

Beautification Commission (BC)

Meeting Minutes

November 19th, 2012

9:00am, Town Hall Room B-3

Present: Suzanne Schutte, Heather Pommernelle, Pam Elliot, Sig Buchmayr, Cindy Ryan, David May, John Schlachtenhaufen, Bob Baker, Sandy Drimal, Phyllis Hawkins, Sabina Harris, Marcia Meinerth

Absent: Sandy Filmer (representing BC at the Green Team meeting at this same time)

Action items are noted in red.

Financial (MM)

- Reimbursements still owed to HP for Valley View, and Planter's Choice for berm plant purchases. **MM will double check payments are coming soon.**
- Check from Whole Foods for \$165 has not yet been received; **PH is working to collect from the manager.**
- AAG account - \$3,100 is available for maintenance of AAGs from the Spring.
- Varina's account has sufficient funds for planting and maintenance of the garden.
- All other accounts are up to date.
- There will be a budget review in January. **MM will prepare a budget summary** by category of expenses showing the amount spent in prior years in each category. Depending on the actual amount left in the budget to be spent during the Jan-June 30, 2013 period, the group will determine which projects should receive funding and the amount by category.

The Berm Project

- DM updated all on the status. Hand watering is no longer required until the spring; hoses will be left out, with the exception of those on the berm side. JS reported there was significant storm damage, including the loss of pre-existing trees. There is no longer any shade, which is not a problem for the plants (actually it's better for them). The Tree Conservancy of Darien is looking at whether they can plant more trees here.
- Help from 25 students and teachers from the High School Community Service Project: on 11/20 they will spread the remaining chips and plant allium bulbs, the last berm planting for the season. **SS, BB will help manage the students.**
- Request to the Garden Club of Darien for additional berm funding: only at the end of 2013 would we hear and potentially receive funds.

Signage

- BB is generally pleased with the articles in the paper, including a piece from the BOS. However it did include sign specifications that were not correct; BB highlighted the errors to Jeremy. Basically he sees this project as over, though if someone continues the signage focus he would suggest a continuation of effort to focus on illegal posting on trees and utility poles.
- PH/SD pulled several signs from AAGs over the political season; some (those for Mickelson) are still up today!

Adopt-A-Gardens

- CR announced that Paw Print will sponsor Exit 11N to 95.
- MM reported that Gardener Center actually has paid for both Exit 11S and the existing Exit 11N to Post Road gardens, and will continue sponsoring these two gardens.
- McLaughlin's has given up the AAG at the border of Rowayton at the end of Tokeneke Road, so this very visible spot is now open now for sponsorship. **PH will approach Rowayton Seafood, etc. CR will remove McLaughlin's sign.**
- Fallen stone/cement in the AAG at the entrance of Goodwives: **CR will speak to Anthony Takone** about tidying up the stone.
- CR announced that the family of Amy McCann is funding an AAG in her memory; site will be the corner of Tilley Pond closest to Post Road, directly across from the train station. **CR will communicate with the Friends of Tilly Pond group**, to make sure there are not issues with this. **CR to order larger sign** – "Amy's Smile." The family is collecting the funds, MM is establishing an account to manage the planting and ongoing maintenance of the garden. **SS will send a thank you letter** to the McCann family, as well as the Varina Mason-Steuert's family. **MM will send letters also to individual donors.**
- Exit 13 status from MM: Susan Hayes has improved the soil, and will next week begin planting bulbs, etc. The group will monitor Susan Haynes costs and determine whether/how long to continue hiring her to do

the ongoing maintenance at exit 13.

- HP mentioned the replanting of the edge of Kelly's garden hasn't yet happened, **HP will plan for the spring. SB will pull the stump out when he can.**
- SS on the new AAG at Exit 11 from Post Road: working with Katie Keith on position of the garden, in respect to new trees being planted by the Tree Conservancy. Question of how to remove Eucalyptus stumps, and whether it's necessary. **SS/JS/others to look at placements next week.**
- Discussed possibly making the smaller island near Splash car wash an AAG. Decided not to, as the island is not mowed so it would look messy around a planting.

Other town clean-up

- SS on the Tokeneke Road project: DOT lost the paperwork, (in future we plan to hand drop paperwork off). Group tidied up, cut vines. Several smaller projects going forward to continue the clean-up.
- Piles of logs, vines, etc. on Tokeneke Road, many have been there since the school was built (left by the state). SB asked that they be cleaned up. **SS to speak to George on this.**
- SS updated on Noroton Heights planting at the train station, George's project (not an AAG). They haven't watered, not looking great.

Hanging Baskets (SD)

- SD has taken one of last year's baskets to 2 different garden centers for input on what happened. Their comments: must be fertilized every week, and cut back on July 4th. They did not appear to be watered at one point and got leggy; once they're leggy they won't recover.
- **SD will approach the library and Penny Glassmeyer** to see if they'd like us to order sufficient baskets for their areas as well.
- Actual baskets could be upgraded to moss baskets with plastic liners, to better hold water. **SD is obtaining an estimate.**

Other

- SS on the Girl Scouts: the girls sent us thank cards for our help (though they did the work!). They have approached the GOP to sponsor their Darien Train Station AAG they planted; **SS will follow up.** If not them, PH will approach 1020 Post, Darien Social, etc.
- SS on DPW list of work projects: George is on leave until the week of 12/3. They won't be able to work on our list until Sandy clean-up is finished. Asked for where to store the water tank over the winter; pending reply. Has asked if wood chips are available. Asked to meet and discuss the new Exit 11 (priority for Jaime Stevenson). Also will cover: hanging baskets on posts with parking signs; re-painting of lamp posts and some curbs. Will add Goodwives Shopping Center stonewall repair to the list.
- SS on the annual report: adjustments made as per BC member requests; **SS will send out the final report.**
- Board member renewals, vacancies: BB will be resigning at the end of this year – he will be missed! BC board member terms are 3 years.
- Tree Conservancy activity from JS: an Oak and London Plane Tree will be planted at Exit 11N, a Princeton Elm will be planted in a small island across from Friendly's, 2 Oaks at new Exit 11N, and native viburnums on the slant by Exit 11S. Likely more at the berm as well.
- 2013 Meeting schedule: 2nd Monday of each month - Jan 14, Feb 11, Mar 11, Apr 8, May 13, June 10, July 15, none in August, Sept 9, Oct 21, Nov 18, no December meeting. Clean-up April 27th. Hanging basket update w/o May 20th.

Next Meeting: January 14th at 9:00am (Town Hall, room to be confirmed)