

**F O W**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING**

February 23, 2009

Present: Bill B.(President), Lars A., (V.P.), Alma M. (Secretary), Jane G. (Treasurer), Sandy C. (Membership), Jim R. (Historian), Steve G. (Park Supervisor), Eric O., Carl C., Pam J., Peter & Mary Williams (new members), Sandy (new member), Laurie (Hingham Pack 41 Cub Scouts Rep, new member), Jim C. (visitor), John H. (Chairman of the Hingham Fair & Honest Governance Committee, visitor)

Present: 16

**1) Opening Remarks**

Bill introduced himself, and noted that FOW has been around for 4 yrs. and is officially a non-profit group. We will be seeking grants for the betterment of our park, with any monies generated returned to the park. The group exists to help DCR in the betterment of the park.

**2) Vice President Report (Lars)**

Lars will discuss some ideas at a later point in the meeting.

**3) Secretary's Report (Alma)**

A motion was made, and passed, to accept the Minutes from last month.

**4) Treasurer's Report (Jane)**

Jane noted that our balance is a little over \$8600, with some money set aside for Trail Watch jackets. Some membership money was given to her by Sandy today, as well as at the last meeting.

**5) Membership Report (Sandy C.)**

Sandy noted that we have 52 entries on his membership spreadsheet, which includes couples and families.

**6) Membership Initiatives (Lars, Jane, Pam)**

Jane and Pam met to discuss ways to promote membership within FOW. Pam noted that they broke the membership promotion down into three areas: Communication, Recruiting and Retention.

For Communication, it was noted that Alma sends out e-mails to members informing them of current meetings, as well as the monthly newsletter. Sandy C. sends out a welcoming letter with a sticker to new members. Jane noted that she received a welcoming e-mail from Eric, which made her feel very welcome. Sandy C. asked a new member how she felt about receiving the letter and sticker, and she said it helped her to feel welcomed. Pam likes that we introduce ourselves at each meeting, as it helps everyone get to know who we are within the group.

Pam wondered if we should note on the FOW brochure how new members would like to be notified of upcoming events, whether or not they had feedback, and how they would like to be involved. She asked Sandy how he notifies members when their membership is expiring, and he said that he sends out at least two e-mails and two letters reminding members. He said he believes it to be successful, but spends a lot of time trying to get people to respond. We will discuss online renewals later in the meeting.

Jane noted that we're trying to figure out how to approach new members to get them involved, as perhaps they don't want to get involved and just want to be financial members; however, sometimes people want to be asked. After the meeting, Jane and Pam want to meet with Bill to discuss ways to send an introductory e-mail that would describe some of these goals for our new members. Carl noted that it's important to let new members know that their e-mails will not be used for junk mail. He also suggested awarding a t-shirt as an incentive to attend a meeting.

For the Recruiting aspect, Pam would like to have membership events at several entrances to let people know that their financial contributions come back to the park because we are a private organization, with posters and t-shirts. Eric noted he would be here in May with a tent for Trail Watch, so they could join him. A member also suggested we come to some of the events that are held in the park. Laurie suggested having some of the Cub Scout families attend, so it wouldn't look like only adults were involved with the group. Pam would like to get the calendar of events from Steve G. so we could try to coordinate being at some of the events in the park. Sandy C. said we should link the park calendar to the FOW website.

We expect to run out of FOW brochures in May and, at that point, we will incorporate changes to the brochure. Jim gave Pam the FOW brochure portion of the newsletter that will be going out soon, and she will work with Jane on making changes to it. Pam wondered if we could go to REI and visit with them, displaying FOW "wares", and it was suggested we get onto their bulletin board. Alma also suggested having our events put onto the REI electronic calendar that is sent out by REI. It was also suggested that we put Wompy maps at REI. Sandy C. suggested we put brochures in various places throughout Hingham. It was noted that we would like to get into the Hingham papers. Laurie noted that no one in her Scout Pack knew about FOW, despite the fact that the group has been meeting in the park for years. Laurie also suggested we put notices into the school papers. We can also link to the Hingham website. Lars suggested making a nice poster/flyer to put onto the kiosks with some photos. Carl suggested starting a committee to be involved in the Hingham 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade, as everyone noted it would be a lot of work to create a float or other idea for involvement.

Regarding Retention, we need to have a clear pathway for membership renewal, as well as ongoing communication throughout the month from various FOW members. Bill suggested Twitter or Blogging. Alma has a Facebook page, and suggested setting up a Facebook group presence. She will look into how to set up a FOW group on Facebook.

Pam will follow up on some of these ideas with Jane, Sandy, Bill and anyone else who is interested.

John H., visitor, asked for more information about FOW and the park, so Bill filled him in on some of the projects FOW has done. He suggested more signage be created for people who use the park and don't have a map such as signs that say "Union Street" with arrows pointing towards that street. Jane noted that we have had suggestions in the past about putting in better signage, but we can't change any signage without the state giving its approval. He suggested making signs that say "please go slow" for bicyclists on hills.

Steve mentioned that we have "Visitor Center" signs in various parts throughout the park, noting where people could go if they are lost. He said that if we put an "arrow trail" up, sometimes the arrows go missing and people get off the trail. Another problem is "trail wear" where one trail gets more worn than others. The park is split into quadrants, and the current map is the best way for people to find their way around, so the onus is on them to pick up a map. Steve also mentioned how FOW has created kiosks at every entrance with maps, to make it easier for people to pick up maps. He could put up more "Visitor Center" signs.

