

*Friends of Christopher Columbus Park
Meeting Minutes 10/14/14
Mariners House, Boston, MA*

Meeting chaired by Joanne Hayes-Rines

Called to order at: 6:38 P.M. - Adjourned at: 7:32 P.M.

21 members in attendance

Recording the meeting is Patricia Thiboutot

Patricia distributed minutes for review by those who were at last month's meeting.

Guest: Jennifer Lee, Boston University Journalism Student

Reporting on Meeting for a class.

Members were asked if there were any objections to her taping the Meeting.

No Objections.

Committee Reports:

Horticulture: Robyn Reed.

Roses winding down.

Plucking off petals.

Ordered Mulch.

Some day lilies were donated to Elliot School.

City donating daffodils that will be planted.

Membership report -- Beverly Knight

-323 paid members

Website & Internet Communications Report - Christina Sperry

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

- 1) An invitation to the Gala, our annual fundraiser, and
- 2) The October monthly newsletter.

They each went to a usual number of recipients, but the invitation was opened at more than the usual ~1/3 rate. It was opened by nearly 60% of recipients. Hopefully that means many people are interested in the Gala and will attend! Notably, that's the highest open rate for any mailing list email as far back as I could find records, March 2008.

As for the FOCCP website, we continue getting a good number of visitors there. We're not yet quite halfway through October, and we already have had more website visits this month than last month. The top external referrer for the month by far is a website called Mommy Poppins, which is a site about things to do in Boston with kids. It picked up on our Columbus Day event.

Infrastructure Committee report - Ford Cavallari

As of our meeting on 10/14, everything for the LED lighting installation was on-track:

1- our custom-made lights (customized to accommodate the limited power availability on the trellis) were on track, scheduled to be manufactured between 10/18 and 10/25 (note on 10/29 - they have been manufactured on schedule)

2- while there on other business, Robyn Reed made a personal visit with Sarah Yang, our contact at the Hehong factory at Shenzhen where our lights were made. Robyn's visit was instrumental in getting FOCCP the preferred manufacturing timing allowing us to keep schedule despite an earlier payment delay to Hehong. Robyn also noted that in Shenzhen the notion of having an all-volunteer nonprofit booster group for a Park was totally alien - Sarah Yang thought our government should take care of our parks, and she thought our group was extraordinary to have such a role!

2- the LED light strips were, as of 10/14, scheduled to be at the trellis on 10/30, before actually needed on our project timeline.

3- installation was scheduled for 11/3-11/14, leaving a week of time before the 11/24 event

4- we kept a backup plan, in case of any delays or disasters, to light the existing trellis lights - although there was no indication that we should expect a delay, we had decided early-on to keep that option open as a precaution against disaster (like a Hong Kong riot), and therefore we asked to delay any trim-off of the old lights until the new lights are either in-hand or in-transit

5- we prepaid about \$6,000 for the lights - another \$18,000 is due upon completion of manufacturing - air shipment and customs handling will add another \$5,000

As of the 10/14 meeting, the RFP responses had also been completed, received and analyzed:

1- the Infrastructure Committee made an initial recommendation to the President that the work be split among two contractors, Lentine (for trees and electrical work) and Lewis (for LED strip hanging on the trellis) - the RFP contemplated such a split (dividing the total project into 5 pieces), with this split saving over \$25,000 from the highest cost bid

2- the Parks Department wrote an unusual letter suggesting they might have a problem with multiple vendors and urged a single-vendor solution - Ford called the letter out as irregular and expressed concerns that the Park was actually insinuating themselves into our RFP process and contractor selection via this letter substantially more than Chris Cook had indicated they should, endangering FOCCP's future immunity from public contracting and prevailing wage laws

3- the Infrastructure Committee made a follow-up recommendation that we select a lead contractor for electrical work and arrange for that lead to subcontract the lowest-cost bidder for LED hanging (Lewis), thus addressing Park Department objections (notwithstanding our continued objection to their letter)

4- when the Infrastructure Committee and Joanne could not agree on contractor selection, Joanne agreed to take it to a Board vote, since the amounts affected by the decision were in excess of \$25,000

4- the Board meeting to hear the arguments on contractor selection immediately followed the general FOCCP meeting on 10/14

