's Barn. He is waiting for one more catering bid. At this time Mrs. Abbott has expressed her preference for Hickory House, which caters at Brandywine Park. They would provide full staffing, a bar and heavy hors d'oeuvres. Victory Brewing will donate beer. Eric Miller will select the wine. Invitations should go out in two days. 80 of the 204 invited are Gene Gagliardi's personal friends. The fundraising goal is \$50,000. Tickets are \$250 per person, and giving levels are tiered at \$1000, \$2500, \$5000 and \$10,000. As long as checks are written to Friends of West Chester Parks and Recreation, noted "MSP Fountain Restoration", the gifts are tax-deductible. A giving card is to be enclosed with the invitation. Gordon emphasized that he needs assistance with actualizing this event, e.g., to help with flowers and assorted details. Mike Norris will be approached to see if he is available to provide music.

The Memorial Bench sponsorship program to raise funds for the fountain is underway. Three have sold to date. The cost to sponsor a bench is \$5000 and we expect to raise at least \$2000 from each bench. 10% deposits are being accepted now, and a site can be reserved for a bench. Eighteen benches are on the site plan for the program.

Jim Salvias announced the addition this year of Marshall Square Park to venues for the Plein Aire Brandywine Valley fundraiser on October 24th. This event, chaired by Patrick McCoy, benefits the Children's Beach House in Delaware. Jim was invited to participate as a juror. A \$500 prize will be awarded to the best work produced in Marshall Square Park. That winning artist will donate the artwork to FMSP, which can then be auctioned off at the October 25th fundraiser. An informative table or display will be placed at the Fall Party.

Four new trash receptacles have finally been placed in the park. Four more are promised for delivery next year.

At the next meeting development of FMSP by-laws needs to be addressed.

The 2014 Improvement Projects List was distributed by Jeff.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Veronica Balassone