

FRIENDS OF THE PUBLIC GARDEN

2020 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

August 6, 2020

The Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Public Garden convened at 6:00 pm on Thursday, August 6, 2020 via ZOOM conference.

Welcome

Ms. Adam, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that this meeting was rescheduled from its original date in April. She thanked all the staff and members for their continued hard work and support during this unusual time.

Ms. Adam noted that Ms. Vizza is now marking her 11th year at the Friends and has been a driving force behind many of the achievements during her tenure. Ms. Vizza has been promoted to President of the Friends of the Public Garden and a release noting this has been sent out.

Ryan Woods, Parks Commissioner, spoke and he expressed appreciation for the Friends as a leader among the city's friends groups. He noted that the MOA, which was signed in January, is an important part of the successful relationship between the Friends and the BPD. He highlighted two important 2020 projects – the Boston Common Master Plan, which is on track for completion in November 2020, and the ongoing restoration of the Shaw 54th memorial.

Ms. Adam thanked all the elected officials who were in attendance or who had written in, in support of the Friends.

Minutes

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

VOTED: to approve the minutes of the March 28, 2019 Annual Meeting as published.

Governance Report

Ms. Kate Enroth, Chair of the Governance Committee, reported that the Committee recommended the election of James Bordewick, Claire Corcoran, Anne Mostue, Jeffrey Mullan, Brent Shay, and Eugenie Walsh to three-year terms on the Board of Directors.

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

VOTED: to approve the slate as presented.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Bill Clendaniel, Treasurer, referred to the Treasurer's Report published prior to the meeting. In 2019, 73% of the Friends expenses were related directly to parks care. The endowment gained 22% and was \$22.3M at the close of the year. Cash reserves were strong at the start of 2020, and this helped the Friends to maintain all staff during the COVID-19 shutdown. The 2020 budget was greatly reduced due to the cancellation of most events and programming, as well as limits in place on working in the parks. Mr. Clendaniel expressed appreciation for all the members and donors who have continued to support the Friends, including the Green & White ticket purchasers and sponsors who converted their purchases to donations. With the reduction in planned expenses, and continued strength of donations, Member renewals, and two unexpected bequests, the Friends anticipates a

modest surplus at the end of 2020. In closing, Mr. Clendaniel noted that after eight years as Treasurer, he would be stepping down in October.

Director's Report

Ms. Vizza began her report by emphasizing how essential the parks have been during the COVID-19 shut down. They have been an immeasurable resource to all, not just the immediate neighborhoods.

Ms. Vizza mentioned the importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Friends. The upcoming strategic plan will include this as a focus, and a committee of the Board has been created to further this work.

In 2019, \$2.9M overall was spent by the Friends, with \$2.2M spent directly on parks care and programming. In 2019 and continuing on thus far in 2020, the Friends undertook many important tasks and initiatives. Soil work has included testing, data recording, and the application of soil amendments. Lawn care has included using sod to replace worn areas along pathways. The elm tree preservation program continues under the supervision of Chris and Norm Helie and their groundbreaking work to track and control the Elm bark beetle population. The Friends has been an active participant of the Kenmore Mall Master Plan project. The sculpture care program has been paused in 2020, however, thanks to the diligent work of this program for many years, no ill effects to the sculptures are anticipated. A sunshine modeling study was completed by the Friends that shows, in very granular detail, exactly which buildings in Downtown cast shadows on the Common and Garden as well as where additional development could occur without adding new shadows. This study has been shared with the City and will hopefully be used to support development that protects sunshine in the parks. The final public meeting for the Boston Common Master Plan will be held virtually over a series of dates to encourage participation. The Brewer Fountain programming and food trucks will not be happening this year. The Boston Common pilot bathroom project will also not be running this year – Ms. Vizza noted that approximately 800 people per day used the bathrooms last year and the intensity of use, as well as data gathered about security and cleaning needs, will help inform the design and implementation of permanent bathroom facilities in the future. The restoration of the Shaw 54th Memorial has resumed. Duckling Day and Making History on the Common were both held virtually this year.

Many events tied to the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Friends have been delayed to 2021. However, some items are still happening. The Friends has organized a BioBlitz using the app iNaturalist. Planning for the rejuvenation of the Arlington Street entrance of the Public Garden is underway. The professional lighting project for the statues along the Commonwealth Avenue Mall is continuing. The Collins lighting is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2020, pending the successful arrival of the materials. The Boston Common temporary art installation, “What Do We Have in Common” by Janet Zweig, is still being developed with the support of curators Now + There. It will be installed in 2021. A capital campaign to support the 50th Anniversary projects will be relaunched this fall.

Ms. Vizza closed by thanking all the Friends' parks partners and supporters.

There being no other business, Ms. Adams adjourned the meeting at 7:15pm
Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Bordon
Secretary