Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows Steering Committee Meeting July 26, 2005

Approved Nov 9. 2005 Meeting held at 48 Sanderson Road

Present: Sandra Ruggiero David White Andrea Golden Mike Tabaczynski Don Miller

John Bartenstein Laurel Carpenter Sarah Garner, guest Barbara Strell, guest

- 1. Minutes of the June 2005 meeting were approved with corrections.
- 2. <u>Next meeting</u>: Wednesday September 21 @ 7:30 pm. Location to be determined. Sandra suggested that if we are able to determine a fixed rotation for meetings in the fall, we might have an easier time obtaining rooms at the former Waldorf High School.
- 3. Financial Report: Specifics were not available.

4. Educational/Outreach Activities

- a. **Andrea** reported that CLC is in the process of planning some walks, one of which would likely be Chris Floyd leading a birdwalk in the meadow. A girl scout project involving invasive plants is also in the works. Barbara Strell agreed to lead a plant walk in October from 10a-12p, if a SC member was willing to accompany her. **Sandra agreed** to contact Dr. Jonathan Way, a recent BC grad, about speaking at a future FoAGM meeting. His webpage is http://www2.bc.edu/~wayjo/mainpage.html **Mike** reported that CLC would like to do a land management tour of the meadow, but the proposed date of Sept 10 was somewhat in conflict with other SC members so he was going to check on whether there is flexibility in this program, as **Laurel has volunteered** to work on a land management plan for the Great Meadow.
- b. School programs. The program is likely to continue with Waldorf High School students acting as guides for several Arlington elementary school classes.
- c. More green guides need to be printed (about 200 copies), but it was recommended that a paragraph on the boardwalks be added, as well as drawn on the map prior to reprinting. **Andrea** will email Sandra the electronic text of the guide, as well as provide a copy to David White for the web and archival purposes.
- d. Community outreach. Arlington Town Day is September 17, and FoAGM can probably have a space at the ConCom or Open Space or ALT booths. David will be there anyway but encourages visits from other SC members. Lexington East Village Fair is Saturday, October 1. FoAGM will have a booth and from the fair will lead short guided tours of the meadow looking at natural features and the new boardwalk. SC can rotate leading tours and staffing the booth.

- e. Additional directional signage in meadow. The two visitors prompted a discussion of additional signage in the meadow to help orient lost walkers, perhaps a few small directional signs indicating the location of the two main entry/exit points.
- 5. Boardwalks. Mike T. organized a pre-build planning meeting, a set-up day on Tuesday, July 19, in which several of the footings for the boardwalk were established, and coordinated a terrifically successful all-day work project on Saturday, July 23. Members of the SC would like the record to acknowledge special appreciation to Mike for his leadership of this project. Approximately 35 volunteers participated, with team leaders heading up specific tasks, such as the sawing station and the boardwalk anchorman. Sandra provided a wonderful lunch and afternoon fruit and ice cream break. A reporter from community newspapers was present and took numerous photographs. Mike started the day with a safety and instructions presentation, and no major injuries occurred, although latecomers did not follow some of the instructions. A wonderful photo has been posted on the FoAGM website. Mike agreed to write up a project summary, which will be used for multiple purposes. There is a follow-up workday on Thursday, July 28 to adjust the trail at the far end of the boardwalk, close a trail from the Bikeway, and install a couple of signs to reinforce the new configuration, and perhaps do some blazing and trimming if time permits. Sandra reported that she heard concerns from two sources that foot traffic on the "quiet side" of the meadow would increase as a result of the boardwalk. David requested that anyone who took photos during the boardwalk construction to please email him.

There was some preliminary discussion of phase 2 of the boardwalk, which will be 445 feet on the other side of the meadow, and further away from road access. Members of the SC brainstormed some ideas for materials transport to the site, as there will be too much wood to hand carry. **John volunteered** to contact Mike Keegan, a local landscape contractor. Mike is working out a possible construction schedule for phase 2. He has his eye on September 24 & 25, which is National Public Lands Day. Publicity will be key to this event as well, and **John suggested** contacting Colonial Times for some before and after coverage. Mike received an email from Kate Rule of MIT offering 10-15 graduate students to provide labor on September 17 from 9:30-1:30, but unfortunately the timing doesn't mesh well with the current project construction schedule so it is not clear how best to utilize the energetic pool of educated laborers!

6. <u>Invasive plant control</u>. John summarized the current Japanese knotweed project, and steering committee members agreed that this has been FoAGM's most visible project thus far, for the following reasons: a) proximity to the heavily-traveled bikeway; b) signage on the bikeway identifies FoAGM as doing the work and provides tear-off sheets with the web URL; c) when SC members have been physically doing the work, many bikeway users have stopped to talk about the project; d) David has developed a separate page on the website with before-and-after photos of the site and an on-going work log. The group discussed the value of having a larger more visible plastic sign, and **Don agreed** to look into pricing and details for this type of signage, which he will email to the SC. John reported that he has one more roll of large plastic sheeting. Don suggested experimentally pulling out some of the knotweed waste materials which are currently

under the blue tarp and placing it over the black plastic to desiccate, so a portion will be removed to test this method.

- 9. Lexington Christian Academy hearing. Mike T. attended the Lexington ConCom meeting in which LCA's proposal to build a parking lot was discussed. Mike reported that many of the LCA neighbors were resistant to this project. The hearing was continued to August 9 at 8:30. FoAGM's concerns are related to access to the meadow, but it is unclear how the proposed parking lot would affect meadow access. Currently some users cut across LCA playing fields to reach the meadow. Mike felt that contacting LCA directly might be the most constructive way to register FoAGM's concerns.
- 10. Future topics: Don Miller requested that yard waste dumping be discussed at the next meeting, as well as begin a dialogue about land use principles for the meadow.

Respectfully submitted Ljc 7/28/2005