

# January 24, 2023

Beautification Committee Minutes  
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The meeting at the Borough Hall was called to order at 7:01 PM by Committee Chair Mary Lynn Ritchings.

The following members were in attendance:

Beth Cox, Joan Crowe, Dorothy Hadley, Maureen Kale, Janine Mastrokalos, Penny Mecca, Gary Mecca, MJ Mitchell, Robyn Palang, John Palang, Sandy Pasola, Monica Post, Mary Lynn Ritchings, Mary Steiner, Arlene Testa, Karen Testa, Moises Vasquez, Chesla Wechsler

A quorum is present.

Committee Guidelines

Chair Mary Lynn Ritchings discussed the Committee Guidelines signature page, which has yet to be handed in. Arlene said that we should hand it in to Christine Riehl. There was some thought that there might be changes made to the guidelines for this year, and Doug Vitale's name mentioned in regard to that, but we were unsure. For now, Mary Lynn will hand in the current page.

Minutes From Prior Meetings

The monetary balance from the Fisher Fund grant is incorrect in the October and November 2022 minutes. The correct money amount is reported in the January Treasurer's report.

There's a typo in the November minutes where "barrels" was used where "planters" was meant. Chesla will change this.

The October and November minutes were moved for approval by MJ Mitchell, seconded by Sandy Pasola, with unanimous approval by the membership in attendance.

Treasurer's Report

Mary Lynn thanked Gary Mecca for the thorough Treasurers report. There are multiple pools of funding and each has its own process for spending. Municipal budget purchase requires purchase orders submitted to the Borough, while purchases from funds in the Community Endowment Fund do not. We have multiple sources of funding (town, Fisher Fund, Arctic Butcher donations, [new] Foos Family Foundation donation, Community Endowment, and the Butterfly Garden fund).

In 2022, the Committee supplemented the \$4000 town operating budget for 2022 through the use of the Fisher Fund, Community Endowment, and donations (Arctic Butcher).

The Fisher Fund Grant for the 2022 Special Project areas has about \$537 remaining, which will be put towards enhancing those areas (Broadway Garden and Welcome Sign) in 2023.

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Beautification requested \$5000 from the town operating budget but will not get an answer until April/May. This is an increase from \$4000 last year.

The Arctic Butcher donation has ~\$439 remaining and the new Foos Family Foundation grant (from Karen Testa's Family) has \$1500. The existing community endowment balance is ~\$300 and the Butterfly Garden reserve is about ~\$3270.

Town budget for 2023 includes the following: \$2473 was budgeted for flowers, ~\$450 on fertilizer, \$300 on holiday decorations, \$400 on scarecrow contest, \$175 on DPW lunch, \$200

for  
flag replacements.

#### Joining Forces Committee

Arlene Testa reported back on Chesla Wechsler's request to get a town email address for Beautification Committee. Christine Riehl will arrange for the address then send the password to Arlene, who will relay it to Chesla. Chesla will provide the address to Mary Lynn to have it added to the Ocean Star listing for the committee meetings so that people can contact us. There was thought that our entry had not been in the Ocean Star in recent weeks, but Chesla confirmed that it was there on January 13th.

Mary Steiner reported out. There are still negotiations over cost, sizing, and location for the potential town crier sign that would display activities in town.

Christi (from Monticello/BamBam Burger) and Doug Vitale brought up the concept of a Decorating Committee. Its purpose is to gather volunteers to decorate the town for minor holidays and in concert with Rec Committee activities and events with the goal of giving Point Pleasant Beach a reputation of being a Cute Town Destination. It would not impact Beautification Committee's Flags, Planters, Gardens, Winter/Christmastime Holiday Decorations. We discussed the difficulty we've had with volunteers. It would need to be funded, possibly through donations as one source, and organized. Sandy Pasola and Arlene Testa discussed (with others) the need for overall coordination between committees on town decorations. There is a town calendar for events, but it doesn't have tasks. A calendar at the task level (e.g., put up XXX decorations, take down XXX decorations) would be useful to avoid conflicts (e.g., cornstalks still being present when scarecrow context entries needed to be mounted).

Arlene educated us that Caryn Byrnes self-funds the cornstalks in the fall.

There was not broad interest in Beautification Committee members joining the Decorating Committee (in the sense of having to attend additional meetings) but members of each committee can always volunteer to help the other, which some members mentioned they'd be willing to do. There was a suggestion (I think from MJ) that the Decorating Committee be a subcommittee of Recreation Committee. Arlene mentioned that she brags about how hard working and organized the Beautification Committee is and perhaps we can offer suggestions on organization.

One example of working together would be for Decorating Committee to take the lead in putting Beautification Committee Minutes

Valentine Hearts in the planters for Show us your Heart or Shamrocks for the Sham Rock event. Arlene educated us on one of the reasons we (the town) does events with the Chamber of Commerce: The Chamber has insurance. If each committee has to get its own, it's very expensive. Arlene is trying to get insurance from the town that covers everything the committees do. Probably won't know more until March/April. Any event done with the Chamber is split 50/50. If we can get our own insurance we might be able to bring in a larger amount of money.  
Thank You

Thanks very much to Karen Testa's family for the Foos Family Donation of \$1500.

