

Friends of Christopher Columbus Park
Monthly Meeting Minutes 09-10-13
Mariner House, Boston, MA

Meeting chaired by Joanne Hayes-Rines called to order at 6:35 pm. 21 people were in attendance.

Recording the meeting is Clerk, Audrey Tortolani
Meeting notes from the previous meeting were distributed.

I. Committee Reports

Treasurer

Joanne reported on behalf of Virginia Kimball. The Insurance has been paid and the taxes are complete. End of August numbers were not reported at this meeting.

Horticulture

Robyn Reed reported the recent rose bloom was wonderful and unexpected. The roses are looking quite vibrant. In the beginning of October, the Horticulture committee will begin to cut back the rose bushes.

There was an extreme amount of trash in the garden this past weekend; needles and other dangerous trash was found. Pictures were taken to document the incident and they will be forwarded to the Mayors hotline. Ann Babbitt reported she disposed of the needles/trash. Joanne will ask her contacts at the Boston Parks group to find out the protocol for disposing of this type of dangerous trash since there was concern expressed about handling it. All involved in the rose garden do wear gloves. Robyn will speak with the rangers about the issues as well and remind them about locking both gates to the rose garden. It was reported one gate is still locked which is an issue. Meredith Piscitelli also let the group know the trash barrel near the rose garden was recently moved but is now back in place.

The Horticulture committee meets on Sunday mornings from 9:30 am - 10:30 am and Wednesday evenings from 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm. All are welcome. Gloves and clippers are provided. Please plan to wear close-toed shoes.

Membership

Beverly Knight reported since the July Report, FOCCP has received \$1736. This represents 10 new members and 15 renewals. The current total of FOCCP members is 285.

Meredith Piscitelli (FOCCP Facebook administrator) let the group know the FOCCP page on Facebook has 286 "likes". She also let everyone know a business on Commercial Street named Sound Shapes ran a program on their Facebook page in which they said they would donate \$1.00 to FOCCP for every "like" they got on their Facebook page during the month of July. FOCCP received a check for \$129.00 from Sound Shapes as a result of this program.

Red Tricycle, an online, nationwide website geared towards mothers and families, ran a contest in 12 large cities across the US, including Boston. As a result of this content, the Christopher Columbus Park was recognized as a finalist in the 2013 Most Awesome Parks & Playgrounds in the Greater Boston Area. The award is posted on the FOCCP Facebook page along with a link to their site.

We have been receiving great feedback from people who have utilized the Park. Verbiage has included "...continue to hold amazing events ..." and "... Park looks lovely ... just moved from Mansfield and am looking for ways to help...". Another comment stated they wanted "...more advanced notice of events...". Joanne would like us to become better informed about non-FOCCP events held in the Park so we can be knowledgeable about all events held in the Park throughout the year. No one was sure who would be the correct person to contact about events planned by the City in the Park.

Beverly would like additional assistance with the Membership Committee. She is able to compartmentalize specific responsibilities so no one person would have too much to do.

Some examples of these specific responsibilities were writing thank you notes of appreciation to donors and sending a welcome email to new members. Estimated time would be 1 hour per week. If multiple people can take on a various responsibilities it would really help Beverly a lot! Please speak with Beverly directly if you are able to assist in any way.

Website & Internet Communications

Audrey Tortolani reported on behalf of Christina Sperry. Two new emails were sent since the last monthly meeting:

1. A final email about FOCCP's summer movies in the park, concluding a series of six dedicated movie emails.
2. The September 2013 FOCCP newsletter.

They each went to roughly the same number of recipients, about 764. Open rates were about the same, 32% which is normal for our e-mailings. The most clicks on links in either of the emails were external links for city events, the Boston Ahts Festival and the Harbor Fireworks on August 31. Just goes to show that FOCCP can positively and effectively promote the city's and other groups' events in the park.

No other developments to report, other than our Facebook page and website did get more visits during the summer than in other seasons, which is not surprising.

Infrastructure and Marketing/PR

Ford Cavallari reported later in the evening about the Trellis Lights and his proposal for 2014.

II. Updates

Picnic Tables

Meghan Denenberg let the group know 2 picnic tables will be ordered next spring and placed in the tot-lot. They will arrive in time for the tot-lot clean up. There will be a sign indicating the tables are provided by FOCCP. Each table weighs 600 pounds, seating is attached and the tables are blue. They are made out of commercially made material.

