

Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail
Minutes of the Meeting on January 21, 2014

Roll call: Co-Clerk, George Hart - members present – MJ Bull, Joe Camilleri, David Carlin, Mark Cressotti, Diane Genereux, Joe Giffune, George Hart, Demetrios Kanavaros, Nancy Kotowitz, Jeff LaValley, Sally Memole, Don Podolski, Jay Queenin, Sgt. Eric Hall, Chris Stegr, John Tassinari

Motion to accept the minutes of 11-19-13 meeting was made: vote passed

Public participation: none

Reports of city Departments:

Mayor: not present

City Engineer: Mark C said we have an invite to an informational meeting on Thursday, January 23, 2014 at 10:00AM regarding phase 2 of the trail. The contractor is ET&L Construction. Jeff recommended that he and Joe G attend. This will be an informal, non-public, round table to discuss important items of pre-construction, including: removal of 4 bridges per the Mayor's request. Joe G asked if this removal would help or hinder the process and Mark said "all changes are bad." Next, Mark said the current TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) of MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) states that the north section of the Greenway will be at \$2.8 million in 2015 and the central section will be in 2016. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Fund was described by Mark with many project details, including: money and dates. Jeff L stated that he has received a link to the TIP on email from Mark. We have to get the State to fund this project and we need to send supportive communications. [Following the meeting, an email containing additional information, including a draft letter was circulated to Executive Board members for review with suggested language as provided by Mark Cressotti]. Mark also stated that the 25% plan of the Western Ave. project was approved, including: 10 ft. travel lanes with 5 ft. shoulder and it can be connected downtown to the Greenway. Mark asked us if the stated 10 ft. (travel lane) and 5 ft. (shoulder) was acceptable, to which there was much discussion. Mark said the plan is to complete the next section of the Greenway by November, 2014.

Reports of Directors and Committees:

- Chair, Jeff L: last Thursday attended a meeting in Springfield with MassBike regarding bikeability and they are interested in meeting with FOCG, so we will be meeting with MassBike and we'll get hard copies of the report.
- Vice Chair, Joe G: none
- Treasure, Joe G (interim due to Mike F having stepped down): there has been transition over the last few months. Over this year was the first time money was spent and the finance committee must make decisions. Our income was down from \$33,000.00 to \$27,000.00, so we need to increase donors.

Also, expenses were up from \$17,000+ to \$22,000+; the net was down \$15,300+ to \$5,700+, so the treasurer should report each month and Joe gave details. The current cash is \$22,636.57. All is now up to date; Jay Q asked about time/etc. commitments [offering possible assistance from his company, e.g. administrative/auditing support] and said he and Joe can talk more. Jeff said Atty. Cal Annino also offered legal (auditing) assistance.

- Director of Advancement, Al G absent: none
- Director of Programs and Events, Nancy K: the upper parking lot at the trail is being plowed. There is a need for plantings. Volunteers are cleaning the trail in winter. Jeff had copies of past events and said we need to expand event committee tasks.
- Director of Education and Research, Don P: he is involved in voting with MassBike. He attended the March 4 & 5, 2012 event in Washington DC and supported the next transportation bill. Jeff said we paid for Don's registration fee and this year the date is 1/22/14 and asked Don if the registration fee was \$349.00 or \$375.00. MJ B made a motion that we pay Don's registration fee for the National Bike Summit and Joe G stated we should send/pay for 2 attendees and Don said the added costs are high and there are other New England events that are cheaper. Joe C said we should support 2 members going to the DC event [as a way of offering an incentive to the 'next generation' of leaders] and made an amendment to the motion to include 2 registrations: vote on the motion passed.
- Directors of Planning and Development, Diane G and MJ B: they spoke about printing, etc. on a spoke card with cost of \$1.00 each (details were on a hard copy hand out). The next step is if they should be tied to membership or use as giveaways. Joe G said to use it as a fundraiser, not a giveaway. Chris S asked if we should proceed with plan/prep/budget for the spoke cards. We need them for Bike Week in May. Questions arose about if we should have a public contest for the design of the spoke card. Jeff suggested we email suggestions to Diane G. MJ said to put RFP for signage (way finding & trail user guides, etc.) to the next meeting because we haven't had time, so motion was made to table the discussion until our next meeting and the vote passed.
- Director of Maintenance, Bob P absent: none

Reports of Committees:

- To be done in the time between this and our next monthly meeting.
- Jeff would like the Board to consider moving toward a consent agenda format to make better use of time at meetings for discussion and voting.