Thank you to Maryann Ellsworth for her service as Secretary.

Mary Lynn thanked all the bakers and buyers of cookies, assemblers and deliverers of cookies (Sandy, Maryann Ellsworth, Janine Mastrokalos, MJ, and Mary Lynn), and MJ for hosting the assembly group and providing a drop off point.

Gary Mecca, Penny Mecca, Karen Testa and Mary Lynn did some organizing with the tubs in the

shed, and Gary hung up poles to store the wreaths. Mary noted that she put the Gazebo decorations into the Gazebo tub and used an unmarked tub as well (with gold garland in it). Mary Lynn mentioned that undecorating the lampposts went very well, taking only about an hour. She thanked the following people for their help that day: Monica, Sue, Janine and husband Jim, Dorothy and husband Rob, Sandy and husband Jack, Gary, Chesla, Moises, Mary Lynn and husband Pete, and June Cuzzo from the Senior Committee.

Gary noted that we may need a better way to put the bows on as the wire didn't survive the wind. Zip ties seemed to work well when Mary Lynn and Gary did some repair work. The bows were showy and looked nice but they did fade so we can't use them next year.

Thanks to everyone who got their flower order in for the gardens. The flower order was submitted to A. Seemar Greenhouse, Inc. Gary, Penny, Karen, and Mary Lynn worked on this order after the holidays. Andrew (the merchant) needed the flower order in January and we were able to meet his request.

#### Planters/Barrels/Gardens

Karen Testa reported that the members who organized the flower order decided to make the planters a bit more diverse this year instead of doing the same plant in every planter. The plan is for Arnold Ave to be divided up into three sections, where each section will have different flowers in the planters. Each assignee to planters would only have one type of planter. It doesn't cost any more money and it lets us see what does and doesn't work, as well as providing some variety in appearance.

Andrew of Seemar was able to get the mandevillas this year so Arlene doesn't need to. He was very helpful with ideas. We have 34 planters this year (added busstop). In March, we'll make Beautification Committee Minutes

sure gardens and planters have assignments. In barrels, we'll have vincas. Twelve barrels are left. The barrels Monica suggested (at the end of Baltimore by the pizza place) are coming out. Mary wants to snag a tree out of them. Moises may need some replacement trees as well. That leaves four on Broadway. If we don't have enough people to care for planters, we'll sacrifice some barrels. Sandy willing to take Karin Magala's barrels if no one else can do it.

If anyone is going to drive a boro vehicle (i.e., the water truck), he/she has to fill out a consent form (insurance, background check). Gary has already done the process. Water truck gets filled from a fire hydrant which is difficult. Parking is tough. Boro has a part time employee to water the trees. Arlene will work with ML and Karen to see what we can work out with the town. The truck can do 5 planters at a time because it holds 100 gallons. Took 3 hours for two people to do the watering.

#### Special Projects

We did the welcome sign and Ocean/Broadway garden in 2022 as special projects. The Randall/Niblick garden needs redoing and a sprinkler system installed. Mary Lynn suggested we form a planning committee to design the garden and cost it out (along with the sprinkler). Mary Lynn distributed a paper for signups for this committee (but more are welcome). Beautification Committee would have to fund the installation of the sprinkler system. Arlene said one source of funding for this garden could be an application for another Fisher Fund grant since you can apply once per year. Gary estimates \$4-5K for that garden to include the sprinkler. Gary is going to look for an alternative sprinkler company to get a better cost, but we'd have to make sure that the organization that cares for sprinklers for the town will start them up and shut them down even if they didn't install them.

Sandy thinks the Welcome Sign garden needs larger evergreen shrubbery. Janine agrees it's looking a bit brown. Money from the Fisher Foundation allocated for those gardens in 2022 (which was leftover) can be used to continue to spruce up those gardens.

Gary suggests fixing the bird sanctuary sign as a secondary project and adding this into the request to the Fisher Fund.

#### Elections

Current Chair (Mary Lynn), Co Chair (Karen Testa), and Treasurer (Gary) are willing to serve again unless others are interested. Maryann (Secretary) wants to remain a member but not serve as Secretary. John Palang made motion for the current officers for Chair, CoChair, and Treasurer, Sandy seconded. Members voted unanimously to approve.

Chesla Wechsler was sitting in for Maryann as Treasurer and offered to serve in the roll for the next year in no one else was interested. Members voted unanimously to approve.

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#### Public Portion

There will be a referendum on changes to the schools which could include making the current HS tennis courts into a park area. Our meetings conflict with those of the Board of Education so getting further information from meetings may be difficult.

John moved to adjourn, Beth Cox seconded. Adjourned at 8:06PM