

**FRIENDS OF THE PUBLIC GARDEN**  
**2024 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES**  
April 9, 2024

The Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Public Garden convened at 6:00 pm on Tuesday, April 9, 2024, at the UMASS Club, 1 Beacon Street, Boston.

**Welcome**

Mr. Colin Zick, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair of the Board, welcomed everyone to the 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Friends on behalf of Ms. Leslie Adam, who could not be present. He thanked the elected representatives in attendance. He also thanked Boston Parks Commissioner Ryan Woods and representatives of Mayor Wu's office who were also present.

**Minutes**

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

**VOTED:** to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2023, Annual Meeting as published.

**Governance Report**

Mr. Roger Tackeff, representing the Governance Committee, addressed the membership to present the committee's recommendation for the election of new and returning directors in accordance with the requirements of Article V.3 of the bylaws. The Directors being nominated for 3-year terms beginning April 2024 are Peggy Ings, Priya Karve, Katherine O'Keefe, Martha Sheridan, and Roger Tackeff.

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

**VOTED:** to approve the slate as presented.

**Treasurer's Report**

Mr. Jim Bordewick, Treasurer, referred to the materials provided at the meeting. Mr. Bordewick thanked the generous donors of the Friends and noted that 59% of income comes from donor support. In addition to the strong level of donor support, the market performed very well in 2023, and the staff continues to be excellent stewards of the financial health of the organization. He noted that the most recent audit was completed without issues. The endowment, at the end of 2023, was \$28.5M, which was up approximately \$3M from the previous year. 70% of spending for 2023 was on direct parks care, in line with the mission of the Friends. He also noted that the mortgage for the office at 69 Beacon Street will be retired this year. 2023 finished with a net surplus of \$175K, \$150K of which was transferred to the 2024 operating budget.

**President's Report**

Ms. Vizza, speaking at her last Annual Meeting as President, began her report remarking on the fact that 7M people a year visit the Boston Common and the Public Garden. She then thanked the many volunteers who help support the Parks including the Rose Brigade, who are in their 37<sup>th</sup> year, and the Border Brigade and Tour Guides who are both in their 9<sup>th</sup> years. She then thanked the staff and the Parks Department crew. Ms. Vizza mentioned the continued DEI work spanning the organization – programming, events, outreach, partnerships. This year's temporary bathroom

trailer in the Common will feature artwork by a Native American artist. Signage review for the Public Garden is underway to improve visitors' experiences and make the Garden more welcoming to all. Over the course of 2023, the Friends spent \$2.4M on parks care and public programming. Soil health and improvements and more organic-based care continues to be a focus. 20 new trees were planted, and 14 pieces of public art were cared for as part of the planned cycle of deep conservation and care. Several high-profile projects have been prioritized by the City from the Boston Common Master Plan – expansion and redesign of the Tadpole Playground, an ADA compliant ramp near the Shaw 54<sup>th</sup> Memorial, improvements to the Mayor's Walk, and accessibility and surround improvements at the Parkman Bandstand. The Boston Common Maintenance Trust Fund continues to provide funding for important but neglected projects. Programming at the Brewer Fountain is being re-worked this year with a goal of bringing in more positive activity, and to disrupt the cycle of negative activity. The schedule of events will be more varied in type and timing. The Emerson College "UnCommon Stage" at the Tremont/Boylston corner will open in May. The Monument and Memory Task Force has been working together to focus on the Founders Memorial and events and information will roll out through the course of 2024. The City has budgeted money for the Tool House in the Public Garden which will vastly improve the utility of the whole space while still respecting the design of the original building. Duckling Day and Making History on the Common will be back in 2024. The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary projects will be wrapping up this year with the completion of the renovation of the child fountains and the Arlington Street entrance to the Public Garden. The Friends has also continued to advocate for greenspaces across the City with projects like the Sunshine Model software, which we hope will be adopted as a regular part of development proposal evaluations.

### **Inaugural Parks Champion Award: Margaret Pokorny**

Ms. Vizza and Mr. Zick announced that Margaret Pokorny has been given the inaugural Parks Champion Award for her decades of hard work and dedication to the parks and the Friends of the Public Garden. Mayor Wu read a citation from the City of Boston honoring Ms. Pokorny as well. Ms. Pokorny spoke to say thank you and to reiterate the importance of caring for our parks.

Respectfully submitted,  
Catherine Bordon  
Secretary