Old Business:

- Mural project: in the past we received \$2,000.00 (from the local/Westfield Cultural Council) for the project and it is still on track. Design was shared with the group (Jeff has both a hard and electronic copy) and he is working with local vendors regarding donation of plexiglass material as a cover and cost is less than \$300.00 as it will be 4' X 4'.
- Board Retreat: the facilitator [Harry Rock, former Executive Director of the Westfield YMCA] gave us new dates (2/22/14 and 3/8/14). It will be from 9:00AM to 4:00PM at WSU. A vote was taken on which date would work for the most board members and the results were: 10 for 2/22/14 and 4 (or possibly) 5 for 3/8/14. The purpose of the retreat is to develop a road map to our work and how ideas relate to our mission statement, so a strategic plan will help us meet our goals and keep us headed in the right direction and empower other board members. It was suggested that we conduct it over 2 days, but this is not conducive. People may come for part of the day if necessary and lunch and snacks will be provided.
- Valley Gives recap: the goal was to double our donors and dollars: we tripled our donors and doubled our dollars!! An anonymous donor matched total dollars raised (up to \$1,000) bringing the total gifts raised (\$1,035) to \$2,035.
- Fund Request Parameters: donations to charitable giving guide to set dollar amount according to our budget: this is on a hard copy handout. Chris S made a motion to change language relative to the annual amount allocated to fund requests received. Motion was seconded, discussion resulted inclusion of language stating a simple majority of voting members of board of directors was required to exceed the established amount. *Final copy of the approved policy is attached to minutes.*
- Building Donation Request/COA: Chris S stated that donations from other groups are \$20.00 to \$50.00 per month. Motion made to approve \$50.00 per month, vote passed. *Note: Jeff has asked Chris S to request an invoice from Church of the Atonement so that we have financial backup/paperwork to balance accounting with an as yet to be established line item in our operating budget. Joe G will establish this line item/budget item in Quickbooks.*

New Business:

- Annual Review/conflict of Interest Policy: Jeff tabled until our February meeting.
- Review a motion to accept the Policy of Non-discrimination: Jeff stated we need ways to find new and different ways to solicit charitable donations and showed a draft on a hand out. Motion to accept was made and vote passed. *Final copy of approved policy attached to minutes.*
- Committee Assignments: In sharing a draft of the proposed committee assignments Jeff stated assignments were made based partially on Standing Committees outlined within the Bylaws, others were filled based on each board members strengths and an attempt to balance personalities, etc. Board members were asked to review assignments and contact Jeff for consideration of possible changes and/or additions. Jeff also will personally contact each committee chair to initiate setting a year-long calendar ahead of time and initiating a first meeting of each committee. Jeff also serves as an Ex-Officio of each committee.

- Board Position Reassignments: (A.) Motion to accept resignation of treasurer, Mike Fournier and to accept Joe G as temporary treasurer, vote passed. (B.) Motion to accept Director of Programs and Events need to step down to an at-large position: vote passed. (C.)* Received suggestion of creation of a new position (Director of Membership and Outreach) and the need for a new position description for Sally M. (D.) Motion to accept Annual Reappointment of Ex-officio Members: vote passed.

*Note: Item © was tabled and a further vote and final approval of any changes to the organizational structure/position title changes was suspended due to a request by the Board to have an opportunity to review new/revised position descriptions for both the Director of Advancement and newly created Director of Membership & Outreach. *Jeff will provide updated position descriptions in advance of the February Board meeting.*

- Don P asked about Bikeability Assessment: bike week needs to be discussed before March meeting; discussion of Mark's info on Western Ave. project plans and state's plan and MassBike of Pioneer Valley meeting on Thursday. Jeff advocates to remind city of responsibility of providing safest encouragement of bike and pedestrian use of the lanes; the need to push for dedicated bike lanes; problem is designing for budget not bike safety – much discussion on why/what is right/city/state/FOCG goals. Jeff will inform us of MassBike position.

Next meeting: February 18, 2014

Motion to adjourn was made: vote passed