

FRIENDS OF NORTHWEST PARK ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES



November 9, 2008

Attendees: Jay Melley, Chuck Drake, Randy Lee, Terry Langevin, Chris Alford, April Vines, Dick Dolliver, Kate Lange, Al Boehm, Carol MacMullen, Nancy Taylor, Florence Barlow, Heidi Lindbert, Lauren Grimshaw, Ford Parker, Dawn Morgan, Steve Ryan, Ann Allen, Mike Novak, Rachel Draghe (WIN TV)

Regrets: Vivian Cicero

Absent: Timothy Curtis, Kate Ferris-Morrell, Lon Pelton, Linda Alexander, Mickey Mattei, Bill Schoner, Debby Silliman.

The meeting began at 3:08 after much enjoyed refreshments. Thank-you to all who donated.

2007-2008 Park Presentation: Jay Melley, President, Ford Parker, Park Mgr.

Jay summarized the past year, beginning with our big signature events which were very successful. The Pancake breakfast brought 500 people with 40 volunteers, Creatures of the Night with 150 people attending, the Concert series with \$5700 raised for the Libby and Gordon Taylor Scholarship Fund, and the Country Fair successful on many levels including an increase of \$4,000 more in income over last year. The Friends donations utilized by the Park Staff is visible through various signage and enhancements of the Park. Eric Davison, the naturalist/land manager, we supported as well. One thing we should consider doing is supporting this position again. The burn is scheduled again for Spring. We gave monies for the YCC as we have since the inception of the program. We contributed to three different internships. After all this, we continue to maintain our financial base of approximately \$100,000. A CPA completed a financial review which lays the groundwork for obtaining grants.

We have more to do as we look forward to our 28th year. We hope to continue to encourage the revival of the lost full time education position, get more Grants, and evaluate the use of our financial base for something that is significant. The geothermal project being discussed is a potential area in which we can contribute either ourselves or fun a

Capital Donation Campaign. The idea is to take an initiative and go forward to see what develops. We have discussed being a part of the Chamber of Commerce Auction in April which will help us get our name out and raise funds. Volunteers are needed to help accumulate items for auction.

This should be a great meeting and I would to remind everyone that we are happy to have WINTV join us today. I would like to thank all the volunteers including Terry Langevin for providing timely accurate minutes and Randy Lee for his work on getting our books in order and working with the website which has up to 5,000 hits a month! Ford will now summarize the past year at the Park.

Our last fiscal year was a banner year for the Park thanks to efforts of the Staff, volunteers and Friends of Northwest Park. Please refer to the overview of accomplishments for NWP attached. Thank-you again for everyone who makes these things a reality.

Jay summarized the work currently being done to achieve a "Wild and Scenic" designation by the Federal Government for the Lower Farmington River. Please support the effort which is described in the two handouts. A poster will be posted outside in the main Kiosk.

Nominating Committee: Terry Langevin, Secretary & Committee Chair
See attached list of nominees unanimously approved. A special thanks to Lesley Morgan-Thompson for all her years of service and who will no longer be with us this upcoming year.

Finances: Please note that all financial attachments can be found on the web site. FY08 is 7/1/07-6/30/08; 09 is 7/1/008-6/30/09; 10 is 7/1/09-6/30/10

FY 08: 2007-2008 Project Summary: Ford Parker

\$14,139 was spent with the remaining balance to be carried over to FY09.

FY 09: 2008-2009 Project Status Report: Ford Parker. Last November, the Friends approved \$16,200 in projects for the YCC, interns, nature camp tents, environmental education stream tables, nature center sign, butterfly garden seeding, and specimen mounting at the taxidermist (Coyote, Coopers Hawk, Bluebird). The lava beetle is infesting existing specimens for which Ford will take care of due to excessive fees charged by exterminators. Other projects include the Sensory Saunter Trail, habitat field work, organic garden equipment and supplies and animal barn signs. Please go out and view the fruits of your donations.

FY 10: 2009-2010 Park Support Budget Proposal: Ford Parker

Please review the proposed projects totaling \$16,000 along with a Park "Wish List".

Randy suggested we move the annual meeting to May or June instead of November to be more in line with the budgeting process. It is expected we will vote for these items at that time, prior to upcoming FY10.

