

**Minutes from Burr Garden Committee
September 14, 2011**

In Attendance:

Catherine Albin
Lisa Clair
Laura Fasano
Lori Hashizume
Michael Jehle

Item One:

Chairwoman Catherine Albin called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. in the meeting room of the Fairfield Museum and History Center. It was announced that Jill Kelly is not able to carry out her duties on the committee, but will continue to be available as a resource.

Item Two:

Michael Jehle reported the town's Highway Department left a few samples of surplus granite curbing along the Burr Homestead's driveway. He will invite Ellen Gould, Chair of the Fairfield Historic District Commission, to comment on the appropriateness of the curbing. The intent of the curbing is to limit vehicular access in the vicinity of a stately copper beech tree and for the aesthetics to be in keeping with curbing at the town's marina.

Michael Jehle obtained an estimate of \$5,000 to purchase ground-installed material for special event lawn parking in the rear of Burr Homestead. There was concern about whether installation of the rigid plastic material would prevent grass from growing, especially if special-occasion tents are erected with some frequency over the area. Mr. Jehle felt this would not be a problem. Raising funds for the purchase of the material might be a good kick-off project for this committee. The town may be able to provide the labor to install it.

Although the Fairfield Museum, as designated caretaker of Burr Homestead, was invited to submit an application for Christmas Tree Festival 2012 funding, it appears proceeds from the event have been awarded to Swim Across The Sound. Our request, which Mr. Jehle prepared, included \$25,000 for restoration of the garden.

Item Three:

Lisa Clair noted that in order for any publicity to gain traction with area publications, we should have something newsworthy to tie in with any type of press release. A new

magazine, New Fairfield Living, has agreed to do a feature story on Burr Gardens. We need to come up with a public relations strategy along with goals and a project timeline.

One thought was to revive A Taste of Fairfield. Ms. Albin reported that the Fairfield Arts Center is in discussion with the First Selectman about sponsoring A Taste of Fairfield. Perhaps it could be held at the Burr Homestead. Mr. Jehle noted that the Arts Center's effort is focused on the Sanford Street area, so Burr would not be appropriate for their purpose.

Another program goal might be to initiate a fundraiser to match a \$25,000 anonymous donation from an estate to restore Burr Gardens. We need not host an event to achieve this.

Laura Fasano volunteered to put together a list in consultation with Oliver Nurseries of landscaping needs and cost estimates. Oliver's might also suggest how the project can be accomplished in stages. This information could then be presented to prospective donors.

Ms. Albin will contact Paul Hiller to set up a meeting with Attorney Roy Ervin to discuss the conditions of the anonymous donation. Mr. Jehle will also attend.

The pond's fountain is now operational thanks to the town. There has been no further progress in obtaining estimates to rebuild the pond.

Ms. Albin suggested we identify prospective donors for a Phase I project and host a luncheon to unveil our plans. Ms. Clair reiterated the need to come up with a Public Relations strategy with a timeline. Mr. Jehle suggested that we identify 50 to 75 people who could contribute \$500 to \$1,000 with one-on-one follow up by committee members.

Ms. Fasano agreed to obtain the November dates for local garden club meetings. Ms. Albin, as our designated spokesperson, would attend the meetings to make a pitch on behalf of our committee as a first conversation with prospective donors. Ms. Clair will assist with a Power Point presentation or other materials needed. Ms. Albin should be prepared to address how previous garden club financial support was implemented.

It was the sense of the body to try to raise \$25,000 by December 31, 2011.

Ms. Clair moved and Mr. Jehle seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Hashizume