John H. asked who has keys to the gates. Steve told him the State Police, Environmental Police and every Fire Department in Hingham and the surrounding areas all have keys. He wanted to know if we could get an ATV vehicle for emergency evacuations, and it was noted that Bill Powers, Chief of the Hingham Fire Dept. who visited our meeting last month, was working on a grant to get an off road vehicle that could be used to get stretchers out of the woods and maneuver the trails.

John H. feels that the park would be safer with more of a police presence and said people didn't feel safe. Eric gave him more information on the Trail Watch Wompatuck program, made up of bikers and equestrians. They wander throughout the park, in a uniform, to be a liaison throughout the park looking for any problems. John H. also wondered if motorized scooters could be allowed on the trails to police the area, but Steve noted that staff can patrol on foot and on motorized vehicle on the roads, but no motorized vehicles are allowed on trails. Alma noted that she runs the trails and feels safe, while Steve told him there haven't been any safety issues in the park for over 30 years and that problems which may arise occur with people who know each other.

#### **7) Webpage Changes/Additions (Vicki was absent)**

a) We'd like to get the Wompatuck Event calendar put onto our website.

b) Bill read Vicki's e-mail, which noted that she'd like to add a link called "What we do", with a list of projects, dates completed, descriptions, and photos. She noted that we need more visuals. She also noted that "Google Checkouts" has a better deal for non-profits than Pay pal, which would be 2% of transactions and a \$0.20 fee per transaction. A motion was made, and seconded, to use Google Checkouts for online memberships. She will need to get together with Jane and Sandy to work out the details of how to get the monies funneled correctly into the

FOW account. Renewals will come up by May 31st, so having a questionnaire set up by Pam and Jane, along with online renewals will expedite the process.

### **8) Trail Care Dates/Projects**

Sat. March 14 could be “iffy” depending on the weather. We’ll use that day to check the conditions of trails, pick up fallen branches, and spruce up trails. Sat. April 4 is the other Trail date.

Bill noted that we’d discussed an experiment we’d like to do on the bridges to keep them from being too slippery. We’d like to spread some gritty sand onto wet paint, but need to make sure that any sand we buy off Craig’s List or anyplace else is not used Sandblasting sand, as that would contain contaminants. Peter W. (new member) noted that he would contact some people who work with pre-fab bridges to see what could be used on them to keep them from being slippery. He also noted we need to be careful of what we put on the bridges because they go over wetland areas.

John H. noted that we need to rehab the front building at the main Gate House and also repave the deteriorating front entrance road. He suggested we speak to private contractors to see if they’d like to donate time and money to do this. Steve noted that he has had private contractors in at various points to patch up parts of the road. We also told him that we’ve spoken of rehabbing the main Gate House at past meetings and Steve said it is also on the long list of State items to work on in the future.

Trail Day Work will take place beginning at 8:30 to about 11:30, with lunch provided. An e-mail will be sent out to remind members, as well as reminders on the website.

### **9) Old Business**

a) Jim got a pricing of \$300 for the Bare Cove sign for the Marine Sergeant David W. Sturgis Memorial Gate House sign. It will have a red background with gold leaf lettering. Bare Cove is the sister park to Wompatuck and, during WWII, was their annex. In prior meetings, we have discussed paying, or co-paying for their sign. A motion was made, seconded and passed, for FOW to pay for the sign.

b) The application for the grant with the nuclear power plant has to be in soon. Bill will work with them to get a \$22,000 grant to put in new windows and other items.

c) Pam suggested we work on getting a bridge down on some parts of the park that will be underwater when the spring thaws begin. Steve said we may do this on the second trail day.

### **10) New Business**

a) Cub Scout Pack 41 was officially recognized as the newest FOW Members by Bill. Laurie will be presented with some t-shirts for the Scouts that she could use as a reward system. She noted that the Scouts attend Plymouth River Elementary. They have been using the park for 6 years, including camping and using the

Visitor Center, and want to give back to the park for all of their years using it. Some suggestions made to them for ways to help include helping to run kid events in the park, like Kid Hikes. The adults would be the official leaders, but the Scouts would lead the hikes for other kids and run simple tasks for other kids. Carl suggested they also do a treasure hunt in little groups of 5, on specific trails, with an adult.

- b) Lars mentioned that he'd also had ideas on how to get membership to grow, and felt renovating the FOW brochure is very important, as well as posters about what we do. He will work with Pam and Jane on further details. Bill suggested that Lars send the e-mail he'd sent to the officers with his ideas to Pam and Jane.
- c) Steve C. will be notified again that Jane needs to be added to the Officer e-mail list.
- d) Bill told us that Pembroke Conservation Land, similar to the Trustees of Reservation, has a property where they have built a bog bridge that goes for about 300-600 ft. It winds through the woods and around trees, and is about 3-4 feet off the ground in several places. Since it was built, it has helped keep the land from being rutted out by bikes. Carl had suggested we hike on it so we could look at it and learn something about it because it's something we'd like to think about having here at Wompatuck. A date will be set up in April for a time when the vegetation is filled in at the park there.
- e) Jane suggested Jim lead another historical walk in the park.
- f) Jim said the people at Bare Cove Park would like to have a social get-together over the summer.
- g) Bill suggested that we have a summer June or July FOW meeting be used as part hike, part meeting.

**11) 2009 Landmine Classic (Eric O.)**

Will be held at meeting's end.

**12) Future Meeting dates**

Our next meetings will be on Monday March 16<sup>th</sup> and on Monday April 27<sup>th</sup>.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Submitted by,

Alma Ramos-McDermott  
Secretary