

# **Minutes of the 2015 Rita Park Cottagers' Association Annual General Meeting**

**Saturday, September 19, 2015 – 4:00 p.m.**

## **Roll Call**

Cathy Hamilton, Kevin Holly, Sally Landon, Carrie Sinkowski, Jean Karges, Cary Lee and Liz Richmond-Lee, Stan Mott. Heather and Scott Wlodarczyk. We have two new residents, who are renting Scott & Sue McKinney's house at 2011 Maple Boulevard: Bonnie and Bill Werner: Welcome!

## **Call to Order**

Sally Landon called the meeting to order at approximately 4:30 p.m. and thanked everyone for attending. She mentioned an interesting fact that she learned from reading the park's documents from the 1960s: members were referred to as either an "east enders" or "west enders". She said that we have no east enders at the meeting today. Stan Mott said that there used to be a foot bridge on Maple Boulevard that separated the east end from the west end and that is how the distinction began.

Everyone introduced themselves and gave a bit of a history of the area and their relationship to the area, some of which are:

Stan Mott = oldest resident

Jean Karges = she and her husband were responsible for having built five houses in the area

Carrie Sinkowski = only native Port Doverite

Bonnie and Bill = originally from the Cheapside area

Sally distributed copies of the agenda.

**MOTION** to accept the agenda was made by Kevin and seconded by Carey Lee: Carried.

## **Minutes from 2014 (Sally Landon)**

Sally spoke about the Minutes from 2014 and what needs to be reviewed from them:

- Action: the need to create by-laws
  - Was decided that it is a bit too formal for us as we tended to get bogged down in details. Sally had volunteered to draft guidelines, which are still in progress. When she has a draft she will email it out.
- Web site: we have one but we need to pay for it
  - Carrie suggested that we use Facebook instead as it is free. Kevin pays for the web site. He said that it isn't a big deal but he thinks that Face Book would be better as it allows everyone to contribute. He will look after the transition.
- Park Maintenance: the idea of purchasing plaques to honour previous families for their contributions

- It hasn't been done due to lack of money and the ability to do it. We have no work crews, as we had in the past, to get things done. It was mentioned that this situation is cyclical, therefore, be optimistic and we will squeak through the low times.
- Liz mentioned that no one in the area is 20 years old and has the energy to do these things.
- Liz mentioned that we could find/obtain a really lovely stone that could be engraved and that would be a cheap solution. Kevin tried to volunteer Liz for the task but she declined. After a bit more consideration, Liz accepted the challenge to look after the stone memorial.
- Kevin said that the term "work crew" is a bit misleading. It is more about co-ordination to get things done. He said that Philip Goldsmith's nephew had contacted him about wanting to create a garden to remember his family. (*Philip Goldsmith died in August of 2013. He used to live on Kiwanis Avenue (in the west end)*). Liz mentioned that she knew Philip and that she played with him as a child in Paris.
- Sally mentioned the Japanese Maple in the park that was spearheaded and planted by Philip Goldsmith as a memorial to departed residents.
- Kevin talked about the possibility of creating a vegetable garden, with the proceeds to go to a charity.
- Heather said that we need to remember that we will also need to maintain whatever is created.

**MOTION** to accept the minutes was made by Kevin and seconded by Carrie Sinkowski: Carried.

### **Treasurer's Report (Kevin Holly)**

The past year has been hard: the report isn't good and hasn't been for some time. He said he now realizes, in retrospect, that it was a mistake not to have raised the dues last year.

- Kevin took over as treasurer from Rick McGraw two years ago. Even then Rick was always putting his own money into the coffers to cover things. The same has happened this year and the association owes Kevin \$255.00.
- As a result Kevin decided that we would no longer pay for lawn maintenance. The result has been that the grass has been cut sporadically by various people. He mentioned that Tom and Harriet used their hired landscaper to cut and groom the park, twice, at considerable expense. Others mentioned that they, too, had done a round of grass cutting.
- Kevin mentioned that this past year no trees have been taken down and the steps to the beach haven't been maintained.
- Kevin said that we need a minimum of \$2,200.00 to get through the season with no maintenance at all. Part of the justification for that figure is that the taxes for next year are going to go up: in 2013 the park was valued at \$54,000.00; in 2017 it will be 101,000.00 !!! When the MPAC assessments went out three or so years ago, this figure was never challenged and it should have been.

