

## **The Friends of NWP Meeting April 8, 2008**

**Attendees:** Jay Melley, Vivian Cicero, Florence Barlow, Ann Allen, Nancy Taylor, Chuck Drake, Heidi Lindberg, Randy Lee, Chris Alford, Terry Langevin, Mike Novak, Dawn Morgan, Bill Schoner.

**Regrets:** Lisa Bress, Carol MacMullen, Kathryn Grimshaw, Lauren Grimshaw,

**Absent:** Linda Alexander, Al Boehm, Tim Curtis, Dick Dolliver, Kate Lange, Kate Ferris-Morrell, Mickey Mattei, Lesley Morgan Thompson; Lon Pelton, Debbi Silliman

7:10pm meeting began.

**Minutes** unanimously approved with the addition of many thanks to Eric for stopping by and giving a very informative presentation.

**Presidents report:** At the Town Meeting Peter Souza was impressed with Fords long term presentation for the maintenance of the Park in terms of the Capital improvement budget. It is included in the Town improvement package beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>. A full time educator is in the budget. April 7<sup>th</sup> was the first in a series of public hearings on the official budget presented to Council. There appears to be support for the Park and they really liked positive comments. Keep in touch with your local Council people.

**Pancake Breakfast:** \$2081 was deposited and it was a great day. Expenses are expected to be less than \$300. Chuck is on gallon 47; an all time high for the season! There's still more syrup to be made. All buckets are pulled. The sausages were excellent and were from the wholesale house, the Restaurant Depot(Thank-you Beanery). Approximately 387 adults and 83 children(6 and under) attended, for a total of an estimated 500 people. The Masons identified 33 children. Publicity needs improvement. Approximately 40 volunteers did a wonderful job, thank you.

**Treasurer's Report:** Last month's report hasn't changed. The Gordon Taylor Scholarship Fund still needs to be accounted for financially. \$4945 has been spent year to date. The actual Accountant Review will be available in May.

**Coffee House:** This Saturday is classical guitar, mandolin, bass, violin, acoustic instrumental session. It is not sold out. Two more are events will complete the year. The numbers per concert are down from last year.

**Volunteers:** Roseanne Lombardo from Loomis wants to have volunteers help at the Park on a year round basis, not just spring. Ford and Jeff need to arrange chaperones through the school and coordinate efforts.

**Newsletter:** It just went out and many thanks to Chuck for his consistent donations. It would be great to have a Presidents corner explaining the Friends vs. NWP staff and an article "Reasons to become a Friend". Barbara Natalie will be the next founding Friends focus.

**Earth Day:** Dawn is willing to set up a Friends table with water and granola. A motion was made to provide up to \$200 for expenses and any donations received go to the Open Space Fund in the name of the Friends of Northwest Park. It passed unanimously. A suggestion was made to have the Chamber post on the website that sponsors are needed.

**Staff Report:** The March maple sugaring programs went well thanks to Kathryn, Tom and Chuck. "Whose Egg Is It?" attracted an estimated 85 participants similar to last year. Lots of fun was had. Earth Day is April 19<sup>th</sup> and is by Cyd Groff. Many thanks to her for coordinating a Falconer Show, Wolves of North America, and Reptiles and Amphibians. Tom will be leading nature walks and Jen will be doing recycle crafts. Proceeds from a raffle will go to the Open Space Fund.

The *Seniors program* is really taking off with 7 programs scheduled from April through September. East Hartford, Windsor, The Caring Connection, Manchester, Hebron, and West Hartford are all participating. *Cub Scout Day* has 45 Scouts signed up and Kathryn, Jen and Peter will instruct in Wildlife, Weather, and Map and Compass. *Summer Nature Camp* is almost full! Twelve YCC applications have been received and interviews are scheduled for next month. Two or three will be hired pending funding. *The Park burn dates* are April 12, 19 or May 3<sup>rd</sup> depending upon weather.

Katie Horton will be returning as the spring intern. Her focus will be assisting Brad with getting the new Animal Barn signs completed and planning the organic demonstration garden with the advisory committee. She will begin as the YCC Field Supervisor in July. Amy Hansen is the summer intern and is a long-time volunteer of the Park.

The budget includes the full-time educator position and \$150,000 in facility upkeep. Paul Norris is working on the plan for a 12 passenger van and we are awaiting progress towards this goal.

**Meeting Schedule:** Randy brought up that there used to be 4 designated Trustee meetings where people tended to show up in larger numbers. Other meetings were Executive Committee meetings. Other organizations who received input from a management consulting firm have concluded quarterly meetings were much better attended than monthly meetings. There is a desire to get the maximum of Trustees involved in decision making for the Friends.

A motion was made to have 7 meetings a year: Jan., March, April, (May,) June, September and November with May being on an as needed basis. *November, January, March and June are the official Trustee meetings and we indicate that Trustees attend 3 out the four meetings.* All are welcome at all the meetings. We currently meet monthly with the exceptions of December, July and August. The February meeting is lightest as far as attendance and subject matter. The motion passed.

**E-Newsletters:** Publicity needs improvement. The newsletter comes out 4 times a year. Randy proposed utilizing the Constant Contact Company at a cost of \$250 annually to send unlimited e-mail newsletters at least every 3 or 4 weeks. It is entirely self-managed as to the mailing list. It would include e-mails from our Friends list, concert list, all e-mails that we have. It allows people to put their e-mails on or off the list as they wish. He is willing to maintain it for a year and would like *a volunteer to take it over as soon as they are comfortable*. A motion made to support the project for \$250 annually. It passed unanimously.

**President's planning:** One question which needs discussion is why the Friends are holding large sums of money without a plan. Do we want to sit on it, become involved in long term Capital Plans, or spend it? Comments included Bill stating it is very difficult to attract new members to an organization without a long range plan as to what the reasons are for the Friends being. What's our purpose? Mike stated it is not only the money we have but the future monies we have the potential to collect. Anything we don't have right now, we can raise. Dawn suggested we not go down to zero base and all agreed. A cushion should be defined. It was suggested the Finance Committee put together an analysis for presentation at the June meeting of recurring expenditures. It should be the goal to come up with the "available" sum.

Jay will hold a special meeting the second Tuesday in May to discuss the policy of the Friends in maintaining and developing the Long Range Plan for the Friends. The Shad Derby is May 17<sup>th</sup> with Florence, Nancy, Ann, Terry and Ruth Casagrande volunteering. The Country Fair needs a jump start since it is a big 375<sup>th</sup> year.

9:03 adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Langevin, Secretary