5- based on the Board meeting, as well as follow-up discussions, several important changes were agreed:

a- Sanibel was awarded the contract, based on their willingness to meet the low-bid numbers and take on the subcontractor

b- despite still being on schedule, to eliminate all risk of delay to the 11/24 illumination event the Board chose to put off the installation of LED strips until March and go with the backup plan immediately of lighting the old lights

c- Sanibel was also chosen as the firm to refresh the trellis lights, based on their offer to provide volunteer labor and over-winter warehouse storage for the LED strips

d- Lentine was asked to continue doing all holiday tree decoration for FOCCP

The Infrastructure group was 100% committed to the trellis relighting project in September/October so there was nothing else to report . and contractor selection via this letter substantially more than Chris Cook had indicated they should, endangering FOCCP's future immunity from public contracting and prevailing wage laws

Treasurer's Report: Audrey Tortolani

All numbers are approximate:

Select Expense Items:

\$6000 – September expense for Trellis Lighting

Select Revenue Items:

-Gala Tickets: \$10,000 as of 9/30/14

-Sponsorships: \$22,000 as of 10/11/14

Fundraising Report: Chair Patricia Sabbey

-Sponsors: \$5,000 each

Carmela Laurella.

Marriott Long Wharf

Sunstone

Condo donations of \$500 each:

Mariner
Commercial
Lewis
Lincoln (1st time)

Lahey Landscaping; Joanne

Walk through park proposal:

- Replace 2 oak trees (12' to 15') \$780 each
 - Annual pruning wisteria
 - Remove existing lights
 - Deep root 2 crab apple tree and 6 locust trees
- Robyn added to trim tree by Rose Garden near fountain
Total: \$12,490.
Park Dept. does not prune but does shape pear trees

Christopher Columbus Day Event

The day started with the parade through the park, led by Christopher Columbus on Stilts & Jenny the Juggler. The opening ceremonies included remarks by the Italian Consul to Boston & Aaron Michlewitz, along with NEMPACs soloists performing God Bless America & O Sole Mio in Italian....not a dry eye around.

Thanks to the efforts of our many volunteers, this year's Christopher Columbus Day celebration was a huge success. A special thanks to our young raffle salespeople, Meghan's niece & nephew, Isabelle & Camden & Jack Marengi . A new addition to our festivities this year was a bake sale table. Greg Marengi wanted to participate in raising money for the park too. Being familiar with school bake sales, etc. he had the idea of a bake sale table. Greg worked hard putting it together and with the help of his little brother, Michael the day of our event, the bake sale was a sell-out. Between the raffle sales & the bake sale, these children raised \$800+, paying for the services of Jenny, the Juggler & Christopher Columbus on Stilts. The horticultural committee had a table of day lilies (donations accepted), divided from the crescent garden.

The day's activities included performances by Jenny, the Juggler, Big Joe, the Storyteller, Christopher Columbus on Stilts, an appearance by Curious George, and Peter O'Malley, the Magician. In addition, NE Aquarium's Tidepool, NEMPAC's musical petting zoo & fall craft table and face painting by Jenny and our creative volunteers combined to provide a fun-filled day. Jim, the Bubbleguy, was a special addition, kids and adults alike were mesmerized by his giant bubbles. We ended the day with an after-party at Joe's American Bar & Grill.

Oasis Project- Patricia Sabbey

On October 8 Joanne and I met at the Parks Department with Lauren Bryant, Project Manager, Liza Meyer, Chief Landscape Architect, and Antonia Bellata, landscape architect from Bellata3 Design. Antonia presented a revised version of the proposed urban oasis design. The cost is:

Construction \$225,553

Contingency \$26,000

Design \$23,000

(\$6000 of the design fee already paid)

The Parks Department needs to assess the extent of the sinkhole/sea wall repairs so this may delay the project. This

could tie into the Oasis project development.

Funds donated so far:

Blossom Fund. \$10,000

Beautify Boston \$20,000

CL Waterfront - Carmela Laurella. \$25,000 (payable in installments)

Gala-Laurie Cadigan

Collecting auction items and gift certificates.

Sold 107 tickets

Goal to sell 250-300

Maximum of 10 corporate tables - 7 sold

Cocktail tables and chairs for guests

Reminder...Trellis Lighting Monday, November 24

Minutes accepted with changes.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Thiboutot, Clerk