

Friends of Christopher Columbus Park  
Monthly meeting  
1/13/15  
Mariner House  
North Square  
Boston, MA

Meeting opened by Vice President, Ann Babbitt at 6:40 and attended by 9 members. The minutes for the November meeting were not available and will be reviewed and voted on at the February 2015 meeting

[1]

Treasurer report -- Audrey Tortolani

Audrey reported the FOCCP account total is \$366,000.  
She will soon provide the end of the year Treasurer's report

Infrastructure committee Audrey presented report for Ford Cavalleri

Infrastructure Report 1/13:

1- Going with the "punt" plan as voted by the Board on 10/21 (delay new lights, refresh existing LED strings on trellis), Steve Mirabella and Sanibel electric refreshed the current trellis lights, replacing about 30% of the light strings and reattaching power plugs to about 70% of the strings (they'd been snipped off at the end of last season). This was Sanibel's first time refreshing the trellis lights, and considering the learning curve the refresh went pretty smoothly. The major early problems were some erratic timer issues, but Steve and Dino reset the timer and things seemed to settle down after that. Steve volunteered Sanibel's labor as a donation to FOCCP for this activity (estimated amount: \$7000).

2- Per the "punt" plan, we switched the delivery of our custom-made LED lights to slower ocean cargo shipping. The switch in shipping method necessitated some major changes in how the lights needed to be handled, including some more steps for the Infrastructure team, but in return FOCCP received an additional savings against the project budget. These new steps included selecting a cargo shipper, finding and selecting a cargo inspector, and making an electronic funds transfer (T/T) for our final payment in lieu of escrow (which was no longer available when we switched dates and shipping modes).

3- Steve Mirabella and the Infrastructure Committee will convene to begin crafting the final installation plan sometime in late February/early March, around the time of receipt of the LED lights.

4- Expenditures associated with the trellis LED project are as follows thus far:

- a-first payment to Hehong: \$5,100
- b-second payment to Hehong: \$11,732
- c-Logfret shipping: \$1,089
- d-SGS cargo inspection: \$700
- e-previous site inspection: \$400

In addition, \$2,500 was spent on materials for the November trellis refresh of the old lights, and \$1,200 had been spent on test equipment and supplies prior to the main order. Excluding the refresh expenditure, that makes total spending thus far on the project just over \$20,000. Additional funds are allocated in 2015 to cover the installation (which will require additional electrical equipment to be sourced locally) and add/program some additional, more advanced LED controllers. The total project cost is expected to be well under our original estimate.

5- The timeline of major milestones since our last meeting (and expected going forward) is as follows:

completed:

- 10/21: FOCCP's Board voted for the "punt" option
- 10/29: our custom lights were completed at the Hehong plant
- 11/1-11/10: we solicited quotes for ocean shipping
- 11/11: we received 2 shipping quotes from Hehong's Chinese ocean freight vendor and from American shipper Logfret
- 11/12-12/7: we assessed new options to mitigate risk because the Alibaba escrow option was withdrawn by Hehong
- 11/26: we negotiated a better rate with Logfret and received a revised quote
- 12/8: we received two quotes for cargo inspection, from our previous site inspector and from Swiss-based SGS (recommended by Logfret)
- 12/9: decision made to go with Logfret and SGS
- 12/10-12/16: exchanged paperwork with both vendors and executed engagements letters, POAs, etc.
- 12/17: Infrastructure team finalized specific parameters for inspection and provided to SGS (including item counts, conformity to specs, and systems testing of LEDs/controllers)
- 12/29: Received SGS report which identified no major deficiencies or other issues but identified 13 issues for our consideration
- 12/29-1/04: Infrastructure team reviewed report, evaluated the issues identified by SGS, and concluded that cargo was ready to ship
- 1/05: Bob and Ford documented Infrastructure Committee findings on the cargo report
- 1/08: Joanne signed off on wire transfer and bank/Audrey started preparation to execute (requiring Joanne or Audrey to be present at the branch)
- 1/08: Ford instructed Logfret to contact Hehong on 1/13 or later to arrange for pickup

1/13: Joanne went to branch, initiated wire transfer, and proof of transfer was sent to Hehong

expected:

- by 1/15: pickup of goods at Hehong by Logfret
- by 3/1: goods arrive at Boston port for customs inspection
- by 3/15: goods arrive at Sanibel warehouse in Woburn
- by 3/30: installation plan complete
- by 4/30: installation on new LEDs on trellis started

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Ford Cavallari  
Chair, Infrastructure and Media  
Friends of Christopher Columbus Park

Horticulture Committee report - Meredith Piscitelli

A meeting was held last Saturday, January 10 to discuss plans for next year and welcome new members to the committee

A serious issue at the moment is that the big locks on the Rose Garden gate has now broken twice. It was put there to prevent people from walking over snow covered rose beds and injuring them badly. Waiting to hear a response from the City

The Committee is planning to purchase additional rose bushes and possibly initiate an "Adopt a rose bush" program. In addition, planning to conduct training/educational sessions on proper rose cutting/pruning

They will schedule another March/April welcome meeting. If interested, contact Robyn Reed thru [Info@FOCCP.org](mailto:Info@FOCCP.org)

Michele Brogan suggested also letting people know that it is not necessary to be member to volunteer in garden

Membership report  
No report this month

Website and Internet communications report - Christina Sperry

Three emails were sent to our mailing list since the last monthly meeting

- 1) one final reminder about the Gala, our annual fundraiser
- 2) As a fill in for the December monthly newsletter, an email thanking the Gala's many corporate donors and sponsors, and
- 3) January Monthly Newsletter

The January email and the Gala reminder went to the usual number of recipients and was opened at the usual ~ 1/3 rate. The thank you email was opened more than average at about 42%. Overall in 2014, we sent 27 emails to our mailing list. Special thanks to Meghan Denenberg for helping with a number of the year's newsletters, especially the Gala related ones.

The FOCCP website had more visitors this year than years past. We had 17,182 visits in 2014. The vast majority of that was in June- August, with July being the most popular month ever (as previously reported) with 5,276 visits. The most popular page at the website by a good margin was the home page

(unsurprisingly, followed by the page listing Park events, then the FOCCP calendar, and then our weddings in the Park page. Here's to another fun, busy year in the Park

#### Fundraising Committee report - Patricia Sabbey

Fundraising for the Gala was successful due to the impressive energy and enthusiasm so many individuals put into this effort. Meghan's commitment to holding weekly meetings leading up to the event kept the energy and enthusiasm going. Engaging Faneuil Hall Marketplace as local a supporter was important. As a group we should continue to find ways to publicly express our thanks to our current supporters and also to continue to explore the possibility of increased community support from new business supports

#### Brief post Gala discussion

270 Gala tickets were sold and 266 attended the event

Just a couple of issues identified:

- 1) may need to re think the procedure for "trying your key" for the Treasure Chest. The line was long as folks had to wait their turn.
- 2) timing of band break right after the winning of the treasure chest needs to be revisited

#### Thomas Morris, Manager at Hordon Health on North St

Thomas attended meeting to introduce himself and let us know that their organization is planning for their event in the park in June  
Also -- he volunteered to handle/donate **emcee** responsibilities for gala next year, if we are interested

#### New business

NEMPAC is requesting from FOCCP \$2500 in financial support for opera performance in the park scheduled for this summer  
The consensus of the attendees was to raise the amount from the figure we provided last year but possibly not \$2500  
No vote because of small attendance at FOCCP meeting

Adjourned at 7:20pm

Minutes prepared by Liz Greene, in the absence of the Clerk