

Friends of the Island Parks Board Meeting 15 February, 6.30 pm

Board Members present: Chairperson: Barry Metcalfe

Shane Bittaker, Ray Dabkowski, Nancy Dunne, Cindy Farris, Ron Geisheimer, Diane Hood, Jacques Marion, Bob Meadows, Melanie Metcalfe, Mike Moran, Gabriella Mullins, George Skalkeas, Pat Snair, Toni Wise

In attendance: Bill Gruber, Peter Krulder, Karen Malo, Tim Marshall. Also, welcome and thanks to Ray Pointer (official FIP photographer) for his interest in attending.

Apologies: Wayne Case, Sharon Meyer, Sally Naylor.

Minutes of last meeting, 18 January (after correction – FPS not NPS) accepted unanimously.

- Tim reminded meeting: Minutes of each meeting with accompanying finance reports, will be posted on website after approval at following meeting. Barry has sent Tim all the approved Minutes and finance reports for 2010 for posting; Tim to check receipt.

President's Report:

Barry had circulated to the Board for comment, the Friends' mission statement and goals for 2011 (as shown by power point presentation at AGM). Bob to email Barry with suggestions re. grammar; otherwise no comments / revisions received.

Treasurer's Report:

- George guided us through the January 2011 report, which was accepted unanimously.
- Cash assets now at \$162K. (\$3,000 increase in month mainly due to retail sales in Nature Centre + memberships).
- Time for annual audit.

Park Manager's Report:

- Financial position of FPS: very positive support for State Parks from the Governor. In his budget recommendations, he concurred with operating budget for 2010 but this has to be ratified by the legislature. Recognition of considerable economic importance of Florida's State Parks: *economic impact of Honeymoon and Caladesi to the local community is estimated at \$73 million!*

Florida's State Parks are exceptional in that as much as 66% of their budget is raised by the Parks themselves from entrance fees, concession income, camping and cabin fees. Peter encouraged the Friends to make these facts widely known.

However, hiring freeze continues, so HISP's APM not yet appointed. Also, huge cuts in facility improvements budget, including vehicles and equipment. Barry commented on vital importance – now more than ever - of fund raising by the Friends to support the parks. Peter also stressed the importance of reporting volunteer hours (including Friends' hours) to reflect community support.

- Heating of Nature Centre: during very cold weather, temp in NC was only 55F. Peter consulted heating engineer – extra heating strip may help; as might insulation beneath floor. NC may have to be closed when weather is exceptionally cold.

- Questions from the media: Peter asks – in line with FPS policy – that we redirect the media to Peter. It is NOT OK to answer, or be quoted, “as a member of the Friends”. This is a necessary precaution to avoid being misinterpreted in the media.

Membership Report:

Ray reported many renewals received.

Membership committee decided to postpone discussion on raising membership fees until 2012.

Under review by committee:

- Resurrect the revised (but never discussed) membership form.
- Incentives for membership levels. Gabriella to host meeting at Holiday Inn with Sally, Pat and Ray to collaborate on incentives/sponsorship/donations.
- Orientation for members to include opportunities to volunteer for Friends' fund-raising role. Pat and Gabriella to draft job descriptions. See Karen's leaflet "what can I do".
- AGM to be held on different date than Holiday Party (not discussed or agreed upon by Board).

Barry encouraged all Board members to consider these topics and send comments to Ray prior to discussion at March Board meeting.

Programs:

22 February: Chocolate buffet. Board members requested to donate choc treat. Art show by Robin Rebeck to open on same evening.

22 March: Jo Malo from Clearwater Marine Aquarium ("Winter" the filmstar dolphin).

26 April: Art opening by Susan McCubbin.

Presentations on Caladesi Exhibit and on new Playground:when timing is right.

Nature Centre Retail:

-Tim reported on Sharon's behalf. Net sales in January = \$4,800. Sales in previous 6 months' have been a major contributor to the Friends' fundraising.

