

April 2, 2018

FRIENDS OF THE PUBLIC GARDEN

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting
April 2, 2018

The Board of Directors of the Friends of the Public Garden met at 69 Beacon Street, Boston, on Tuesday, April 2, 2018 at 4:00 p.m.

Members present: Mesdames Adam, Anderson, Bordon, Burlingame (ex officio), Burns, Corcoran, Cox, Nessen, O’Keeffe, Quinn and Messrs. Albright, Clendaniel, Hood (ex officio), Mead, Taylor, and Zick.

Members absent: Mesdames Achtmeyer, Johnson, Mason, Pokorny, and Mr. Burnes.

Ms. Vizza was also present for the meeting.

Ms. Adam, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Transfer of Surplus Funds to Shaw/54th

Mr. Clendaniel reported that the Operating Surplus for last year was \$631K, as opposed to the previously anticipated \$518K. He noted that the Board has already voted to move \$500K of this Surplus to Temporarily Restricted Funds, to be used across all three parks as well as the Shaw/54th project. In keeping with the objective of this previous vote, and the desire to limit the amounts left in surplus funds in the final audited financials, he recommended that an additional \$100K be transferred to the Shaw/54th project. These funds could be used in any way for this memorial – the planned renovation, programming, and/or future maintenance and repairs.

Upon a motion being duly made and seconded, it was unanimously

VOTED: to approve the transfer of \$100K from the 2017 Operating Surplus to temporarily restricted funds for the Shaw/54th Memorial.

Portable Restroom Pilot on the Common

Ms. Burns, in her role as a consultant to the Harold Whitworth Pierce Charitable Trust, reported on a potential grant of \$1M from the Trust to the Boston Parks and Recreation Department to conduct a multiyear pilot of public restrooms on the Common. Materials were circulated showing the type of temporary restroom-trailer facility, the plan for operating hours, cleaning, security, and proposed location. The BPRD is eager to conduct the Pilot as it is anticipated that increased access to bathroom facilities will be in the Master Plan for the Common. This Pilot would provide very valuable data and help to inform that plan. The Pilot will require approval from the Landmarks Commission. The 6-month Pilot (May-October) would repeat for a second and perhaps third year if it is deemed successful. If unsuccessful after the first year, any remaining grant money would be transferred to a fund which would support future public bathroom facilities on the Common.

BPRD has proposed to the Friends that it serve as the Fiscal Agent for the grant from the Trust, as that would allow the City to select the most desirable vendors for the restroom-trailer, cleaning service, and security, as opposed to simply needing to submit to a low-bid contract.

There was much discussion about the likelihood of the Pilot proceeding, with or without the involvement of the Friends as the Fiscal Agent. It was agreed that the Friends should strive to have an active voice in the discussion regarding bathrooms on the Common, as this issue has been raised repeatedly by park users. There was also concern that the Friends be compensated for any potential internal costs associated with administering the grant, and that the Friends be indemnified for any liability issues regarding the operation of the facility.

Upon a motion being duly made and seconded, with Ms. Burns abstaining from the vote, it was

VOTED: to approve in principle that the Friends of the Public Garden will serve as Fiscal Agent to the Pierce Charitable Trust donation, which is to be directed to the City of Boston Parks Department to fund a multi-year pilot program to bring public restrooms to the Boston Common. The final decision regarding entering into an agreement with the City and the Trust will be dependent on further details surrounding costs to administer the agreement, and the agreement itself, and such a decision will be brought to the Board for an additional vote.

PR Communications: Insights Presentation and Discussion

The team from Solomon McCown presented their findings to the Board. They reviewed the 12 in-depth interviews and materials overview that they conducted. The team made recommendations on both the approach to messaging, as well as the messages themselves, that would help position the Friends as an even stronger and more widely recognized advocate for the Parks. Recommendations included wordsmithing the existing materials, and phrasing therein, to make the financial commitment and expertise of the Friends more apparent. There were several recommendations to use the strength of the Friends' legacy and work to support other greenspace organizations and causes throughout the city and region, without succumbing to "mission creep." There was a very clear need identified to increase and broaden the use of digital outreach. More outreach to City and State officials was highly recommended so that role and importance of the Friends would be more apparent, and not just in "times of crisis." Perceptions of the Friends as a "NIMBY" organization were also discussed.

The External Affairs Task Force, the staff, and the team from Solomon McCown will continue to work on strategy and implementation of a proposed PR plan for the Friends. A full copy of the presentation is available.

There being no other business, Ms. Adam adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Bordon
Secretary