

Friends of the Island Parks Board Meeting 20 September 2011, 6.30 pm

Board Members present: Chairperson: Barry Metcalfe

Cindy Farris, Ron Geisheimer, Diane Hood, Jacques Marion, Bob Meadows, Melanie Metcalfe, Sharon Meyer, Gabriella Mullins, George Skalkeas.

In attendance: Bill Gruber, Peter Krulder.

Apologies: Ray Dabkowski, Tim Marshall

Absent: Shane Bittaker, Wayne Case, Mike Moran

Welcome: Barry welcomed John Hobach of JMC who would be giving a presentation on the Caladesi Exhibit later in the meeting.

Minutes: of last meeting, 19 July 2011 accepted unanimously. There was no Board meeting in August.

Melanie to send approved minutes to Tim for posting on www.islandparks.org.

President's Report:

Barry reported Dr Pat Snair has resigned from the FIP Board. FIP Board now has 14 members; quorum is 7.

Treasurer's Report:

July Report was accepted unanimously.

Highlights of August report:

-\$169,500 in account.

-Several large withdrawals included HOSP \$5,800; CPA fee \$1,250; architect's fee for Caladesi Discovery Centre \$21,500; materials to build trash bin containers \$600.

-New CPA is Joe Garrison, great experience of non-profits and will be presenting the FIP accounts in a way which is helpful to prospective sponsors/donors.

-CDs due for renewal with Synovus (bank is most supportive of FIP); new rates of interest lower than previously.

August report accepted unanimously.

George also reported that financial contributions are starting to come in for the LoveFore golf tournament in support of the new Playground. These will be kept in the separate Playground account.

Park Manager's Report:

-4 of the 5 Parks under HISP administration reported a positive financial contribution (income greater than allocated budget)

-income generated statewide met 68% of cost; terrific achievement.

-beach renourishment adjacent to north parking lot may begin Aug/Sept 2012; far end of lot is now closed because of dangers due to erosion; parking spaces there have been successfully reconfigured to provide a net gain.

-Rotary (via Sally Parks) is asking if FIP wish to apply for a grant from them; Board agreed to request grant for various RCNC proposed expenditures; Barry to seek comparative estimates from 2 cabinet-makers (anticipate about \$2,800) for the modifications to the RCNC counter.

-Halloween: request for volunteers from FIP to help in all areas of this fun and successful event; contact Karen or Peter.

-Peter reminded the Board (Vice-President?) to check the by-laws concerning the announcement of the election of the FIP Board and officers, and the requirements concerning the budget.

Membership Report:

Diane reported on behalf of Ray:

-Membership increased to 300 members approx.

-Ray has offered to set up a Hotline for recorded messages, which could also accept incoming messages; decision postponed until Ray is available for discussion about monitoring messages.

-Program for September Members' meeting will be video, "Return to Picnic Island" about Christopher Still's paintings of Caladesi.

-Art Opening at October meeting.

-Traditionally no meeting in November.

-Holiday Party, Tuesday 6 December 6-8 pm at Dunedin Fine Art Centre. Centre will be beautifully decorated and art will be available for purchase (we may be able to sell FIP Calendar and memberships but no other FIP merchandise). Facility charge \$340; canapés \$8-10 per head; FIP bar with \$3 donation for beer and wine. Diane was warmly thanked by the Board for the considerable research which goes into choosing a venue for such an event.

-AGM and election of Board & Officers, proposed for Tuesday 24 January 2012, 7.00 pm, Nature Centre. Presentation to membership about annual accomplishments; progress with on-going projects; financial report and fundraising activities.

Nature Centre Retail:

Sharon reported low sales over last 2 months (coincided with drop in park visitors).

-Request for glass-fronted display cabinet at sales desk. Expenditure up to \$3,000 approved by Board (comparative estimates requested).

-Art exhibition to open at members' meeting, 25 October: Elaine McCormick, Dunedin artist – watercolors and oils. Followed in late January 2012 until Island EarthDays by Ann Warren (seaweed collages, water color paintings, nature prints) with a Gallery Opening at the January members' meeting.

(Secretary's note: as decided at September Board Meeting, the Members' meeting in January 2012 will be concentrating on a special presentation of FIP's accomplishments, on-going projects, finances and fundraising + AGM/Election of Officers. Note. There is also a gallery opening scheduled for the same evening.)

-Rain barrels have sold very well; request to Barry/Tim/Ray to collect another 100 from Coke (no lids if possible).

-Fund-raising Yard Sale: 8 October, History Centre on Curlew. Items to Gabriella and Sharon. FIP merchandise will also be sold. Cost \$40 for 2 booths.

-Kiwanis Adventure Run: 8 January 2012. Sharon liaising with Kiwanis. Volunteers needed. Donation to FIP anticipated.

-West Florida Runners event: 28 January 2012, Caladesi. Volunteers needed. Barry to liaise with Bill. Donation to FIP anticipated.

Nature Centre Operations:

Report postponed in Tim's absence.

Island EarthDays

14 & 15 April 2012

(Secretary's note: Melanie & Barry abroad Nov-late Mar; apologies but therefore unable to assist with Publicity and Logistics prior to event.)

