

## FRIENDS OF MARSHALL SQUARE PARK

Minutes of Meeting on March 9, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Jeff Beitel at 7:06 p.m. In attendance were Jim Salvas, Linda Scott, Lane Randall, Betsy Woodrow, Pat Loew, Jen Long and Veronica Balassone.

--Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

--Linda Scott gave the Treasurer's Report. In the Receipts and Disbursements Report year-to-date, she pointed out that receipts from memorial bench and coping stone donations were reduced by \$2500 to account for a donation for a stone not yet engraved because the minimum has not yet been reached to meet the engraver's requirement for coming to the fountain site to engrave a stone. There was some discussion as to whether Jeff might discuss with the engraver reducing the number of stones needed for a job from 4 to 2 stones minimum to avoid paying a \$150 setup fee. Jeff suggested that FMSP consider recognizing the Hickman for its donation of 2000 bricks, with a value of about \$8000 if we had needed to buy that number of bricks, by engraving a half coping stone with the Hickman's name. It was discussed that we should consider paying the setup fee and not make sponsors wait more than four months for their engraving.

The Balance Sheet showed current assets of \$34,991 in the bank, and accounts receivable of a negative \$1815, reflecting \$785 in the Paypal account reduced by the \$2500 coping stone donation for a stone not yet engraved. Linda was advised to treat donations for coping stones as deposited cash assets whether or not the engraving has been completed.

The report on this year's Progressive Dinner and Membership indicates net income was down this year compared to last by about \$450. There are fewer memberships this year, down by about 23%, resulting in about \$600 less in membership dues. The Progressive Dinner brought in \$525 less than prior year. It was acknowledged that the raffle and auction of the artwork was crucial for bringing the fundraising income from the event close to prior year. Discussion followed with regards to the downward trend of membership and the dropoff in attendance at the Progressive Dinner. Jim expressed the need for clarity with regards to who has paid dues and who hasn't; and felt that dues should be abandoned altogether. Betsy and Linda felt that it was important to create exclusivity by requiring payment of dues to attend events as a benefit of membership.

--Jeff mentioned the Humphry Marshall exhibit is still available for viewing at the Chester County Historical Society.

--Installation of the playground equipment by the Borough should begin in two to three weeks. Brick sidewalk repair has been included in the Borough's budget and will be scheduled for this year. The Department of Recreation and Parks will put a new roof on the park bathroom building and will give it a fresh coat of paint.

--The deadline for advertising in the Borough's Spring/Summer Activities Guide is March 20<sup>th</sup>. Jim indicated a half-page ad will target membership and a full-page ad will be placed for the Summer Concerts. However, two people with leadership positions on the Concert Committee have resigned and

there was no organizational meeting for the Summer Concerts in February. Jim will ask for an extension for advertising until the end of March.

--Spring park clean-up is scheduled for Saturday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Very little leaf pickup will be involved but there will be mulching particularly around trees over in the playground area if the borough will supply wood chip mulch again this year. Jeff is working on getting a contract to mulch leaves on sight in the fall.

--Betsy gave the report for the Events Committee. She believes we need to reexamine the Progressive Dinner event. The fall party is scheduled for the last Saturday in September and will be held at the Cornell's home on the corner of Walnut and Virginia.

--Jen Long gave the Membership Committee report. The brochure to attract young families to membership is still being developed, as well as a welcome letter for new members. Linda would like to see a letter composed to thank members for renewing their membership. Jeff asked the committee to look into the large drop in membership dues.

Jen discussed the development of a Little Buddies program to launch sometime this year. The program is intended to engage age 12 and under children and grandchildren of FMSP members to learn about and care for the park. There is no additional cost for involvement. Events including craft projects, scavenger hunts and other activities with incentives such as earning stickers and prizes will be developed. Coordinating program introduction with a dedication of the new playground has been discussed with the Playground Committee.

--Jeff reported on the Fountain Restoration Committee. Anne Walters and Jeff are working to get Phase 2 off the ground and have revised drawings of the brickwork. The marker to recognize and raise awareness of Humphry Marshall will now be a granite ground marker and not a signpost. Jeff and Anne are in discussions with the Humphry Marshall Trust for sponsorship of this. We will request that a new sign for Marshall Square Park be placed by the Department of Parks and Recreation at the corner near the playground. The Phase 2 plans have been approved by the Department of Public Works. The bricklayer has submitted a bid and the committee is close to getting all the cost estimates for the Phase 2 work.

Phase 3 for the landscaping plans around the fountain were discussed. Jeff indicated there was a unanimous committee member vote to request that the Tree Commission approve removal of the weeping beech tree and two other trees with the promise of FMSP planting five trees in their place. As chair of the Tree Commission, Jeff will need to recuse himself from voting on the proposal; Anne will be present.

--Jim Salvas reported on the Summer Concert Series. The need for members of FMSP to support the committee organizing the event is even greater as a few persons who had been willing to participate on the committee have other time commitments now. In addition, there still were sponsorship vacancies, most importantly a major sponsor to replace Kit Anstey. Following discussion, Pat Loew very generously offered Chestnut Square to become this year's major sponsor. The dates for the three concerts are Thursdays June 15, July 20 and August 17, with rain dates the following Thursdays.

--A vote was held to nominate Veronica Balassone for Recording Secretary and Lane Randall for Corresponding Secretary for another term. The vote in favor of these two members to continue to serve as such was unanimous.

--Linda Scott discussed the process of applying for 501(c)(3) status. There is a new federal program streamlining reporting for those organizations that raise no more than \$25,000 annually. It allows the group to remain unincorporated. The IRS requires certain language be in the group's organizing document.

The advantage of becoming a non-profit includes gaining full control over donations and securing our own liability insurance. The downside is abiding by reporting requirements and completing full tax returns. FMSP would have to name a board as well as have officers.

--The next meeting is April 13<sup>th</sup>.

--The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Veronica Balassone