

## Beautification Commission Meeting Minutes

3/9/15, B3 Town Hall, 9 am

Chair: Suzanne Schutte

Attendees; Sandy Drimal, Sig Buchmayr, Bob Wolkwitz, Cristina Orsi-Lirot, Michael Chiodo, Jeff Smith, Sandy Filmer, Nina Miller, Cindy Ryan, Sabina Harris, Marcia Meinerth, Marianne Wadleigh

### Discussion on Hiring Less Expensive workers:

-Bob has located a man who mostly does landscaping in town, works for the ABC, is insured and has a business permit. He is interested in cleaning up the entrances/exits 10-13 in town (to be done from Memorial Day to the end of October approx. every 3 weeks) and other potential work. Bob will talk to him next week re working at a few strategic cemeteries. **Bob** will update us on the results of this meeting.

-Both **Michael and Cristina** have inexpensive workers who they have used in the past for personal projects, but need to verify if they are insured.

### Cemeteries:

-**Bob** will look at the existing 22 cemeteries on his list and determine which of these are the most strategically important and require/warrant work done by the BC. He will come to the April meeting with his recommendations on which ones to clean up, and the approx. cost of repairs.

### Elder contract:

-Based on the above discussion/hiring, **Cindy, Suzanne and Michael** will meet to update Elder's 2015 contract, and meet with Elder to review it with him. This should be done before Elder begins working on spring projects like AAG clean ups. **Suzanne** will schedule this meeting with **Cindy and Michael**.

### Berm-Boulder discussion:

-The group discussed and decided that the existing boulders on the right side should be moved to the base of the hill; the boulders on the left side should be moved around/in front of the stream area; more boulders should be brought to the berm from the dump area as necessary; that once the boulders on the right side were moved, then grass seed should be thrown in the holes left by these boulders and the flat grassy area in general to encourage new grass growth up to the location where the hill begins.

**Sabina** will ask the DPW for grass seed.

-**Sabina** talked to George Swift at the DPW who says that he will schedule the moving in the next several weeks as they are busy now with pothole and curb repairs. George also wanted to know if we needed more wood chips dumped anyway, and the answer is yes at the berm, once the boulders are moved and we determine the real border for the grass area/berm.

### Spring Clean Up 4/25:

-**Suzanne** mentioned that she will contact in mid-March approx. 20 groups who traditionally help with the cleanup. In addition to these groups, the group agreed that she will ask the Police Dept to volunteer

(along with being made aware in general of the cleanup date), and that as part of a “community outreach” effort, BMW and Whole Foods would be asked to have their crews help clean up the embankment areas along Ledge Road. Suzanne also will contact the new head of the Chamber of Commerce (Susan Cantor) to see if they are interested in co-sponsoring the event as in the past, the DHS Community Service Group to establish a date for them to work at the berm and the DCA, the Pear Tree Point mom whose 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class helped plant flowers at town hall last year, and the other local schools to get more involvement. **Cristina** also volunteered to contact boy scout troops to see if they would be interested in helping.

#### **AAGs:**

-**Marcia** needs to send out all invoices to sponsors.

-**Sig** needs to talk to the Dock Shop owners to see if they will sponsor the island near their store or will do ongoing clean up the rose garden at the corner.

-**Cindy and Michael** will look at the adopted AAGs once the snow melts to determine which ones require cleanups, and schedule time with Elder to get this work done in late April. Some BC members will additionally volunteer to cleanup select AAGs, whose locations will be discussed and decided on at the April meeting.

-**Cindy and Michael** will approach the BMW dealership to see if they are interested in adopting the old Garden Club AAG on Ledge Road.

-**Everyone** is requested to come prepared to the April meeting with ideas/ways to renovate the AAG at exit 10.

#### **Budgets:**

-Marcia updated the group that the BC was given \$26K in our budget for the 2015/16 fiscal year, and that \$20.9K had been used this past year in contractual services.

-**Marcia** will prepare and send to the group prior to the next meeting a detailed breakdown going back several years of actual expenses and revenues by key categories (hanging baskets; berm; cemetery; AAGs; other expenses.) This breakdown will be used in determining which categories and amounts to fund this year.

-The group decided that in the fall we will discuss strategies on asking for more funding from town hall.

#### **Other business:**

-New Member list: **Suzanne** will update and circulate the internal list of phones/emails to all members.

-Safety Vests: Marianne ordered new safety vests which will be available shortly. Reminder: everyone is required to wear one while working on state property, and as “PR” for the BC group efforts.

-Urns: **Marianne** will check the urns in Noroton Heights and at the PO once the snow melts, and will update the group on their condition and any work required.

-Milkweed seeds: **Michael** asked Suzanne for some milkweed seeds for her garden.

-Recognition Letters: **Sandy Filmer** discussed the idea of sending recognition letters to Darien merchants and groups who have done a good job of maintaining their properties. Names mentioned to recognize included Selleck Woods caretakers, Tokeneke Road merchants, the Italian Deli on Tokeneke, the Shell and Standard gas stations, Dolcetti and the Library for their hanging baskets among others. **Sandy** will prepare a sample letter and bring it to the April meeting with her recommendations and list of possible recipients. **Suzanne** will forward to her a file with the BC letterhead for this use.

**NEXT MEETING: April 6**

**Suzanne** will contact town hall to inform them that we need to move the meeting from the originally scheduled date (4/13/15) because this falls during the Darien school break and members with school age kids will not be able to attend. And she will request a meeting room.