

TARRYWILE PARK AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING

June 16, 2009

CALL TO ORDER:

On Tuesday, June 16, 2009 at 6:37 p.m., the regular meeting of the Tarrywile Park Authority, was called to order at Tarrywile Mansion, 70 Southern Blvd., Danbury, CT, by Vice-Chairman T. Cutsumpas.

ATTENDANCE

The following board members were recorded as present:

Board Members: R. McGarrigal, J. Preston, W. Platz, M. Repole, B. Talarico, D. Manacek & T. Cutsumpas

Board Members Absent: M. Marcus & J. Harner

Park Staff Present: S. Moy

Guests: B. Petro, S. Crews & R. Gunn

AGENDA:

1. **Acting Chairman's Report:** T. Cutsumpas reported that Chairman Marcus had asked the staff to do a cost saving analysis on the insulation project in the Mansion attic area. Mitchell Fuel reported that even though there were more cold days this heating season, that we used 400 gallons less oil for a savings of \$1,281. With the cost of the insulation project at \$2,800, this would mean that the project would pay for itself in a little over 2 years.

T. Cutsumpas also reported that he had been contacted by Walmart on June 12th. The Danbury Walmart had some plants that they were looking to donated to a local non-profit organization. S. Crews went to Walmart and picked up 3 truck loads of annuals and some trees.

2. **Friends of Tarrywile Report:** Vice-Chairman Cutsumpas reported that Friends Treasurer Mark Nolan was unable to make tonight's meeting but that he wanted to report that the "Evening at the Mansion" event went well. Attendance was down slightly but since they were able to get sponsors for the event, they were expecting to show a profit. They are still tabulating the ticket sales and did not yet know the final profit.

3. **Minutes:** A motion was made by W. Platz to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2009 regular meeting. R. McGarrigal seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Financial:**

A. **Financial Report – May 2009:**

A motion was made by M. Repole to approve the May 2009 Financial Reports. R. McGarrigal seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

B. **2009-2010 Budget:** T. Cutsumpas requested that this item be moved to the end of the agenda for in depth discussion.

5. **Correspondence:** S. Moy reported that two pieces of correspondence were received. The first was a note from Eastern Mountain Sports informing us that at their recent Club Day activities at the store that they received donations totaling \$170 to be given to the Park.

The second piece of correspondence was from the Land Trust of Danbury thanking us for allowing them to host their annual Bird Walk here at the Park. The walk was their best ever and had almost 30 participants.

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6. Committee Reports:

A. Budget: T. Cutsumpas requested that this item be moved to the end of the agenda for in depth discussion.

B. Website: D. Manacek reported that the committee has been meeting and looking for ways to generate revenue with the new website. He contacted several local caterers, some who are currently on the list that staff give out and some who are not. It was determined that income was not likely to come from charging for website links. However it may be possible to generate income from possible commissions on caterer activity in the Mansion based on a caterers list that has been set up and we provide to renters. They are in the beginning stages of research and will have more to report at the next Board meeting. The Committee is hoping to finish the research, set up procedures and if feasible try the new program by November 1st.

7. Staff Reports:

A. New Business:

1. June Park & Mansion Use Report: The June use report stated that there are 12 events scheduled for the Park with 305 people anticipated. There are 18 events scheduled for the Mansion with apx. 1,124 people attending. In June a total of 30 events will be held at the Park and Mansion with apx. 1,429 people attending.

B. Old Business:

- 1. National Trails Day:** S. Moy reported that there were 29 volunteers for National Trails Day. The groups worked on three projects on the Orange Trail and all were completed. Thank you notes have already been sent.
- 2. Story Walk:** S. Moy reported that Story Walk will begin on June 29th and be held for a seven week stretch, Monday thru Friday from 9 am – 4 pm, with a different story each week. This program is made possible through a grant from Northeast Utilities. Each child that participates can come up to the Mansion and receive a bookmark for participating. They will also be eligible for a drawing at the conclusion of the seven weeks.

8. Other Business:

A. Tenant Review – Farmhouse Lease Renewal and School Building Lease Update: S. Moy reported that in regards to the School Building, the tenant has decided to stay another year and finish off her 5 year lease option.

In regards to the Farmhouse, the Committee consisting of R. McGarrigal (Committee Chair), D. Manacek & M. Repole met to discuss whether to proceed with renewing the lease, if so for how long and also how to address the complaints from neighbors in regards to parties being held at the Farmhouse. The committee felt that there were three issues to discuss; monetary, our reputation in the community and any legal issues. After meeting two times, the committee felt that with the current budget and financial situation that the best way to proceed is to meet with the parents of the young men to discuss the problems and concerns the neighbors have brought up, offer a six month lease to the tenants and if we experience problems the lease would not be renewed. Much discussion followed. In regards to how we determine if there is a problem, it was felt that the neighbors will need to contact a representative of the Authority while the problem is occurring so we can witness it first hand. D. Manacek volunteered to be that contact.

A motion was made by D. Manacek to accept the Committee's proposal that the Authority meet with the parents of the young men to discuss the problems and concerns the neighbors have brought up, offer a six month lease to the tenants with the option that if there are additional problems that the lease would not be renewed J. Preston seconded.

