

Attending: Craig Maass, Richard Fix, Deb Wilhelm, Pam Uhrig, David Maass, Debby Pizur, Kathy Peetz, Terry Peetz, Betsy Abert, Jan Marsh, Rob Vajagich, Don Lawson, Rick Kaiser, Jody Johnson, South Milwaukee Police Investigator Mike Hill

When asked about the two decapitated chickens found in both Grant and Bender Park, Detective Mike Hill said he had not heard about the report. He recited the following incidents reported in the park during the last month: 1 warrant arrest; 1 criminal damage; 1 drug related; 3 suspicious persons; 3 traffic accidents. Regarding the homeless man frequently seen in and around the park; he has a court date, which includes a status conference. Because of the damage done to park property including security cameras, he has been banned from the park, although the police suspect he still lives there. He is not violent to visitors, but is confrontational with law enforcement officers.

A young oak tree was damaged by a car or truck along the Oak Creek Parkway on the east side of the pumping station.

Our treasurer, Rob Vajagich, reported a petty cash balance of \$2,344.59 plus deposits with the Park People totaling around \$8,800.

Kathy & Terry Peetz, representing the family of Eleanor Hinich, presented the FOGP with a memorial donation of \$345. Eleanor was a strong advocate for the parks, often writing letters to the editor of the Milwaukee Journal to that effect. She was a lover of green space, participated in managing some gardens in the park, and abhorred large construction projects that meant the loss of green space and trees. She retained her passion for nature until quite close to the end of her life at 97 this year. Our group suggested a couple options for a way to dedicate her memorial gift, and it was decided that a tree planting would be most appropriate.

Regarding pedestrian access to the park, neighbor Richard Fix proposed that the FOGP consider installing a sidewalk or gravel trail to allow safe pedestrian access to the Oak Leaf Trail. Currently there are few if any safe ways, he said, to bring families with, for instance, little ones on bikes, trikes or strollers into the park without having the constraints of traffic on the Park Road to worry about. No pedestrian link exists between College and Hawthorne which is a mile and a half in width. College is quite dangerous with cars speeding along that curve. And the "desire line" paths from Oak, are often covered in downed trees and are thought to be dangerous in stormwater runoff events in particular.

The Park's design preceded much of the local neighborhood, when Grant was more of a suburban destination place for drivers and horses. Thus, the linkage is lacking for our community.

Plans are underway to repave the bike path this summer, so the suggestion is that perhaps a sidewalk could be added at that time. Even the playground has no pedestrian access, it was pointed out. We discussed a petition to the city/county and will contact parks administration to inquire about the contract for repaving.

Grant Park Unit Coordinator, Matt Collins, had proposed that the FOGP and the Friends of the Mill Pond split the cost of hiring a seasonal worker for the summer months of 2015 to assist with weed-outs, Oak Creek clean up and rain garden maintenance, etc. That cost, he estimated,

would be about \$7,000. The FOMP held their monthly meeting and rejected the proposal. Our group can not afford the entire cost alone, so we also rejected the proposal. Perhaps next year?

Don Lawson asked David Maass about the possibility of starting an environmental club at the South Milwaukee High School. Oak Creek has a vibrant club, and the FOGP would be happy to coordinate projects in the park with student volunteers.

Rick Kaiser updated us on the Cudahy Sportsmen's Club issue. We contacted the EPA, but never received a response. The EPA, however, contacted the DNR and they determined that the club needs to apply for a permit under the Clean Water Act regulations. The club can continue shooting while the permit is being approved, but the DNR specified that they should discontinue using lead shot, and follow best management practices guidelines. We are unclear how the DNR plans to monitor all of this. The latest development is the club's proposed relocation to a new site in Warnimont Park, northeast of Aurora St. Luke's South Shore hospital. An artist's rendering of the proposed site is on the club's website, cudahytrap.com.

Debby Pizur noted that no one has yet reserved a booth at the South Milwaukee Spring Market on March 7th. We still plan to sell raffle tickets for donated Irish themed items that we would have offered at our cancelled Pullin' o' the Green party.

The premiere party for John McGivern's *Around the Corner* program featuring South Milwaukee and our Friends group among others, will be on Feb. 23rd at the Performing Arts Center here. The show airs on Thursday, Feb. 26th at 7 p.m. on MPTV-ch. 10. The FOGP will have a table in the atrium showcasing our interest in Grant Park. Don Lawson will man the table.

Our next meeting will be held on March 12th.

Respectfully submitted by
Jody Johnson