

Minutes – FoAGM Steering Committee Meeting – Tuesday, November 18, 2003

Present: John Bartenstein, Don Miller, Mike Tabaczynski, David White

1. Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, December 16 @ 7:30 p.m.
2. Previous Minutes: The minutes of October 28 were approved. John agreed to take over the minutes, on a trial basis, through the end of the calendar year.
3. Trail Work Feedback/Opinions: The recent trail work has proved to be quite satisfactory. People seem to be complying with the new trail route and the signs are attractive and appropriate. The Eagle Scout signage project is still awaiting approval and probably will not be completed until next spring.
4. Educational Activities: Andrea reported by email that the Arlington Girl Scout visit on November 11 was successful, with about 25 scouts in grades 6-8 and their leaders in attendance. The scouts made a generous gift in addition to paying for the guides, and the funds will be turned over to the ALT treasurer. They also offered to make themselves available for community service work at AGM. Discussion of the Arlington Schools and vernal pond visitation management programs will be deferred to the next meeting when Sandra can make a report.
5. Upcoming Events: Sandra will be attending a meeting of Walden Keeping Track on Thursday, and it is hoped that they can provide a speaker for a winter general meeting to be held on a weekday evening in late January/early February, followed by an outdoor tracking event in AGM on a Saturday. The goal is to try to bring more people in and increase awareness of our efforts. The indoor program might include a brief presentation on our recent accomplishments. There was also discussion of a larger general meeting to be held in the spring, possibly early April. It was proposed that the spring meeting focus on the control of invasive plants, and that the issue of invasive plants should be a major focus of our efforts in 2004. The New England Wildflower Society has an expert on invasive plant control who might be available as a speaker, and we discussed the possibility of offering an honorarium if necessary to engage him.
6. ALT Annual Meeting: Don, Mike, Sandra and Andrea attended the ALT Annual Meeting. ALT representatives made positive remarks about FoAGM and the new fiscal sponsorship arrangement, and Mike and Sandra spoke briefly about our projects and education efforts. Mike brought to the meeting a fact sheet and contribution form, a copy of which is attached. ALT has been in touch with a reporter for the Arlington Advocate, and an article is expected to run on the ALT/FoAGM partnership in both the Advocate and the Lexington Minuteman during Thanksgiving week. Brian Rehrig is working on a final version of the press release/article and will supply photographs for the story. David will be contacted for quotes.

7. RTP Grant Application: A supporting letter has been signed by the Arlington Board of Selectmen (copy attached), and Mike is getting together the remaining material needed for the application. The application should be ready to submit after the grant announcement is made (shortly after Thanksgiving) and well before the January 1, 2004 deadline. The grant requires a 20% funding match which will easily be met by the volunteer labor that we are expected to supply. We will be looking to do this project, if funded, during the late summer of 2004 at the earliest. It was agreed that we should plan a “ribbon-cutting” ceremony upon its completion and invite the Arlington Board of Selectmen as this will be a mutual opportunity for positive publicity.

8. Budget/Uses of Funds: ALT reported at the annual meeting that it had received an unsolicited contribution to the FoAGM fund of \$500. Combined with ALT’s \$250 seed contribution and other contributions, this should bring our treasury balance to nearly \$1,000. Mike will arrange to get from the ALT Treasurer in advance of future SC meetings a summary financial report of inflows, outflows and current balance. The following suggestions were made for possible uses of funds:
 - Refreshments for volunteer events
 - Professional invasive plant control
 - Mini-grants for students to do conservation projects
 - Supporting school visits with guide books, etc.
 - The Eagle Scout signage project
 - Loam and tree plugs to heal eroded spots
 - A second kiosk on the nursing home side
 - Publications, including guidebooks and maps
 - Trail maintenance supplies

This draft list can be supplemented from time to time. David observed that the general categories covered are: (1) school projects; (2) public information generally; (3) trails and signage; and (4) invasive plants and habitat management.

9. Fund Raising: The planned press release will contain information about how to contribute the ALT-FoAGM Fund. David and Mike will prepare an email to send to the current email address list before the December 16 SC meeting informing existing contacts of the ALT-FoAGM fiscal sponsorship arrangement and attaching a contribution form. In order to do a general fund-raising mailing, it would be necessary to develop a mailing list from the current email list, which will require considerable effort. It was decided that we still are not ready to go to a membership

organization with annual dues. Other fund-raising suggestions included the sale of T-shirts, calendars, mousepads, decals, stickers and canvas bags. It was agreed that SC members should bring sample T-shirts to the December 16 SC meeting.

10. Arlington Friends Group Coalition. David will attend a meeting of the Coalition on 11/19. Typically represented are the Friends of Robbins Farm, the Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park, The Friends of Spy Pond and the Greenstreets group. Other Arlington SC members may wish to attend future meetings in rotation.
11. Birdhouses: The Waldorf woodworking class completed two birdhouses this fall that are suitable for owls and kestrels. Don will work on selecting locations and getting the birdhouses placed, preferably with the involvements of the students and before the winter. The location of the birdhouses will be noted on Mike's map but will not be publicized as the purpose is to encourage nesting, not to encourage spectators.
12. Agenda for Next Meeting: Possible agenda items for the December 16 meeting include educational activities, the winter meeting, the spring meeting, a fiscal report, a review of sample T-shirts that might be used as a model for an AGM T-Shirt, a report by Laurel Carpenter on an AGM project, and a discussion of future plans for the medium term (about one year) and long term (about three years).