8. **Other Business:**

A. Tenant Review – Farmhouse Lease Renewal and School Building Lease Update - continued:

Further discussion followed. S. Moy will contact the parents and set-up a date so that the Authority members can meet face to face with the parents. If a date can not be agreed on, R. McGarrigal suggested a conference call but we would prefer a face to face meeting. M. Repole is in disagreement with the committees recommendation and therefore does not feel the need to come to the meeting. Discussion followed with staff and fellow Board members asking her to attend to show both sides of the issue to the tenants. R. McGarrigal, D. Manacek & B. Talarico will attend the meeting with R. Repole possibly attending if her schedule allows for it. T. Cutsumpas will contact the neighbors that were at the previous Board meeting with our decision.

Motion passed with R. McGarrigal, J. Preston, W. Platz, B. Talarico & D. Manacek voting in favor and M. Repole voting nay.

B. Budget Discussion: The Authority took a short break from 7:54 pm – 8:00 pm and then discussed the budget items (#4B and #6A) that were moved to the end of the Agenda for in depth discussion.

T. Cutsumpas started the discussion by passing out a letter that City Hall Department heads received in regards to year-end budget tightening. In the letter, City Director of Finance David St. Hilaire expressed his concern that the economic recession will linger on for many more months. T. Cutsumpas wanted the Authority to be aware of the City's position. Budget Review Committee Chairman J. Preston started the discussion by going from page to page to discuss what was increased, cut and/or reduced to make the budget balance. On page 1, he noted that in previous years as was proposed by M. Marcus, the surplus from the previous year was used to balance the upcoming fiscal year budget and to bring us over into the first few months until the first City grant check was received. At the beginning of the process, T. Cutsumpas instructed S. Moy to remove the surplus amount and that the budget would be balanced without that amount.

Anticipated income was discussed. S. Moy noted that even though we did make almost \$64,000 this year for Mansion Rentals that the average over the past 5 years is closer to \$55,000. Website/Vendor Income was listed as an income of \$5,000 and the Camp Bldg./Red Barn Income listed as \$5,000. Discussion followed with some Authority members expressing concern that since both the website/vendor and the Camp Bldg./Red Barn income would be new programs/income producers that it was a risk putting them in at the current amount. More discussion followed. For times sake, the Authority asked R. McGarrigal to use the flip chart to write down items that were of concern, that they might be gone back to at the end of the discussion.

For employee benefits, almost \$13,000 was cut. The committee felt that with the current economic situation the employees should take on more of the cost of their health benefits. Staff salary levels reflect no raise this year. Also the hours per week for the staff show a reduction from 40 hours to 37 ½ hours. This is to reflect that the staff lunch period is no longer a paid lunch. Discussion followed and this item was also put on the list for further discussion.

Accounting fees, advertising, insurance, memberships & subscriptions, mileage reimbursement, office equipment, office equipment maintenance and office supplies were either cut slightly or not at all. Postage was reduced as we do more and more with emails. Special mailing line item was cut as we no longer send out a newsletter. In regards to printing and binding, both the Mansion brochure and trail map line items were reduced. T. Cutsumpas felt that these items could either be emailed (the Mansion brochure) or people could print off the trail map from our web site. Under the special event line item, WinterFest has been removed.

8. Other Business - continued:

B. Budget Discussion – continued: Moving on to Mansion operating expenses, R. McGarrigal asked if we could realize a savings using a VoIP phone system. S. Moy did explain that two land lines are needed for the alarm system, but the staff could look further into the VoIP system. This item was also put on the list for further discussion.

In regards to heating fuel, S. Moy noted that we were able to lock in at \$2.0725 per gallon for all buildings, which is a lower rate than last year so we will have some cost savings there. Under security systems, those rates remain unchanged. D. Manacek felt that a savings may be felt if we called them and asked for a reduction. This item was put on the list for further discussion.

Under Children's Garden maintenance and mowing and the Mansion area maintenance and mowing the Authority asked if the staff could take over any of these items to reduce the costs. Already taken out of the budget is the Farmhouse mowing and fall clean up which the staff will take over. Discussion followed. This item was put on the list for further discussion.

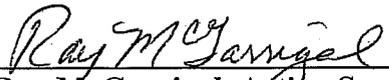
The mulch line item has been reduced to \$0 as staff felt it could be skipped this year. The haying line item has been reduced to \$0, as in the past few years an outside vendor has performed the service in exchange for the hay. The portable toilets were taken down to a \$0 line item. T. Cutsumpas stated that the town parks do not provide them and he didn't feel we should. M. Repole disagreed and felt it was a public health issue and wanted the line item put back in. This item was put on the list for further discussion.

Due to the extended discussions on many of these items, the Board agreed to continue the meeting and allow staff a chance to rework some of these numbers and discuss some of the ideas that the Board brought up to see if further savings could be found.

Adjournment

A motion was made by R. McGarrigal to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 p.m. Seconded by B. Talarico. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,


Ray McGarrigal, Acting Secretary