Visitors = 2,381. Web visitors = 6,420. Volunteer hours = 513.

- Calendars discounted; only about 12 left. Ray thanked Brenda's Restaurant for selling 9. As an aside, Ray was asked why the Park needs money. This led to a discussion about the importance of making known the extreme budget cuts in the FPS for equipment, while publicizing (via displays and photos) the Friends' much needed support for the Parks through fund-raising achievements and purchases.

Nature Centre Operations:

- Tim organized a training session about the Friends on 22 January for a group of dedicated docents. Peter commented that it was a really good class. This is now a team of well informed, uniformed volunteers available for outreach programs. Tim is collecting display material for them and Barry stressed that funds are available in order to ensure the best possible displays. Tim mentioned their need for a yard cart and dolly to transport displays; Nancy to research costing.

- Website: Tim reported he had revamped website and invited suggestions for "buttons". Barry congratulated Tim on creating such a superb site and one which is so easy to navigate. Peter commented on the popularity of the wildlife section with its updates on the eagle chick.

- Tim asked about possibility of deriving income from Google ads attached to website; Peter to consult District.

- Barry thanked Tim for all his work and for presenting both the retail and operations' reports.

Island EarthDays, 16 & 17 April 2011:

Draw tickets : George stressed urgent need for a Board member to manage sale of draw tickets. (Secretary's note – many thanks to Gabriella for subsequently volunteering.)

Playground:

- Diane reported that a design for a "Limitless" playground had been received from Miller (rather than a "Boundless" one which has different certification and for which different grants might be available). Cost estimated at \$120K. Committee is researching other suppliers for comparison.
- Gabriella asked about opportunities to sponsor items of the playground (with plaques on benches etc). Barry requested that the committee identify such items for sponsorship since considerably more funds will be needed to supplement those anticipated from the Love 4 tournament and potential grants.
- It was also suggested that when appropriate, the project should be presented at a members' meeting. Barry commented that it was going to be interesting to see which project would be launched first – the Playground or the Caladesi Exhibit!

Caladesi Exhibit:

- Peter has conference call on 22 February with Director of FPS to discuss project. Long awaited approval hoped for.
- Bill suggested that when appropriate, the project should be presented at one of the monthly members' meetings as an advertised topic in the program.

Benches:

- Bob reported new enquiries for a swing and 2 benches.
- George mentioned that 7 benches had been "victims" of beach erosion by recent winter storms and now require "replanting". Arranged to consult Dan about locations to find a balance between environmental considerations and donors' expectations.

Wildflower Garden:

- Peter has met with potential designer who is enthusiastic and aware of the special requirements of FPS. Would charge only a nominal fee. Peter, Barry and Toni to meet with designer on 23 February.
- Donor of funds for garden has offered to design page about the garden's progress, for Friends' website.

Other Fundraising:

- Grants:

Barry confirmed that FIP is now a member of Visit Florida and eligible for their grants.

- Sponsorship:

Pat has agreed to take this on, assisted by Sally. Their idea is to find lots of small sums and grow them. They will need support from the Board with contacts in the community.

- Wills:

Barry and Gabriella to meet Anna Stearns, CPA advisor on 18 February. Discussions so far have emphasized importance of marketing and highlighted the Friends' need for expert help with this.

A.O.B.

- Solar powered eagle cam: Peter to ask Fish & Wildlife if they would permit it; Barry and Ray to research technology (incl. repeaters); Bob Walker (responsible for Dunedin's osprey cam) could be consulted about permits and grants; Tim cautioned that cameras tend to be knocked out of position by observed bird.
- Dunedin Chamber of Commerce: meeting on 15 April. Peter nominated Friends' to provide speaker (especially since IED is that weekend!).
- District 4's Volunteer Picnic: Congratulations to Diane for being nominated for FPS Volunteer of the Year Award; also nominated for other award categories were the Tollbooth Volunteers and the team who worked on the Anclote Shelter.

Meeting closed at 8.03 pm.