

DARIEN BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION

SARAH SCHWARZ, CHAIR
ALICIA PEPERONE, VICE CHAIR
TRACEY WHITEHEAD, TREASURER
ELIZABETH HALL, SECRETARY
KIRSTEN DUNLAP
COLLEEN KALVAITIS
MELISSA KELLY
AMANDA SEGURA
JACKIE STODDARD



MINUTES OF THE MEETING

November 8, 2023, 9:00am
Darien Town Hall, 2 Renshaw Road, Room 119

1. Call to Order.....Sarah Schwarz
Present: Sarah Schwarz, Alicia Peperone, Elizabeth Hall, Kirsten Dunlap, Colleen Kalvaitis, Melissa Kelly, Amanda Segura, Jackie Stoddard
2. Review and Approve Minutes from October 11th Meeting.....Sarah Schwarz
Move to approve the minutes, Jackie first and Melissa seconded.
3. Elect new Secretary.....Sarah Schwarz
Elizabeth Hall is retiring as Secretary and Kirsten Dunlap has agreed to become our new secretary. She will review the role with Sarah. Vote: Amanda 1st, Jackie 2nd
4. Green Team Liaison Report.....Colleen Kalvaitis
Colleen said that Land Trust, Garden Club, and Parks and Rec and the Bird Sanctuary also attended. They discussed “How healthy is the Sound?”. They want to make a committee about saving trees and become a “Tree City” for Arbor Day, April 26th. Colleen and Jackie will continue to go to meetings
5. Social Media/Website Report.....Alicia Peperone.
 - This marks the 1 year anniversary and we have had an instagram account and we have about 30 posts. Alicia proposed a wreath showcase event like they do in Shippan and it was featured in Darien/New Canaan magazine. Discussion about whether to throw in a \$25.00 gift card as a prize or just bragging rights.

- Town Administrator sent out an email/post that not all posts are Town of Darien so we have to put “official account” on ours. Alicia will add that line to our instagram site.
- Updating Website: Melissa will keep an eye on the DBC website and update Linda with updates about once a year. We discussed getting a group picture at our December Meeting with the intention of posting it to our website and our Instagram.
- Sarah will reach out to Linda O’Leary to get a better understanding of the process of renewing for our terms in office since the terms of six out of nine members are expired or will expire this month.
- Colleen - mentioned that the flag poles outside Town Hall are dirty. She will ask DPW if they can power wash them.

6. Report on Weeding and Pruning Hall/Whitehead/Kalvaitis.
Weeding was done at Mather Center

7. Town Hall Planters.....Melissa Kelly.
Melissa will handle Christmas decorations at Town Hall by putting a wreath on the planters. DBC voted to allow Melissa to spend up to \$1500.00 in the Fall and she spent \$450. In the first week of December she will create a new look for the Town Hall planters by installing 30 inch wreathes for planters and one 50-60 inch wreath above Town Hall Entrance.

8. 2024 Hanging Baskets.....Tracey Whitehead.
Tracey was not present so Sarah mentioned that she and Tracey counted the new baskets that will be needed for the additional lampposts that are new in the Corbin District. We will need about 25+ additional baskets. Tracey is handling all of this as well as chains.

9. Update on Curb Repairs.....Alicia Peperone

- The street curb around the adopt a garden at Old Farm Road has been repaired as have the curbs at Middlesex and Mansfield and Noroton Heights Train Station. Three other islands will be done in the Spring. Painting of yellow lines will be done in Spring.
- The New Town Sign at Exit 11 is sheet metal on wooden post. Alicia will follow up with DPW.

10. Future DBC projects (Sandy Garnett).....Melissa Kelly.
Melissa followed up with the artist but didn’t see his art lining up with what

we think that our town would respond to. He wants to help but may not be a good fit right now. The Commission decided that we have too many big projects to focus on right now and this would be too big to start. We decided to shelve this idea.

11. Status of Elder Garden Cleanups.....Tracey Whitehead.
We will need to follow up with Tracey.

12. Adopt a Garden.....Alicia Peperone

- Review timeline and deliverables.....Alicia Peperone.
Alicia handed out a project management spreadsheet with dates and deliverables for the Relaunch 2024 Timeline. The landscaping company, ELM has a lot of good ideas. ELM met with Alicia and they looked at small, medium, and large gardens and thought to rename them: “Gold, Silver, or Bronze” depending on money spent by sponsors. Proposals and prices will be voted on at December 13th meetings. Melissa will create an active list of Chamber of Commerce members or reach out to Chamber of Commerce itself to create a sponsor list. We discussed that it made sense to keep the information in a shared Google Doc so that commission members can access the information. The Commission is hoping that by April or May we will have at least six sponsored gardens.
- Landscaper Pricing.....Alicia Peperone
Alicia will have more information next week.
- AAG signs.....Colleen Kalvaitis
The Commission discussed having temporary signs created that say sometime like, “Adopted Gardens coming soon”. We can market these on instagram. Colleen brought some samples from Sign of Success and mentioned that pricing is not established yet, we have to decide on size and shape before they can price it out. And prices are rising. It would be nice if it was the same font as our town signs to remain consistent. Navy lettering with white background.
- Relaunch letter sent out.....Sarah Schwarz/Amanda Segura.
Letters were sent to the last sponsor on record that sponsored a garden. Maybe 3 gardens are still getting taken care of, most have had the signs but no work for years. A spreadsheet was also created by Sarah to show status of gardens and letters mailed, DBC has no responses as yet. Corbin and King’s Highway, a sign with Growing Concern sign and the garden looks nice and

is kept up. Sign size and description discussion of wording. Colleen will check it out. Taking gardens in the interim so they look ok now and through winter - Fosters on Nearwater had men working on it. They've kept it up.

- #11 next to the Darien Fire Dept.....Sarah Schwarz.
Sarah met with a mason and discussed the idea of upgrading this garden with Ed Gentile. The land is owned by CT DOT but she is pricing out three different scenarios that Ed said that he will do his best to work with the supervisor: (1) redo the area using the same dimensions as the current footprint (2) similar dimensions but with paths into the space from the sidewalk, or (3) utilize the entire footprint. Sarah will put in a Capitol funds request to see if the town could pay for it. Early stages, we could do plants there.

13. Vote on Dates and Times for 2024 meetings.....Sarah Schwarz.
Discussion of meeting dates. We should keep the May meeting and the August meeting. It was decided that we will change the start time of the meeting to 9:15 AM starting in 2024 to accommodate members who have a hard time arriving by 9am. Vote to change: 1st Amanda, 2nd Jackie.

14. Meeting Adjourned at 10:36AM