**PARK COMMISSION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

**DECEMBER 29, 2021**

Meeting called to order 6:32pm at the Town of Union Fire Station (location change due to tax collection at Town Hall)

Commission members in attendance: Fred Belay, Jennifer Meyer, Barb Kleist, Sarah Titera, Tom Roach, Dean Kallenbach

Guests: None

**Follow Up: Winter Solstice Event**

\*\*Conversation regarding the December 18, 2021 event at the Conservancy. Fred shared an email evaluation from Sara Norman at Landmark Conservancy, with whom we partnered to put on the event. Things that she thought went well included:

* Good marketing visibility in advance of the event
* Fire was going when the event began and created an inviting hub of activity
* Smore packets were a hit, as were the hand carved roasting sticks
* Sara had a lot of good conversations about the property and Landmark
* Attendance estimated at 40 folks (25 signed the sign-in sheet) was a good turnout for the event
* Apple cider and cocoa were donated

Things she thought could have gone better included:

* Could have made it more clear that the guided hike was 3-4 p.m.
* Town or Park Commission should have been invited to say a few words before Sara started her hike
* There was no garbage can
* Sara forgot some handouts and her sign-up sheet (Fred worked something up that was used for the sign-ups).
* She felt she could have had better participation from her team in the areas of picking up the donated treats, having a greeter-point person at the table, and chatting with folks throughout the event

Sara suggested that, if we decide to do something similar in December of next year, we might make it a bigger event, perhaps involving a horse drawn wagon, a candlelight walk, or some photo backdrops for families.

Fred thought he probably should have prepared a short speech to begin the festivities, but Dean thought the town was well represented by the conversations Park Commission and Landmark Conservancy members were having with those in attendance.

Jennifer suggested that it might be good for those of us on the commission or members of the Town Board to have a reflective vest letting folks know they could come to us with questions or comments. **Action item: Jennifer will look into getting such vests, and having some identifiers put on them.**

The ideas of a candlelight hike or a horse drawn sleigh or wagon ride were also discussed briefly.

Another idea to make the event more fun for kids was Glo-sticks, especially if it were tied to an evening event.

**Motion to approve a $500 donation from the Commission to Landmark to support its partnership for the December event Barb / sec Sarah and passed.**

**February 12, 2022 Snowshoe Event Planning**

\*\*Dean volunteered to manage the marketing end of the event from the Park Commissions perspective, coordinating with Sara from Landmark. Dean will reach out via email to Sara, copying the Commission, to get the details needed to publicize the event. Among the information we want to ask Sara about the February 12 event:

* How is registration being managed, and when is the deadline? Also, do folks who have their own snowshoes need to pre-register?
* Will there be someone from Landmark who will be training newbies how to snowshoe? If not, is this something we need to add?
* What is the time of the event?
* What other aspects of the event do Commission members need to be managing?

Dean will plan to develop and distribute a news release. He will also try to organize TV interviews for Sara and Fred to talk it up in advance of the pre-registration deadline. Sarah T. suggested we target some on-campus groups like kinesiology and ecological groups.

Fred will draft a list of duties for the event for Park Commissioners.

Barb reported that we have several s’mores kits still ready to go, and others could be made quickly if we have more chocolate bars. We’ll plan to make them available for the February event.

**Park Supervisor-Overseer Position**

\*\*Currently, most work on the parks happens at the hands of Commissioners. Should we consider a paid position, especially once the cameras get installed and activated at the conservancy? Such a position could regularly check for fallen trees on the trails. There is no money for it now, but Fred volunteered to put together a task list and timetable that such a position might be assigned, and we’ll keep it on future agendas for possible consideration for the 2023 budget.

There was also conversation that we may need to talk about getting foresters out, especially to Sherman Creek Park, to help us manage trees. Jennifer suggested that the DNR may have some resources available in that area.

**Next Park Commission Meeting Wednesday, February 2 at 6:30pm**

Meeting adjourned 7:34 p.m.