

TARRYWILE PARK AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING

August 18, 2009

CALL TO ORDER:

On Tuesday, August 18, 2009 at 6:34 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: J. Preston, W. Platz, M. Repole, B. Talarico, D. Manacek & T. Cutsumpas

Board Members Absent: M. Marcus, J. Harner & R. McGarrigal

Park Staff Present: S. Moy

Guests: Mark Nolan

AGENDA:

1. **Acting Chairman's Report:** T. Cutsumpas stated that any items he would have reported on will be discussed further on in the agenda.

2. **Friends of Tarrywile Report:** Friends Treasurer Mark Nolan report that the "Evening at the Mansion" event went well. Attendance was down slightly, possibly due to a conflict with an event at Boehringer Ingelheim the same night. However, since the Friends did the yearbook and received sponsors for the event, they did show a profit of \$4,400.

The Friends are currently working on a table for The Taste of Danbury. Mark reported that the Friends will be working on a brochure that will highlight the 5 parts of the Master Plan. Mark asked that if anyone on the Authority would like to volunteer for a 2 hour time frame at the table to please let him know.

The Friends are also organizing 2 upcoming "Open Houses". Possible dates would be October 18th and the other on December 6th. In October they are looking at possibilities such as a scavenger hunt and possibly a petting zoo as events. In December the open house would be more winter themed with wreath making, decorations and a possible story time for the children. More details will be forth coming.

3. **Minutes:** A motion was made by W. Platz to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2009 & June 17, 2009 meetings. B. Talarico seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Financial:**
 - A. **Financial Report – June 30, 2009 & July 30, 2009:**
A motion was made by M. Repole to approve the June & July 2009 Financial Reports. B. Talarico seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

 - B. **2009-2010 Budget Update:** This item will be discussed along with the IRS Section 125 Cafeteria Plan agenda item under Item # 8 - Other Business.

5. **Correspondence:** None

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
DANBURY TOWN CLERK

2009 SEP 24 A 8:38

BY: 

6. Committee Reports:

- A. Website:** D. Manacek reported that the committee has met 5 times to discuss how to built revenue around the new website. At the request of the committee the staff wrote criteria on how a caterer is selected to be on the list. They also expanded the current list to 10 caterers, all of whom have been here before. The committee is suggesting that if a caterer on the list holds an event at the Mansion, there be a \$1 per person fee paid by the caterer. Another idea is that if a caterer has never catered here before that an additional \$500 fee be paid by the user in order to allow that caterer to use the Mansion. Much discussion followed. M. Repole did not support the idea and felt that it is close to coercion. More discussion followed. It was determined that the committee needs to meet again to refine the parameters and to further look at the concerns that were raised.

A motion was made by W. Platz to continue the discussion and report back at the next Board meeting. B. Talarico seconded. The motion passed with J. Preston, W. Platz, B. Talarico and D. Manacek voting in favor and M. Repole abstaining.

7. Staff Reports:

A. New Business:

- 1. June 30, 2009 Year End Mansion Rental Report:** The report stated that there were 132 events during FY 08/09. That is an increase of 11 events over last year. Of that 21 events were weddings. Danbury resident full day rentals were 6.8% of the rentals. Out of town resident full day rentals were 9.1% of rental. Hourly rentals accounted for 37.1% of rentals and non-profit groups comprised 47% of the rentals.
- 2. July & August Park & Mansion Use Report:** The July use report stated that there are 11 events scheduled for the Park with 365 people attending. There were 9 events scheduled for the Mansion with apx. 294 people attending. In July a total of 20 events will be held at the Park and Mansion with apx. 659 people attending. The August use report stated that there are 9 events scheduled for the Park with 175 people anticipated. There are 12 events scheduled for the Mansion with apx. 749 people attending. In August a total of 21 events will be held at the Park and Mansion with apx. 924 people attending. In addition the fiscal year end use report showed that a total of 235 organized events were held at the park & Mansion with 10,359 people attending.
- 3. Youth Volunteer Corps:** S. Moy reported that the Volunteer Center has been working with the Youth Volunteer Corps of America and have organized a local chapter. The Youth Volunteer Corps purpose is to create and increase volunteer opportunities for young people ages 11 – 18, address community needs and develop a lifetime commitment to service. The Volunteer Center asked Tarrywile for a project idea for the group. The staff suggested building the first section of the Wetlands Boardwalk. The project would probably occur closer to National Trails Day in 2010. The Y.V.C. will also be exploring a grant to help pay for supplies. The staff will keep the Board updated.
- 4. Recent Volunteer Projects:** S. Moy reported that during the course of the summer, several volunteer groups and individuals worked at the Park. On different days, groups from WCSU and GE Capital both worked at improving the path way up to the look out above the water cistern. These groups also worked on clipping back the Forsythia and clearing invasive vines. The Summer Youth Employment Program had a group here for several weeks and they worked on cleaning up the area between the lower parking area and the farm area. They also worked on weeding the gardens several times. We also have three SAVE Volunteers currently. The three gentlemen are doing small projects and repairs with Rich & Sam. We also had several individuals through the court system and some additional volunteers that have been helping out through out the summer.

