



## BUCKINGHAM POND CONSERVANCY BOARD MEETING

May 23, 2022

Virtual Meeting 7:00

Meeting Attendees: Gabi Sarhos, Anne Savage, Nancy Costello, Marsha Penrose, Laura Shaddak, Jeanette Carioto, Ted Kolankowsk, Mark Schlessman, Ceiligh and Felton McLaughlin, and guest Deb Zamer

Absentees: Jenny O'Neil, Grace Bennett, Kate Carleo

1. VOTE: The April 25 Board meeting minutes were accepted.
2. **Vote on the Treasurers report will take place when submitted** by Jenny O'Neil.
3. Park updates: Deb Zamer, Albany Common Council representative for the 14th ward, spoke in favorable terms about the responsiveness of DGS. She agreed with Gabi regarding the desirability of streamlining communications and **encouraged BPC to reach out to her with concerns.** There was a discussion of the current complaints about the porta potty's placement. It can be seen from the windows of nearby residents, and it is near the playground. Anne said BPC had worked with the City years ago but there was no communication regarding its current location. Deb brought up the fact that cleaning trucks have to have adequate access so it has to be near the parking lot. Pictures of the existing fencing were viewed and **Deb remarked that she can advocate for the removal of some posts of the rope fence.** It may be possible to devise a gate, replacing a couple of the posts in this area.

Gabi asked for comments on removal and for information on other parks. Families residing at a distance would be inconvenienced by removal, and the lack of maintenance personnel would be a problem if a small permanent structure like that at Westland Hills were erected. Ted commented that the cost of a prepackaged structure with vandal-resistant steel interior fixtures would be about \$100,000. Deb restated the neighborhood's desire for the porta potty to be back where it was.

The **next item that Deb was requested to bring to DGS concerns dangerous hanging tree limbs.** Laura stated that the most pressing problems are dead branches that are hazardous to pedestrians and kids. Ted spoke about the need to maintain safe clearance. There are some large healthy branches that are hanging over the path and the pond, but a list of the most pressing problems is needed. Mark talked about the process of trimming dead trees of all branches and

topping, leaving the trunk standing as a habitat for birds and critters. He also asked about dead limbs left in the water.

It was decided that Gabi and members of the landscaping committee should arrange to walk around the pond with Deb and, hopefully, the City forester to ascertain the most pressing problems.

Felton then brought up the missing fountain on the west side, close to the playground. Sergio has said that all new fountains and some extras have been bought, but again this year one is missing. Gabi said that Jessica is aware of this and has said that they'll be coming.

Felton also reported on his emails with Jessica about the pond's weed problems. Herbicide application has usually been done by this time of year, but nothing has been decided about a contractor, vendor, or product and there is no ETA. Deb asked him to cc her when Jessica is contacted. She reiterated that contacting the City frequently with various problems is not the most productive process. Anne spoke about previous efforts to plan quarterly meetings that ran into problems with the turnover of personnel. It was decided that Felton and Gabi would be the points of contact for Deb as she advocates for BPC concerns.

Deb brought up the matter of grants and stated that there have been many more asks for good projects than there are current funds available, but there will be other funding opportunities. She suggested that generic information be gathered and at the ready. Gabi said that Elisabeth, a former Board member, will probably be able to help with applications. Ted said that he can put together a list of targets that he's familiar with.

When Deb asked about the signage notation to be discussed as time permits, Gabi told about her informal survey of what has been done in other parks.

Gabi asked about the plans of the planting for shoreline stabilization, and Laura responded that it is very close to being ready for submission to Sergio and Jess. Felton said it needs to be sent to Joe Coffey for help with the Army Corps, but Gabi stated that short staffing probably precludes any help with permitting. Felton said there should be an inquiry about assistance, and Anne said everything should be cc'd to Deb. Ted asked about the possibility of hiring someone, which might cost as much as \$4000, and Anne said that perhaps the City would share the cost.

Grace was not in attendance to discuss CSLAP, but Felton said that they are waiting for the first bottles to arrive.

The Spring Cleanup was said to have a very good turnout. Anne asked where the list of possible volunteers went, and Marsha said there were only two or three people who signed up at the event. Grace will be the keeper of the list.

Mark talked about garlic mustard plants that aren't in their first year, so there aren't a lot of seeds coming up. He plans to pull before they go to seed and will put out a request for people to come out and help. Laura noted more on the western side of the road.

Ceiligh does not have administrator access on Facebook and Instagram to post for Mark. Mark said it could be put in comments, but Ceiligh doesn't have a Facebook account. Anne may be able to see that it can be posted. Gabi requested that Mark and Laura figure out when they want to do the removal project.

Janet Stutzman is no longer doing the garden, but Laura said she would be willing and able to keep it looking nice. Gabi will be writing to Janet on BPC letterhead.

4. Membership: Grace was not in attendance.

5. Social media: Mark stated that he hopes he'll be able to compose some posts on tree tags in the near future.

6. Website: Jenny was said to have paid the 50% down payment. Gabi said the website is moving forward, and she will get some possible dates to Nancy for content writing.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:23 Next meeting will be June 27, 2022