- Kevin wants to speak to Norfolk County to try and get a break on the taxes, based on the fact that this is a property that can never be sold or developed.
  - Carrie Sinkowski intervened to say that she has connections and that there are grants to be had and that she would tackle the job of looking into getting us a grant.
- Kevin said that if we have 21 families contribute to the expenses, then dues of \$100.00 will get us through. If we have 18 families then \$125.00 will do. If we have 15 families then we need \$150.00.
- Bonnie Werner said that she was quite willing to pay the increased dues. They have grandchildren and the park is used by them;
  - There have been changes in the area: new families, particularly in the east end. That has resulted in a loss of knowledge about the history of our area and a resulting lack of membership;
  - We need to focus on our core and drive the message home that if you are using the beach access you need to pay. (*Analogy: CFL in Canada – they tried to go to the U.S. and it was a disaster. The result was a move to small stadiums to focus on the area people.*) We need to get people to participate;
  - We need more specific signage;
  - Liz asked if there was a penalty system for those who abuse the privilege. It was decided that when that situation occurs instead of punitive measures, we need to be friendly, inclusive and explain the situation.
- Kevin proposed that we are all now going to have to be paying \$150.00 per family. Liz Richmond-Lee agreed that we need to raise the dues.
- Bonnie volunteered that her family would look after maintenance of the west-end stairs (*on their property*);
  - Stan Mott mentioned the current decision made with regard to beach access in the Long Point area – and that is that anyone can access a beach, that all beaches are public. He noted that Long Point’s beach access issue has not yet resolved. It was pointed out that the deeds in this area claim ownership to the water’s edge. The west-end access is a right of way for Rita Park and can be controlled. The east-end access cuts across three property boundaries and isn’t so easily controlled.
  - Sally proposed a possible raffle to bring up revenues or some sort of fund raiser, but was reminded that you require a lotto licence first. Carrie Sinkowski said that obtaining a lotto licence is a huge hassle, but she volunteered to tackle the job of obtaining one. Sally asked her to investigate what was involved.
  - Heather mentioned that spring is the time of year to do some of these things as that is the time of year when everyone is energized and looking forward to the better weather. She then

suggested that this annual general meeting be done in the spring as people are more likely to be home. It was mentioned that in the past the reason that the meetings were done in the summer was because this area was a cottage area and that is when all the families were in attendance.

**MOTION** to accept the treasurer's report was made by Jean Karges and seconded by Carey Lee: Carried.

### **Social Activity Report (Sally Landon)**

- Sally stated that nothing at all had been done this past year. She mentioned the twice-a-year parties that we have had in the past. She mentioned that social committees have been struck in the past but haven't worked, largely due to scheduling difficulties. She said that the blame is hers and she apologized.

### **Trees**

- The willow has lost more limbs. The town had previously said that the tree is theirs but now they are back tracking. Jean Karges was asked to use her influence to see if she can find out where the town stands on this issue.
- Sally talked about the trees that were taken down on the lot owned by Ed and Deena (*beside Jean Karges' house*) and how they generously paid to take down a tree that was technically not on their property but on the park's property. She thanked Ed and Deena and said she would look into the various tree services available for future work in the park.

### **Election of Officers**

- Sally no longer wants to be president but no one will step into the role;
- Carrie Sinkowski offered to swap with Kevin but she won't take on the job of vice-president as she already has two jobs. Liz Richmond was asked and declined.
- The question was asked if anyone would like to take on the job of social convenor. Kevin said that we need people to organize events such as leaf raking, spring clean ups, etc. Jean and Liz volunteered to work together.

Therefore:

### **Election of 2014 – 2015 Executive and Directors**

President – Sally Landon (by default)

Vice-President- Carrie Sinkowski (under duress)

Treasurer – Kevin Holly (sticking it out for the time being)

Secretary - Cathy Hamilton

Directors - Stan said he would continue as a director as long as he was supported by his family

- Carey Lee

- Bill Werner

- Tom and Glenn are to be emailed and asked

Social Committee – Jean Karges and Liz Richmond-Lee

As there were no further items of business presented for discussion:

**MOTION**, by Kevin Holly that the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Carrie Sinkowski.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.