B. Old Business:

- 1. Recreational Trails Grant:** T. Cutsumpas reported that S. Moy made him aware of the fact that the State has awarded us the Recreational Trails Grant to build the parking lot off of Tarrywile Lake Rd. The grant was for \$60,000. Discussion followed. Staff will keep the Board updated.

8. Other Business:

- A. Tarrywile Lake Algae treatment Update:** Dave reported that the Lake is looking very good. It was treated on July 14th and the treatment was paid for by the Tarrywile Neighbors. The neighbors felt it works very well when the Lake is partially drained down in the winter months. It worked so well this past year, that a secondary treatment will not be needed this summer.

- B. Tenant Review – Carriage House Lease Renewal:** S. Moy reported that in regards to the Carriage House, the tenants, Sam Dodge and Joey Solomon, has decided to stay another year. The Tenant Review Committee met and agreed that the lease should be renewed. The CPI has dropped this year, so the Committee recommended that the lease be left at \$1,525 a month.

A motion was made by M. Repole to accept the recommendations of the Tenant Review Committee's recommendation. B. Talarico seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

- C. Employee Handbook:** T. Cutsumpas reported that with recent changes, the Employee Handbook should be looked at to make sure it is up to date. He asked that S. Moy put the item back on the agenda for the September meeting, at which time a Committee can be set up to look over the Handbook.
- D. WalkCT.org:** Connecticut Forest and Parks is launching a new site, WALKCT.org. The website will feature trails around the state that are open to the public and Tarrywile will be featured. The kick off date for the website is September 15, 2009.
- E. Weasel Study:** S. Moy reported that the Weasel Study that was conducted by the DEP Wildlife Division found that we do indeed have weasels here at the Park. Two long tailed weasels were trapped and released. A formal report from the DEP will be forthcoming.
- F. Mansion Improvements:** T. Cutsumpas reported that he and S. Moy had been talking about several possible Mansion areas improvements that may help beautify the area and increase rentals. He encouraged any Board member with ideas to talk to Michael, himself or Sandy.
- G. IRS Section 125 Cafeteria Plan:** T. Cutsumpas reported that in regards to employee benefits that in order for their contributions to be pre tax dollars an IRS Section 125 Cafeteria Plan must be in place. The plan is needed so that the employees know that money is being taken out of their pay check and that they are in agreement with that. Our bookkeeper Ginny Schmidt-Gedney has had experience writing these plans and can do so for Tarrywile. Because this plan is not yet in place, the employee's contributions can not yet be taken out. Discussion followed. The Board agreed to let Ginny proceed with writing the plan and bringing it back for their review.

A motion was made by B. Talarico to have staff proceed with writing the IRS Section 125 Cafeteria Plan. W. Platz seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Other Business- continued:

H. 2009-2010 Budget Update (originally agenda item # 4B): T. Cutsumpas reported that while the Employee Health Care package had been voted on at the June Board meeting, the final cost figures for the plan did not come in until after the meeting. The Authority was unable to hold a meeting in July because of a lack of quorum, so the item is being brought back up for discussion at tonight's meeting.

When the meeting concluded in June, the Authority budgeted \$60,646 and the employees would contribute the balance towards their health care benefits. However since the numbers have now changed, the Authority is again looking at the issue. It was suggested that the Board offer to the employees the same arrangement that is offered to non-union City employees. T. Cutsumpas noted that the City employees also pay 6% of their dental benefits. Much discussion followed. M. Repole noted that to ask the employees to take on the dental insurance creates more of an undo burden on the staff. She stated that the dental benefits have never been discussed in previous discussions and it should not be brought into the discussion at this time. More discussion followed.

M. Repole recommended that we follow the City's arrangement with Tarrywile employees. If employees are on Century Preferred, the employee pays 12% of the cost of their benefits. If you are on Blue Care they would contribute 6% of the cost. M. Repole did note that perhaps in future years that an employee contribution towards Dental Insurance may be necessary, but items should be phased in. M. Repole further recommended that the surplus from the 2008/2009 fiscal year be used to cover the additional costs. Discussion continued. D. Manacek did note that he realized that even with offering the employees the suggested package, with them paying either 12% or 6%, that they would still be taking less pay home every week than what they are now even with their 1½ % raise on July 1st and the additional 1½ % on January 1st.

A motion was made by M. Repole that for health care benefits the employee pay either 12% or 6% depending on their selected health care plan and that dental, life & pension not be part of it for this year. And that in order for the adjusted budget line item to be met, that the funds be taken out of the surplus from the FY 08/09 fiscal year. In addition any future people hired, would be offered exactly the same total benefit package (health, dental, life) in accordance to what the City non-union employees receive. W. Platz seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

I. Red Barn Rentals/Camp: M. Repole reported that she and S. Moy have been working together on how to increase rentals and/or how to make more money from the Red Barn Environmental Center. They are still discussing some items and hope to report back to the Board at the September meeting.

Adjournment

A motion was made by B. Talarico to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m. Seconded by M. Repole. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jeffrey Rreston, Secretary