

Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail

Minutes of the Meeting on November 19, 2013

Roll call: **Co-Clerk, George Hart** - members present – MJ Bull, Joe Camilleri, Mark Cressotti, Diane Genereux, Joe Giffune, George Hart, Jeff LaValley, Bob Pac, Don Podolski, Chris Stegr, John Tassinari

Motion to accept the minutes (with an added correction) of 10-15-13 meeting was made: vote passed

Public participation: Sally Memole was present

Old Business: stencils on sidewalks was mentioned; funding request parameters: MJ made draft of a policy on charitable giving by FOCGRT. Chris asked of need to review this. Jeff gave thank you to MJ for thoroughness of the draft. Jeff said no budget yet for 2014. Further discussion of a cap amount. Chris made a motion to table until Dec. meeting – motion passed.

Reports of city Departments:

Mayor: not present

Mark: no definitive of go ahead on phase 2. DOT not in favor of moving the north section to 2014. We have technically lost money for contractor in '14. Bids have been extended. John asked if we can lobby to any group. Mark said the city has done all that can be done and recommended that we could reach out to Congressman Neal and Senator Warren. Joe G asked if we're limited by awaiting Cross St decision? MJ said we should draft a letter. There was much discussion and questions of the \$2M use by '14 or later. Jeff asked Mark if there is any advocacy we can do. Mark said the city has done everything possible and described levy accesses as a 'swap' for Cross St. school. John asked if MassBike or Rails to Trails could help support. Joe G asked if there are other means of funding and Mark said yes. MJ asked for feedback from Mark on kiosk design. We discussed rules and requirements and will help us with this. MJ discussed need to finalize kiosks and free standing historic signs. Bob mentioned the need to address graffiti.

Reports of Directors:

- Jeff L: explained that we attended Chamber of Commerce dinner and Cal Annino offered legal assistance. Business West has an annual award and Jeff nominated the FOCG group. Wreaths across America is coming again on Dec.10 at 12:00pm to Stanley Park. WOW is holding a lantern light parade on Dec.10 and asked if we want to march. Also reminded us of end of year donations.
- Joe G: Bear Scouts got their sign up and did maintenance.
- Treasure and Financial Report – Mike absent: Jeff shared comparison sheets of '12 and '13 and reiterated Mike's help. In reference to handout of finances, Joe G said Sept., 2013 was wrong and needs correction. Mike has agreed to head finance committee. Joe G stated we (he and Jeff) need to meet with Mike to clarify apparent inconsistencies. Jeff said he'd set up a meeting.

- Director of Advancement – Al absent: Jeff spoke for this: we are participating in ValleyGives again. This year on 12-12-13 for 24 hours. Last year we raised about \$500 from 15 donors, all online. He'll send a handout on how to promote. US Post Office does a mailing of neighborhoods and the cost of this mailing is about \$300 - also the purchase of envelopes would be about \$100 and the purchase of lists would be \$300. Jeff feels it would be worth doing because about 2% usually respond. MJ stated we may need a person to take responsibility (from advancement) of memberships. Discussion of gifts (water bottles, shirts, hats) to members/donors. Jeff requested an inventory of these items. George said he would do this of the items he has in storage.
- Nancy – absent
- Don: Mass in Motion was one of the sponsors of Bike Week
- Diane and MJ: proposed hiring a consultant and we need to research electronic signs. Proposed sending a link to Southwick.
- Director of Maintenance – Bob: proposed Peter Miller at MOU meeting. Asked DPW to clear trail leaves, etc. At the DPW meeting they approved eliminating access ramp (spur) to Bliss St., so now there will be only 12 access ramps. On a trail count Sat., Nov. 16 from 1:30 to 2:35pm there were 39 bikes, 10 pedestrians and 1 jogger. At the Farmington Valley Rail Trail Committee meeting it was noted an increase in use.
- Jeff: noted the Park and Rec. Dept. brochure and asked Jim Blascak if we could post in it.

Reports of Committees:

- Nominating Committee: Bob asked for a non-public meeting and what was the evolution of the board. Explained candidates as listed on handout. Jeff stated the need for new officers and directors. Much discussion of our options. A motion was made to create a shared position of Education and Research to be shared by Joe C and Don P and the motion passed. Vote on all other nominations also passed unanimously.
- Website Committee: all is updated. Historical signs are posted. Jeff asked for links to other organizations be created.
- Education Task Force: Jeff tabled, but stated that a post Western Ave. meeting with Bob Plasse and Brent Bean re added advocacy. WSU welcomes student chapter of FOCGT, adding 3 items from Jeff that he will email to us.

New Business:

- Remember ValleyGives day on Dec. 12
- Jeff proposed a board development/strategic planning retreat: should be good for us all, did research on using Genesis Center or Holiday Inn. See handout on back of Oct. minutes for details. Discussion on where/when/facilitator – George recommended Harry Rock from Springfield College and will reach out to him.

Next meeting: December 17, 2013 Motion to adjourn was made: vote passed