

Lake Park Friends Minutes: Board Meeting

Tuesday, October 11, 2011 • 7:00 p.m. • Location: **Marcia Coles Community Room**

Present: Phil Schultz, Jim Cope, Steve Duback, Steve Morse, Alice Wilson, Jennifer Grasse, Jayne Pink, Sandy Wiegand, Brian Desplaines, Susanna Mortara, Sarah Zimmerman, Ann Wollmer (Administrator), Gerry Broderick, Sue Gillman, Sarah Toomsen, Tom Cheney

Excused: Ann Vermut, Judy Van Till, Katie West

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. The August 9th minutes were approved without opposition on a motion by Jim Cope (Steve Duback seconded).
3. Government report: Gerry Broderick. We have a serious County budget deficit of \$55 million (out of a \$1.2 billion budget). The Parks Department budget was cut by \$3.4 million, about 15%, continuing a generational decline. Parks and transportation compete with mandated services for funding. Supervisor Broderick offered an amendment to restore 43 full time positions, which was put over for future consideration. By next summer we might have a crisis in the Parks if all the cuts are enacted. Transit system is "teetering on disaster" also, but that is much more noticeable and measurable than Parks and garners more attention. Forty percent of the parks' revenue is from golf, so a rainy summer would create a serious revenue problem. Steve Duback asked how a friends group might consider dealing with this. Friends groups could call their Supervisors and/or the County Executive to let them know our position, and possibly also contact state Assembly representatives. A sales tax would bring in revenue from people who live outside the County but use our system. The County Executive has veto power, so the last word won't be until a November 17 veto session. We've done incredible and nationally recognized work with too few resources, but at some point we'll reach the breaking point, partly due to a \$300 million deferred maintenance problem. Sandy asked whether we can encourage our members to contact their representatives, and the group indicated that would be acceptable if properly neutrally worded.

Cell tower and building (with toilets) are proposed by ATT at the lakefront. The Lakefront Development Advisory Commission has no major objection. Supervisor Broderick is concerned about its height, but the promised revenues are attractive. There's a public safety problem with the lack of communication to the Bradford Beach area, but could there be another place for it? A public hearing is scheduled for October 18 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at the Harbor Lights Room in downtown transit center. At the same meeting, the Lakefront Committee chaired by Sue Black will present its vision for the lakefront.

Supervisor Broderick left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Sue Gillman: Jim asked about staffing the ice rink during the evenings with a seasonal worker, perhaps with partial funding from us. The group agreed it's hard to ask hockey players to leave when it's not hockey time. It was suggested we split the ice between hockey and smaller kids with a berm or cones, or that signage could help with the timing issue.

Sue Gillman was thanked for her generous contribution of an auction item to the Cirque.

Sandy: Ann and Sandy met with Sue Gillman and Sue Forlenza for 2 hours to improve communication and discuss what projects need doing in the park. Perhaps these meetings can occur quarterly and occasionally include a Bartolotta's representative.

4. Cirque de Lake Park: Susanna. Phil thanked Susanna and everyone who helped. Susanna thanked Ann and all of the volunteers: Jennifer, Jayne, Alice, and Ann Vermut were all on the committee. Chris is processing the numbers, but we know that 125 tickets were sold, versus 110 last year. Sponsorships were a little higher, but Downer sold a bit less this year: we netted \$130 from them versus \$230 last year. Other numbers will be reported later. This year we had to pay for the tent. Jayne offered to help with the way things are presented next year, to help with lighting and sound. There was agreement that the event was a big success, with guests reporting they had a great time.

Susanna and Sue Gillman left the meeting at 7:55 p.m.

5. Development Report: Alice Wilson. The Development Committee has been working on thinking more strategically about donor relationships. They have also begun to make a targeted list of foundations that might contribute to the performance structure.
6. Sarah Toomsen: Playground report. The current concept for the playground evolved from several options. It will feature a playground in the location of current large structure. Current small child area will be restored to grass and be more of a picnic area. Play surface will be poured-in-place rubber. Sarah displayed the concept drawings: a preschool age structure on the side, large structure from 5-12 focusing on active play. Discussion of what to do with the existing handprint monument. The Parks Department's plan is to remove it, but the board felt some donors would be upset. Could we reuse it or take it apart and return to families? We will consult Joe Suszek. Possibility of matching picnic tables adjacent to the playground. Sarah proposes benches between the playground and the seat where parents could see both structures. Budget for playground is \$420,000, including asphalt path work. An entry arch is a possible future option for LPF's donors to fund.

