

Darien Beautification Commission Meeting

Monday, October 24, 2011

Attendance: Suzanne Schutte, Bob Baker, Phyllis Hawkins, Marcia Meinerth, Sandy Filmer, John Schlachtenhaufen, Sandy Drimal, David May, Heather Pommernelle, Sabina Harris

Financial update: Marcia updated the group on the amount left in the budget to maintain islands and other projects. She also mentioned the amount paid in July, August and September for Baskets, summer watering and some work on islands (AGG's) paid to Complete Designs. The suggestion was made to not pay based on hourly rates, but in the future, it would be better to gauge cost with set amount.

Heather asked if all checks were in from AAG sponsors? Marcia to verify.

Open Discussion of Basket cost, watering, types of flowers, and placement of. It was decided at Sept. meeting that the baskets needed to come down at end of month. After hurricane most baskets didn't look good.

Decided:

1. Baskets only downtown area Starbucks to Darien Sport Shop.
2. Go back to the original baskets of petunias.
3. Sandy D will approach the Library about whether they would care for baskets in their area. Should we buy them and they care for them or leave it entirely up to Library?

David inquired about cost of watering in town. Stated that Cindy R had done research a few years ago about costs from different vendors. Need to ask Cindy to report. Possibly revisit cost from other vendors.

Other suggestions need to look at all islands and make them all more uniform and put in drought tolerant plantings.

AAG update (Adopt-A-Garden): Heather announced Ext 11 was cleaned up and rearranged. Ext 13 cleaned up. Still looking for a sponsor. Suggestions? Discussion Ext 11 – should area be mulched, weed barrier, can grasses be put in, better soil? Can DOT do anything? Suzanne to ask DPW/DOT.

Heather & Cindy are looking to write up formal guidelines for the AGG plantings to help new and existing sponsors.

Also if sponsors are not paying annually we need to take their signs makers down.

6 pots did well this year. Thinking of what to do for winter? Various suggestions.

Other area to be cleaned is by CVS sign entrance to parking lot. Other area needing attention is near Post Office in town.

Berm update: David and Suzanne spoke with 2 greens keepers on suggestions for grasses. Every solution will be costly. Hard place to plant and maintain because of lack of water, the slope, and the soil.

David M. did many hours of research to develop a plan for the area. He presented detailed plan / drawing that could be phased in over time. (2-3 years) Suggestions: Plant various mature grasses will help kill off weeds. Cost is major huddle to cover entire area at once. Could it be possible for us to grow plugs for a year or 2? David could cost out if we decide. Areas to grow grass plugs: DPW or DCA.

Need protected area to grow the plugs and water source needed.

With our current budget we can't fund a project of this scale. Question could we ask Town to fund a one time cost to help fund the Berm rehab.

Suzanne reminded, we need to be very sure of our plan because we have already spent monies on plantings (that have not taken well) and put in many hours of labor.

David's Berm Plan detailed the entire area from stairs to stairs. Suggested plantings of several varieties of grasses, flowers, bulbs, shrubs and trees to give the area visual appeal for all seasons. Multi year commitment.

Next steps: David detail costs. John S and Suzanne to investigate possible spots to grow grass plugs. Need approx. 11,000 sq ft. (DAC and DPW)

Town Signage: Bob's continued diligence has gotten more sign compliance in regards to sign size and placement. Larger Commercial signs still a problem with conforming to regulations.

Suggest to Town Hall web site it has to state the Sign Regulations more clearly for general public to see and understand. Need to state clear and concise guidelines of all signage placement, and size and have it enforced!

Suggest wait for new town Administration and revisit informing public and enforcement of signage. Invite Mr. Ginsberg to our meeting and also new Selectmen.

Fall Clean up: Suzanne to organize. Sat. Nov 12 date, will send out the words to gather volunteers. (Sig, Sr. men, High Schoolers and others)
Decided no bulb planting this year due to budget constraints.

Next meeting Mon. Nov 14.