Urban Oasis Project

Joanne Hayes-Rines provided an update on the Oasis project. There was a meeting held on September 9th with Antonia and Felipe of Bellalta 3 Design. The Committee attendees were: Joanne Hayes-Rines, Patricia Sabbey, co-chair Ann Babbitt, Ford Cavallari, Meghan Denenberg, Virginia Kimball and Danny Nuzzo. Also in attendance was Sherry Geldersma, the project manager from the Parks Department. It was a two hour meeting which included a presentation of an updated proposal combining two of the previously presented designs. The cost presented was very high and Bellalta 3 Design has been asked to go back to the drawing board. Given the Oasis project will likely cost more than previously planned, potentially up to \$300,000, FOCCP will be pursuing grant opportunities to raise additional money. The two possible grants are from the Henderson Foundation and the Harold Whitworth Pierce Charitable Trust. The deadline to submit the preliminary letter is September 30th for the Harold Whitworth Pierce Charitable Trust grant. If they accept the project, they will ask for a full proposal due early November. Potential grant money from this source is \$25,000 to \$50,000. The deadline for the Henderson Foundation grant is October 15th. Potential grant money is up to \$100,000. Kathy Ray will be helping with the grant writing.

Joanne indicated we may be able to use flowers and plants from the crescent area and the City may have extra trees available for the Oasis space. This would help defer some of the costs.

III. Upcoming Events

Columbus Day

Ann Babbitt let us know the event will be held on Monday, October 14th. She has 3 new members on the Committee. The FOCCP Information table is covered however, Ann does need help with set up, games and face painting on the day of the event. Much of the entertainment has been secured including Jenny the Juggler, Magician Peter O'Malley, T-Bone, and Boris the stilt walker. The Italian Consul and hopefully Mayor Menino will attend. Patricia is working on getting music; potentially the St. Leonard's choir. Patricia also let the group know Barbara Wallraff is recruiting singers from Coro Dante. It was confirmed the Fire Truck is coming. The celebration will begin at 11:00 am with the parade, followed by the opening ceremonies. There will be lots of time for lawn games, face painting, and arts and crafts. The event will end at 3:00 pm.

IV. Trellis Lighting

Ford Cavallari let us know there was an Infrastructure meeting on August 28th and the focus was on 3 main areas.

1. Prioritization of issues for a report to the Park. Matt is helping to prioritize.
2. Review of walk through of Park
3. Trellis Lighting

Ford presented a PowerPoint slideshow on the research he has done on the Trellis lighting. The current lights on the Trellis are approaching their end of life and FOCCP will need to do something after this season. Here is the information Ford presented in the meeting.

- To replace the current lights, the minimum cost is \$45,000 - \$50,000.
- It costs \$10,000 just to turn the lights on and off each year.
- At one point this season, 75% of the "summer" lights were out.
- The suggestion is to reuse the existing electrical boxes.
- The LED light strips Ford is proposing are waterproof and would allow for multiple light colors to be displayed.
- The LED lights along with the controller would cost about \$100,000.
- The lifespan of the LED lights is approximately 10 years.
- Ford suggested looking at different ways to put the lights on the Trellis - instead of wrapping, potentially putting strips of the lights along the sides of the Trellis.
- There was also discussion about how to attach the lights if not wrapped; staples, and adhesive were mentioned.
- Ford would like to negotiate with the Parks department to see if they could assist with the funding.

The next proposed step is to purchase some of these LED lights and test on a specific section of the Trellis. Ford requested funding of \$10,000 to test 1 grid on the Trellis. The money would pay for materials and labor.

A vote was taken at the meeting and \$10,000 was approved for this test.

November Fundraiser

Beverly Knight provided an update on the status of the FOCCP annual Fundraiser. Kim Caverly, Beverly Knight, and Pam Girouard are co-chairs of this event. The venue will be new this year; Fairmount Battery Wharf and the date is Saturday, November 16th. 7:00 - 8:00 pm Cocktail Hour, 8:00 - 11:00 Gaming, Dancing and Dining. The complete downstairs area will be available which includes 2 ballrooms. The Luke Marantz Quintet will be playing music all evening and Patron Spirits Co. will provide complimentary signature drinks and pastries. There will also be a café with an espresso cart. The price of the event per person has not been determined yet. The committee is working with Chef Arwi, from Aragosta to finalize the food options which will likely include passed hors d'oeuvres, food stations, desserts and coffee.

Laurie Cadigan is heading up the auction committee again. She is looking for gift certificates for the auction. Lee Ann Collins from Exhale will be making a donation for the auction.

Invitations will be sent out soon. The goal is to have 200 attendees.

IV. Additional Information

On behalf of Donna Freni, Joanne communicated information about the North End Clean up event to be held on Saturday, September 21st from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. All volunteers should plan to meet at the Prado on Hanover Street. The City of Boston is leading brooms, shovels, bags and gloves.

Jim Salini let the group know the election for NEWRA officers will be held on October 10th in the Nazzaro Center.

The previous months minutes were accepted without change.

Meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm