

June 17, 2013 Friends of Trinity Bellwoods Park Meeting minutes

Taken by, Carolyn Wong (who tried her best to follow, in chronological order, any errors/omission, let me know)

AGENDA

I. STEERING COMMITTEE REPORTS (30 Minutes)

- 1) Introductions by Chair (Patricia) - 5 min.
- 2) Website & Twitter Update (Carolyn and Leigh) - 2 min.
- 3) Farmer's Market (Carolyn) - 5 min.
- 4) Adopt-a-tree update (Michaëlle) - 2 min.
- 5) Green House update (Anna or Gene) - 5 min.

II. PARK BUSINESS (45 Minutes)

- 6) Tree removal/Gibson House Construction UPDATE (Louise P)
- 7) Yoga, Health, Wellness Fair - (Marcus McLean)
- 8) Toronto's Homegrown National Park project - UPDATE (Aidan)
- 9) Corporate promo in the park -- good or bad? (Brian G/Park Supervisor)
- 10) Proposal for a permanent skateboard space in the park - is there support? (Ariel Stagni)
- 11) Getting our group charitable status, a real Brd of Directors, etc - is it time? (Patricia)

III. OTHER BUSINESS (15 Minutes)

I. STEERING COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 1) Introductions by meeting (rotating) Chair Patricia Cavanagh.

20 in attendance including Patricia Cavanagh, Carolyn Wong, Anna Hill, Leigh Nunan, Michaëlle McLean, Councillor Layton, Brian Green (Park Supervisor), Marcus McLean, Louise Pollard, Aidan Dahlan Nolan, Ariel Stagni, Susan, Sian,

- 2) Website & Twitter Update – Carolyn

We don't have a dedicated person tending to our social media communications. Collectively (Michaëlle, Leigh, myself) we do our best to keep our website/Facebook/twitter 'living'. Please refer to our website calendar, it is updated often, and includes permitted Special Events that we get notice about. Summer time is super busy, so it's a good resource in planning your time in the park. Our twitter (over 450 followers)/FB count is growing, would love more. Along with site, all are proving effective in sharing info and getting the word out to the wider park/community.

- 3) Farmers' Market – Carolyn

Started May 7th, on a perfect sunny & warm day. Excellent turnout. We have some new vendors and many returning regular. The vendor line up is closed for the season. We can always use volunteers to help load in/out or vendors and for other things. Please contact info@tbfm.ca if interested. Last day is Oct. 29th, 2013. And let's all wish for sunny days each Tuesday from now on ;-). If you have any questions contact me or come up on a Tuesday to chat. Visit our dedicated site www.tbfm.ca. Oh, we have over 1050 twitter followers. If you want to get the low-down on what's arriving on the vendors tables – sometimes discounts - on Tues, this is the only way to get it.

- 4) Adopt-a-tree update – Michaëlle McLean

- 103 sapling trees currently in the AAT program with 76 park neighbors as Adopters

- currently 7 "orphans" so pass the word around to friends and neighbors
- Since last fall the park has received 8 new Sakura Cherry trees (4 in the North end, 2 behind the north baseball diamond, and 2 in the south end) plus 2 new trees in the north-east end to replace the two mature trees lost last summer.
- it's been a rainy wet spring and early summer so the trees are pretty happy

5) Green House update - Anna

Our annual potluck tomorrow at 5pm to 7:30pm. 40-50 people involved in the GH community. Roof vents need some work. Anna has put word out for new coordinator – it is her time to step down to allow another to contribute. This position has much potential i.e. There are possibilities for a grant honorarium for coordinator/programmer – important to consider for interested people, they make it want they want. Heavily used most of year, except 3 months in winter – where there is time avail for programming. We have a summer group that gardens, x3 beds around the GH that could help tending – anyone want to help volunteer? Contact me, Anna at annahill1@me.com

II. PARK BUSINESS

5 A) Alcohol consumption in the Park – Councillor Mike Layton

His office is aware that it is growing. Fun to a point, has witnessed early consumption around baseball diamond – major underground word and in the popular media about TBP a drinking park. Solutions: requested for signage around baseball, Parks Supervisor is going around more, have notified baseball league organizers that they have to reign in drinking or risk losing your permit. There is a July 4th meeting to discuss next steps with MLS, parks, Councillor office. Sue (resident) says she saw a sweep of 4 cops cars through park. Other disturbing point, alcohol free give away by corporations in parks and city streets. Layton and Park Supervisor, Brian Green are on it, have had discussions on how to reign it in because drinking alcohol in public is against the law.

6) Tree removal/Gibson House Construction UPDATE (Louise Pollard)

Councillor Layton – John Gibson House renovations, a little background info; the reno will upgrade existing dorms for privacy, install accessibility ramp – of concern is the removal of trees to make room for it. Solutions were discussed of a particular configuration to work with heritage design – had figured out how to. General feeling of neighbors is that there is a lack of community consultation. Noted: No tree protection at all around tree in question, nor any hand digging or any concern by workers. Lisa/Louise went to meet with Jim McMinn (JGB). Informed of 3 phases of renovations, some interior work going on now. Note: phase 3 is the massive and major one, 8 million dollars cost. Jim McMinn made it clear did not see it happening in the immediate future because they are still fundraising.

Prior understanding of zoning is being used against the park. Louise has approach lawyer for reinterpretation of zoning rules that they are using against park. Look at historical context. There is major concerns about construction details/logistics. Plans been reviewed by Councillor Layton, house does need work, massive short fall in assisted living. How to make renovations fit with residents & park – how can it be accomplished to make it work it for both?

Louise is willing to be contact person for group of concerned neighbors moving forwards - jdtlouise@yahoo.ca

7) Yoga, Health, Wellness Fair - (Marcus McLean of Collectivespace.com)

Marcus explains the mural against Great Stuff building that was his initiative, refreshing acquaintance with Friends because he wants to redo it. ArtScape has been helpful – street art grant, August install by Aaron Li-Hill, a Distillery project in the works. Downward Dog Yoga Fair Aug 3 & 4th. Downward Dog is going through renovations and want to do art yoga fair. With 10-15 artisans, art crafts, major things free yoga classes during day. BIA is applying for permit on their behalf. Marcus unclear at what stage it's at, FoTBP has not seen letter of condition. Rob Sysak/BIA is permit applicant, Marcus is coordinator. Anna supports small indie business, if anything Queen West BIA is good for park/neighbourhood etc. Others express concern about over-permitting of events in the park. Friends will always be concerned about over permitting of the park.

9) Corporate Promo & GENERAL PARK BUSINESS (Brian Green, Park Supervisor)

Question from attendee about grass cutting – Brian answers that TBP actually gets the most cut and it has been a rainy season with fast grass growth.

Question from attendee about the hanging bridge of the playground apparatus which is broken. Per Brian, Parks is aware, and have taken it down for safety purposes. The specific part has been ordered and being made, as soon as ready it will be installed. It's on the way.

Susan asks about slack liner status. Brian informs that man-made slack line poles will be put in north of the circle.

He is seeing of lots of park use and alcohol abuse/use in the park. Police are aware of the 4-5 marketing/alcohol companies giving out free samples in the park. Park patrons are drinking the sample given and going for 2, 3, 4th freebees and getting on their bikes and riding through park. This is dangerous and the police can not bust drunk bike drivers.

Corporate Promo in Park: Per Brian, Royal Canin dog food company approached Parks Dept to give out free samples of their dog food for a fee. This proposal will not happen this year in Trinity Bellwoods Park but will happen in another park. Note: the Friends had serious concerns about corporate use of park in this way. Brian feels that we could use the funds for park improvements as his budget could use the extra.

Anna Re: Royal Canin dog food give away proposal was for 6 days = \$6000 to parks. The Friends very reluctant to allow – Corporate sell out? Parks is more of the mind, “why not ?” because they could use the funds. Brian doesn't want to say no.

Sian starts a discussion about a vision that guides organization/Friends to make these decisions. Pro-events in parks, meeting friends, people. Vibrancy is terrific. Absolutely require a vision for park. Ariel – can't be done arbitrarily. Agreed.

Michaëlle Re: Royal Canin – it appears we're already down the slippery slope to allow corporate advertising in the park so it seems it's too late to strenuously object, although she'd like to. But very concerned that the Parks Department is seriously underpricing corporate use of the park (or any city park) for this kind of advertising given that Canin would have exclusive access to 100% target market (ie: dog owners) for 24 hour periods. Encourages charging a whole lot more – which would be in line with commercial rate they'd pay – which would mean the proceeds could more seriously address the park's needed renos.

A general discussion about fees paid to hold events in park (as opposed to corporate advertising). Discussion of the entry fee charged for the Luminato/MAI show and concerns about this – some

people felt that it should have been a free event because it's in a public park. Parks only found out two days before they started setting up that it was to be a ticketed event.

Parks vision is to partner with corporate entities.

Comments: Park use is good, heavy use not so good. Concerns about 18 wheelers entering park re: Luminato set up. How can this be happen? Luminato is bigger than Parks Supervisor who has no control over that, but it was supervised by Parks Department.

Per Brian, it has been reported recently in 'Monocle' magazine that TBP is one of the 5 best parks in the world. Brian has observed this summer that 3000-5000 people use the park on the weekends in the warm months. What he is saying is things have changed dramatically in the past 3-5 years. i.e. Pop up parties, movies being showed late into the evening without permits. And that 12-15 hours a day of use of the park takes it's toll. Most events are reasonable. Understand that Parks is working hard to keep the park safe and manage what goes on in away that is fair to all.

9) Toronto's Homegrown National Park project - UPDATE (Aidan)

Thanks for being on agenda. He responded to the David Suzuki Foundation call out to be a National Park Ranger. Has talked to several parks groups (Little Norway Park, Roxton, Bickford etc.) Trying to connect people. Homegrown National Park project is working with 13 community organization that are working together. His project aims to plant native species in canoe-shaped community gardens along the old Garrison creek that ran through Trinity Bellwoods and other parks. As a ranger, his mandate is to connect to people that can help you accomplish your idea. 'Community Commute', 'Performance Portage' if you see canoe-carrying fella, that's me raising awareness of Garrison Creek. Storm/sanitation sewer dumps into lake, promoting storm water awareness.

2nd phase. Sourcing old canoes/shell, repurpose and plant with native species in participating parks along the Garrison Creek.

June 26th first canoe garden being installed at Fort York. Plant canoe gardens along the water way to encourage bees/butterflies – a pollinator corridor. Approaching all parks on the Garrison, want to find people to help maintain these 'canoe gardens'

The project looking for permanent type of installation, like to have 5-10 year commitment. Would require community volunteers. It is expressed at meeting that this might be difficult.

Leigh brings up about idea i.e. native peoples & canoes...work them together in project? Aidan says they are cognizant of that.

10) Proposal for a permanent skateboard space in the park - is there support? (Ariel Stagni)

Is there a possibility of establishing a permanent skateboard facility in park? Ariel has worked around world developing/facilitating programs for skateboard parks. Has gotten feedback for a desire for something in park other than ad hoc designated skateboard areas i.e. ice rink, entrance benches. It is happening all around the park. He knows a lot of people in the area that want something.

Resident living across from rink, would not be supportive of permanent skateboard park in rink – way too much noise. Perhaps the location could be away from rink. Ariel imagines something else. Most people ideas are different what they can be. Location integration i.e. working with the existing site. Where? Spot S. of Dundas, E. of Crawford – unclear at this point of location in park. Leigh just mentions that any removal of grass will be contentious and any removal of grass wont' fly. Ariel says

that Toronto lags way behind in skate boarding facilities in Canada. Anna suggests to come back with a precise proposal so we can see what it is. Ariel feels that TBP is a very good site for a skate park. Alternate locations presented to Ariel to please consider, Garrison or Stanley Park.

11) Getting our group charitable status, a real Board of Directors, etc - is it time? (Patricia)

FoTBP currently has a very informal Steering Committee. All neighbors or users are always welcome to join and could use new people. Patricia is aware of 'Conservancy groups' in NYC. Since the park has so many more users, would like to think over the summer about how to take FoTBP to the next level, and how it can facilitate the kinds of things we want to do. All these new users could/should be having input in a group such as FoTBP. A new structure could raise our profile.

Noted in past - AOC – type of community center, prior to amalgamation board of 12 people incl Councillor – 2 year max on board. Involved in decision in Rec Center. But, not possible currently as way city is structured.

Leigh, we/Friends are a 'collective' which is a recognised type of organisational structure. Patricia feels we need a clearer, coherent policy on decision making. She will look into it for next meeting. Perhaps we put out an open letter in next newsletter calling out? Is it an idea to aim for 8-10 committed people on the Steer Committee would be strong.

Sian Owen & Laura Jamer, Marcus McLean are willing to meet and be part of the process go forth with structure for Friends.

Patricia will follow up with these folk.

Meeting adjourned 9pm