Special Projects:

Progress reminder: there are 3 main projects which the Friends are working on at the request of the Park Manager; these are the Caladesi Discovery Center, the HI Playground and the Wildflower Garden. All 3 are included in the PM's annual priority list which is based on the Park's Unit Management Plan; a document which is officially approved by the Florida Park Service. The priority list is updated each FPS annual budget cycle and a copy provided to the FIP.

Caladesi Discovery Center:

Formal approval was given by the FPS on July 26th 2011 for an interpretive pavilion with elevated viewing platform. Design of building is moving ahead; architects Collman-Karsky are currently preparing the plans and computerized model/presentation (essential for promotion of project to potential funding sources). As agreed by the FIP Board at its meeting in June 2011, the fee of \$21,200 for this work has now been paid.

Now that FPS approval has finally been given after 18 months' of negotiation, this is the first opportunity for an **Introductory Presentation to the FIP Board by members of the Caladesi Discovery Center working group:**

John Hobach *described the CDC building* with the aid of sketched drawings.

Location – beside main walkway to beach; on remaining concrete slab of old fire tower. Elevated viewing platform needs to be at 25 ft in order to be above tree-line; fabulous views across the island, St Joseph's Sound and the Gulf; accessed by stairs and elevator – the elevator structure of concrete and masonry would further strengthen the building; floor and elevator equipment will be 10-12 ft above sea level.

Wood used for decking would be an innovative, recycled vinyl wood with a 25 year (min) durability; a coquina shell mix would cover the concrete. Every aspect of the structure will harmonize and complement its unique setting

Viewing deck – partly covered by roof; potential for interp. display on coastal geology with comparative aerial photos over time.

Potential for sponsored benches.

Bill Gruber talked about the proposed *interpretive displays* (opportunities at ground level, on viewing deck and on stairway "landings"). Themes such as history, wildlife, habitats, coastline changes.

Cindy Farris talked *about promoting the project and launching the fund raising campaign.* Ideas include a Black Tie Gala, a Scharrer Picnic, Naming Rights (subject to FPS policy) and a spectacular website and blog to include Myrtles' Stories and Ranger Insights.

The working group are preparing a standardized presentation to inform, to create excitement in the community and to provide a vehicle for fund raising. Board members will have access to this and to “bullet points” so that everyone is consistent when we talk about the project or answer questions. A trial presentation will be given at the monthly meeting of the Tampa Bay Sea Kayakers (10 October); this will be an opportunity to see if the presentation needs “tweaking”.

With regard to **funding**, Barry Metcalfe estimated materials and construction would cost \$350,000. Top quality exhibits estimated at a further \$150,000. FIP to be responsible for funding maintenance contract for elevator. The project is approved by the FPS and if funds had been available, it would have received a Partnerships in Parks (PIP) grant from them. However, no funds are available and as of now, no State dollars are expected. The project’s funding will therefore be dependent on FIP’s ability to attract donations, sponsorships, bequests from wills, fund-raising events and grants.

The Board thanked the members of the Caladesi Exhibit working group for “a terrific presentation”.

2. Playground:

Diane reported that the working group continues to research proposals for equipment. Project estimated to cost \$125,000; to be partly funded by Love Fore Golf Tournament on 10 March 2012 (volunteers needed from FIP); grant from Publix may also be offered when funds from other sources accumulate.

Diane confirmed she had sufficient information to give to Barry to enable him to submit a request for Partnerships-in-Parks (PIP) approval from the FPS. Nothing can be done without this approval.

3. Wildflower Garden:

Progress reminder: official, professionally produced plan was displayed at Board meeting in June 2011 (including plant names; pathways of white shell; a memorial brick path; “donor” trees; benches and an arbor). Barry, Shirley and Gerry have marked out “hardscape” on the site according to landscaper’s design and begun clearing the area.

Donation of \$2,000 promised of which \$1,000 already received. Bob reported an additional donation of \$900 for arbor. Potential for (memorial) donations for trees, trellis, benches, bricks (pathways). Garden expected not only to pay for itself, but to be a good source of additional fund raising.

Work will recommence as cooler weather arrives. Volunteers welcome to join the team; contact Barry or Gerry.

Fundraising –

Benches:

Bob reported that 6 items have been installed: 1 swing, 1 table, 4 benches.
+ 3 donors on waiting list for Wildflower Garden.

Wills: Diane to introduce potential contact to Barry at members’ meeting

Grants:

Harry is applying for grants for the playground and Caladesi Discovery Center.

Sponsorship: no report. FIP requests someone to research this area.

AGM & Election of Officers, 24 January 2012:

-Board members: 4 have resigned; now have 14 members (quorum of 7).

Need to consider whether or not to stay with 14 or announce 4 vacancies.

-Officers: need new President and new Minutes' Secretary;

Treasurer - George would welcome a gradual handover to a new Treasurer and suggested the need for a Finance Committee from which a Treasurer might come forward. There are many aspects to the FIP finances and George is very willing to explain them and assist in the transition.

-VP Ray needs 2 volunteers from the Board to assist him with listing vacancies and nominees and with the election process.

The meeting closed at 8.47 pm.

Melanie Metcalfe

28 September 2011