

# **Friends of Salter Grove Community Meeting**

**October 26, 2017**

**Pilgrim Senior Center**

## **In attendance:**

Friends of Salter Grove (FoSG) members; Peter Becker, Marina Wong, Matt Dickinson, Louise Jakobson, Jason Major, Alfred Nazareth III, Michael Jarvis, Richard Furia, Rep. Joseph McNamara and Bill Custer.

Warwick Community Police Officers, William DeFoe and Dan Maggiacomo

Approximately six (6) neighborhood residents

**Louise Jakobson** called the meeting to order at 7:07PM. She welcomed everyone and gave a brief summary of the agenda for the evening. She introduced Peter Becker, the Coordinator for the Friends of Salter Grove.

**Peter Becker** thanked everyone for coming and proceeded with an update on our activities to date.

He narrated a slideshow. The slideshow helped explain the parts of the puzzle that FoSG faces in requesting improvements within the Park. The DEM manages the property for the State of Rhode Island. Coastal Resource Management Council (CRMC) is responsible for the shoreline and any activity within proximity to the shoreline. The US Corp of Engineers is responsible for the breakwater. The City of Warwick has a 20 year agreement with DEM to maintain the land within the park and obtain liability insurance for the Park. Finally, the role of FoSG is one of advocacy for the Park.

Peter reported the following:

New England Grassroots Environmental Fund provided a \$1,000 grant to FoSG for fundraising, community outreach, environmental education, and a focused anti-litter campaign.

We conducted a survey which revealed that 80% of those responding thought that a safe access to the breakwater and improvements to the playground should be our top priorities.

DEM and the City of Warwick agreed to repair the causeway which leads to the breakwater. A budget of \$200,000 has been established. An RFP (request for proposal)

is being reviewed. Peter thanked Sen. McCaffrey Rep. McNamara, Mayor Avedisian, and Councilman Corley for their assistance in this effort.

FoSG requested the Warwick Police Department to increase its presence in the park, as later reported on by Officer Maggiacomo.

FoSG requested that the City install a portable toilet in the park and provide covers for the garbage containers. This has been accomplished with the help of Holly Weber, the new Parks and Recreation Coordinator for the City of Warwick.

Save the Bay in conjunction with FoSG conducted clean-ups within the park since our last meeting on June 15<sup>th</sup>, July 13<sup>th</sup>, August 10<sup>th</sup>, September 16<sup>th</sup> and October 21<sup>st</sup>.

A focused anti-littering campaign was conducted in September. Posters were posted in area bait shops encouraging fisherman to pick up after themselves, and anti-littering signs were posted within the park and on the causeway. Approximately 500 gallons of trash were removed from the breakwater. Peter and Marina spoke with 100+ individuals in the park to encourage them not to litter. This campaign has been effective and littering has been less evident recently.

FoSG has been involved with developing nature field trips for St. Peters school with Susan Unger and one was conducted on May 12<sup>th</sup> involving twenty-four 4<sup>th</sup> graders.

FoSG hosted two potluck picnics to gather community support and renew appreciation for Salter Grove. These were held on July 15<sup>th</sup> and September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Dan Magiacomo, from the Warwick Police Department made a presentation on their efforts. Officer Magiccomo coordinated an effort to greatly increase the police presence in the park. In less than a month the department made 100+ patrols through the park. They also did some plain clothes investigation. There were no arrestable offenses observed, which is good. The officer noted that the greatest deterrent to bad activity in the park is usage by local residents. Officer Magiacomo also said that he has been reassigned, and his replacement as community police officer will be Mark Jandreau. Peter Becker thanked the officers and commended the police department for their responsiveness.

**Matt Dickinson**, an FoSG member and landscape designer, presented some slides related to the proposed decorative trash receptacles and playground equipment.

The existing playground equipment is forty years old, and replacement would be very beneficial. The replacement of the equipment would be divided into two or three phases. The first phase entails the trash receptacles and the swing set. Phase II would entail the installation of a climbing net for 5-12 year olds

The decorative trash receptacles would be “fish barrels” and “bird barrels” to reflect the park’s semi-naturalness. The designs would be laser cut from the steel shell, and the receptacle inside would collect the trash. A concrete pad would be installed to affix the receptacles. Both designs would also include covers.

Matt presented a conceptual rendering of two (2) T-swings. These would accommodate children of all ages, including toddlers and would include adaptive restraints for those needing assistance.

Matt also presented a conceptual rendering of the area surrounding the swing set and the climbing net. Seating and plants would be installed for the purpose of “corralling” the children for safety purposes, but would still be open and inviting.

**Louise Jakobson**, FoSG Fundraising Chairperson, introduced Michael Jarvis who is assisting her. Louise discussed that the goal for Phase I, the trash receptacles and the swing sets, is \$6,000. She happily reported that through our raffle and other donations we are presently at \$3,000. December 31, 2017 is the deadline for Phase I fundraising, so there is much more fundraising to be done.

An anonymous donor has promised to match donations up to his limit of \$1,000.

**Rep. Joseph McNamara**, noted that he is the State Rep for the area. He has used the park for many years, and is very thankful to FoSG and its members for their efforts to make improvements within the park and in tackling the litter problem.

### **Community Comments/Questions;**

A lady, new to the area, suggested that we host a children’s day to get them involved in nature. She thought that by getting the children involved it might help with our fundraising efforts. Peter Becker encouraged everyone to “accompany their words with deeds” and to volunteer as a supporting member of FoSG by signing-up.

A gentleman suggested stuffing flyers for activities and fundraisers in children’s backpacks. Michael Jarvis tried doing this at St. Peter’s with very limited to no success, but it might be worth trying again.

It was suggested by Louise Jacobson that “success breeds success” and by showing potential donors that we are able to fundraise, we may be more successful.

A lady also suggested that we try to piggy back an activity with Gaspee Days.

Alfred Nazareth, FoSG member and engineer, said he had had some discussion with Coastal Resources and they are very supportive of our plan to improve access to the breakwater, but favors a culvert versus a bridge. There was some discussion as to whether CRMC was the instigator of this project since CRMC is more of a permitting agency.

A gentleman named Lenny, a former Health Department official, suggested that we approach the Yacht Club for fundraising purposes. This was thought to be a good suggestion. Lenny also defended the lack of responsiveness of state agencies that we have discovered. Unfortunately, special projects such as ours are lower in priority because of the importance of the day-to-day vital activities.

**Raffle Drawing** – Louise Jacobson and Michael Jarvis thanked our local merchants and the Mollers on behalf of United National Food for their contributions to our raffle. They drew the following winning raffle tickets:

Schastea – Brian Tate  
Edge – Katie Duncanson  
Revolution – Mary Lawless  
Fellini – Veronica Dash  
Cork & Brew – Robert Kok  
O’Rourke’s – Bill Ruggieri  
Gourmet Food Basket – Janey McDonald

There being no other business, Peter Becker adjourned the meeting at 8:13PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
William A. Custer  
Scribe