Sarah Toomsen left the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

7. Performance structure: Tom Cheney and Sandy. Drawings went out to bid on Monday. Dahlman is our contractor. Final price will be in by next week, probably about \$127,000, including \$10,000 contingency. Add \$15,000 for future maintenance and you get \$142,000. Soil quality is a possible wild card requiring contingency fund. Joel has sent drawings to Michele Deubel and explained changes. When our costs are more certain, we will approach the donor to ask them to cover the additional costs. Sandy will seek approval from the board by email to fund any costs over \$125,000, excluding the \$15,000 maintenance. Sandy will make an email motion which we will all need to vote on to approve any excess costs.

Brian suggested using \$15,000 of our \$30,000 bench fund as a performance structure maintenance fund. We will take this up at a future meeting.

8. Treasurer's Report: Brian. Budget for next year is drafted and will shortly be finalized. Next meeting we'll have a proposed budget to vote on. Chris Buell recommends a compilation again this year, which costs \$500. Sarah moved we authorize a compilation, Steve Morse seconded, and the motion passed unopposed. Brian also said we changed our credit card processing, cutting costs in half.
9. Administrator's report: Newsletter deadline was today. Membership numbers went out via email: 439 members, including several new members since the August 9 meeting.

10. Executive Committee: Sarah. All of the Executive Committee's discussions are being addressed at the meeting. No votes were taken.
11. County request to purchase picnic tables: Steve Duback asked about the wisdom of funding picnic benches, which Sue Forlenza will not promise would stay in Lake Park. We'd have to make them identifiable so as not to be moved, or permanent and not moveable. Picnic bench request was tabled pending strategic planning.
12. Education report: Steve Morse. UWM service learners mulched around big trees, which are often hit by lawn mowers and damaged or killed. An example is West of the warming hut. The also pulled junk from creek in Locust Street ravine, to keep water in creek bed so it doesn't wash out the path. Volunteers can help with this at any time. On October 8, waterfall ravine plants and rain garden at the top were planted. Nature Committee has regular Wednesday 1:30 work parties, starting at the Warming Hut. History Committee has history walks and speakers lined up.

Jayne Pink left the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

13. Signage: Sandy. Kevin Haley said there are three rules: follow City sign ordinance on perimeter, remain consistent with County standards, and Sue Black has the final say. Sandy is gathering info on types, location, etc. We're considering an informational sign in the pavilion parking lot; a welcome sign on Kenwood and maybe at Newberry; directional signage to find things; and labeling ravine trails in the way Locust St. is already labeled.
14. Refund of Jennaro Bench: Sarah. The board had previously authorized a refund of \$3200 to Bill and Rita Jennaro for a bench they decided not to proceed with. The refund check was deposited. However, Mr. and Mrs. Jennaro decided they did want to purchase a bench, so we are awaiting their payment.
15. Strategic planning: We still need a facilitator for our November 12 session. Please give Ann suggestions.
16. Proposed Memorandum of Understanding between Parks Department and Bartolotta. Steve Duback offered to talk to the County representative about how they arrived at these substantive terms, to see whether we could do better. Phil asked Steve to make recommendations via email afterwards.
17. Wish list: Steve Duback and Jennifer. This helpful and comprehensive list of our priorities will be discussed at the strategic planning meeting.
18. Bench quotations: Ann Wollmer. Judy has asked people to submit poetry to expand the list of available quotations, which is dwindling. There was a discussion of whether the benches should be required to include poetry related to nature. No action was taken.
19. Joe Suszek bench: Ann Wollmer. Joe would like a bench in the waterfall ravine. He will build it into the slope with a stone back. This could help with erosion: would extend stone wall near bridges. We could charge him \$500. Sandy moved we give Joe a bench and plaque for free, provided he installs it as described. Jim seconded, and the motion was passed without opposition by eight board members operating as a committee of the board.
20. County Budget: Phil distributed an overview of the County Executive's proposed 2012 budget.

21. Volunteer waiver of liability: Steve Morse is concerned about lawsuits by injured volunteers, and asked whether they should be asked to sign a waiver. Ann thinks there's already a form for weed outs. Steve Duback pointed out waivers are not typically enforceable and that it would just cause people to focus on liability.

22. Determine date for December meeting: December 13 is fine with everyone.

Steve Morse proposed we meet more often. Phil asked that we put it on the agenda for the next meeting.

23. Waterfall Ravine: Phil. The County paid to restore the top of the bluff. Joe is finished with his work at the bottom. An Eagle Scout is donating wood and labor to complete the bridge. Volunteers planted the rain garden at the bottom. Right now the water flows into the old catch basin; will divert water and next big rainfall will fill the pond. We'll also add more rain gardens next spring.

24. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.