FY 08: Treasurer's Report & FY 09: Friends Budget approval: Randy Lee, Treasurer

The report and budget were unanimously approved with a minor adjustment to be made in the Concert income. Discussion included the Membership Committee requiring funds, the budget process being flexible, and special projects being considered outside the normal budget process. This year looks good with dues dollars ahead of last year. We have already sold almost \$500 in concert tickets.

Membership Committee: Lauren Grimshaw, Committee Chair

115 memberships have been renewed with two new memberships since August. A list of ideas was circulated and attached, with a goal of a first event to take place the first quarter of next year. Ford offered avenues for marketing and chuck has spoken with Mary Hogan who has offered to get back on track to organize speakers. Stipends of \$200 are not unusual. The shredding of documents is scheduled for earth day 2009. Members get \$2 off concerts. Contact Joyce Kennedy at www.lowerfarmingtonriver.org for a potential speaker.

Concert Update: Chuck Drake, Vice President

Jay introduced Chuck as the "Sugar Meister" who made app. 60 gallons of syrup this year, was a Rotary Club award recipient and the director of the Concert Program.

The maple syrup will continue with orders for Christmas to be in before December 1st or it will not be available due to my being away. There were 10 concerts last year with an income of \$3343.70. The concert schedule will start next Saturday with 11 concerts planned. Our 14th season is coming up with a great quality of mixed music performances. If we sold out every concert, we could take in \$8,700 this year. Publicity is the key issue for success. The guest book information will be compiled with on-line lists to send out a concert newsletter via e-mail. Debby Silliman has been key to our publicity and computer work. The Beanery continues to support the concerts. A concert summary booklet is expected to get to the Library this year and a trifold is available. I am trying to keep prices moderate at \$14-\$17 due to the economic conditions. A tear off poster with schedules is available. The Posters, wall of fame, press releases are all part of the program. If the numbers don't show improvement, it

will be difficult to continue the program. It requires a lot of people doing a lot of work: Debby—publicity, Randy-web site, myself—contracts & press releases, hospitality-Nancy Taylor and Linda Alexander. Other volunteers are always needed. Chuck stated if things didn't work out, we should possibly consider not doing it in the future.

Maple Syrup: It is sold in the Park Gift Shop. Again, contact me before December 1 if you want any for Christmas gifts.

Honey: We have a bee program at the Park which produces honey. Jack Grimshaw and Heidi Lindberg are working on the program. If you are interested in honey, contact me directly.

Special Geothermal Project: Ford Parker, Park Manager

(A powerpoint presentation) As everyone is aware, energy is a major concern and the Park is dependent on an old furnace, air conditioning system and oil as fuel. A renewable resource provided by mother earth just below our feet is at a constant temperature of 55 degrees which can be used to both heat and cool the nature center. It is expensive up front but costs can be recaptured over the years. Northwest Park is looking forward to being a model for sustainability practices for the future. The potential use of methane from the landfill was discussed along with solar energy to reduce electrical bills.

The WINTV tape was running low and it was agreed that any other business would not be taped in order to make sure Steve Ryan's presentation would fit.

Other Business: Chuck Drake wished to provide a brief summary of his thoughts on the Park providing services to the general public. He stated programs cover school students, and Seniors but not the general public. He continued saying we could fund programming that would give something to the community with the Friends name. For example, bears, turkey's in the wild would be good topics. It appears to be too difficult for the over committed staff and we should do something about this as Friends. He said we should be bringing animals to the Library for programs, not other groups. He stated that he is not attacking the Staff and it shouldn't be taken that way. Ford inquired if Chuck had read any of the publications of how many people the park has serviced during the past year and in what capacity. Ford said there is always a need for additional public programs but with no full time educator and only part time Staff, options are limited. Chuck said other places are doing more and we should be able to do more as Friends. He continued that a group of people he knows including himself are not getting the proper value for their money given the current offerings. He continued that we

should all be thinking about this and how we can change this. A couple of Friends offered their services to lead/provide programs at the Park. Several other were getting frustrated and asked that this be tabled to another more appropriate meeting and not at the end of a long wonderful meeting depicting all the successes of the past year. All agreed that it should be tabled to another meeting.

Portraits of Northwest Park: Steve Ryan, Photographer

Steve is a local resident who takes pictures of the Park, often during his lunchtime.

Thank-you Steve for a wonderful pictorial presentation on why Northwest Park is such a precious resource for wildlife and those who visit. Some of his pictures can be viewed on our website. Look for future possibilities of purchasing CD's of his work for nominal fees.

A motion was approved to adjourn at 5:08pm.