

## FRIENDS OF SCHODACK ISLAND STATE PARK, INC.

### Minutes of the November 4, 2013 Board Meeting

#### Attendance

Present: Board members: Dan Odell, Ken Stokem, Karen Kaufmann, Leah Taylor, Ed Secovnie, Jim Bult, and Andy Orhin. Park Staff: Joe Scandura and Kathy Meyer. Excused: Scott Monthie and Chris Monthie.

The meeting was called to order by Dan at 7:02 PM. He noted the presence of a quorum.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the annual meeting held on August 5, 2013 were approved following a motion made by Leah and seconded by Ed. The motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** Please see attached.

**President's Report:** Dan noted, with regret, the resignation of Toni Gato Chinery as our board secretary and as a member of the Friends. He said that in addition to her service as secretary she had actively supported the organization, and the park, in many other ways, and her dedicated service in all these areas will be greatly missed. He asked that if any board member was interested in serving as secretary or knew of anyone willing to join the board in that position, that they should contact him.

Dan noted that we needed to set the meeting dates for the regular quarterly meetings for 2014. He said we have been meeting on the first Mondays of February, May, August (annual meeting) and November, were these dates acceptable for 2014. Ken proposed that the dates for 2014 be set as the second Mondays of February, May, August, and November instead. After some discussion this was found agreeable to the board. A motion was made by Ken and seconded by Karen that the following meeting dates be selected: February 10, May 12, August 11 and November 10. The motion passed unanimously.

Dan provided a brief summary of the region wide meeting of Friends groups held on November 2<sup>nd</sup> in Saratoga, which he, Joe and Kathy attended. The focus of the meeting was on sharing ideas on building membership for Friends groups and sharing what works and doesn't work.

**Staff Report:** Joe gave the group an update on the plans for the new campground. There will be a total of 63 campsites sites. There will be three driveway loops, one on the river side of the park road and two on the creek side. Bids for site development were opened on October 22 and Callahan Paving was the low bidder at \$145,000. The work is expected to start in January and will involve site clearing and constructing roads with crushed stone. Bids for the second phase, involving construction of bathroom and utilities will follow.

**Friday Night Skating Under the Lights:** Joe shared plans for getting the skating rink operating as soon as weather permits. Dan said the Friends would be renting skates on Friday nights for

skating under the lights and asked for volunteers to help. Ed said the Schodack Landing Fire Department expects to be selling food and beverages on Friday nights as well.

**I Love My Park Day:** The 2014 statewide I Love My Park Day is scheduled for May 3, 2014 (the first Saturday in May). We will again plan to participate as we have over the past two years. **Karen** offered to be the contact person with Parks and Trails New York (PTNY), the organization leading the statewide effort. This involves coordinating with them as volunteers sign up on the PTNY website and keeping track of the names, numbers and interests of the volunteers. **Joe** offered to take care of preparing the lunch for volunteers.

Joe asked if, given our plans to participate in I Love My Park Day, if we also wanted to participate in the National Trails Day which is June 7th this year. He said that there is a need to work on restoring a former trail section in the park which could be a good trails project. Dan offered to look into this, work with Joe, and come back to the group on this at the February meeting.

**Friends Website:** The website is up and operating. The developer has been paid their fee of \$880. Members said they had been on the site and explored its features. Several features still need to be added, including the join/donate now feature, the email feature, links to the park website, and others. Dan will be working with Seth Odell, who is donating his time to help complete the website, to see these features are added. Also, now that the web site is operating, Dan will be contacting Cranial Solutions, who will do the printing of related materials. It was decided to use rack cards rather than folded brochures for distribution to the public.

**Day Use Fee Discussion:** One of the roles of a Friends group is to provide input to the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation regarding park planning. With the opening of a camp ground, the park can expect a significant new source of revenue. The question of collection of per car fee, which is officially called the Vehicle Use Fee (VUF) charged to access the park on weekends during the park's busy season, was raised. Discussion focused on should our group consider making a recommendation on this fee. Joe gave us some background on the issue: the VUF fee is only collected on weekends and brings in about \$18,000 income annually at a staffing cost of about \$5,000. Staff will now be needed to collect the camping fees. He went over some of the issues involved, including handling lines of waiting vehicles at busy times when some people are waiting to pay the VUF fee, which is usually a quick transaction, and others to pay for a campsite, which may take more time. Collecting fees is a consideration in designing the traffic patterns at the gate house building where the fees are collected so as to process vehicles into the park without lengthy waiting times. This is a complex issue which we should continue to educate ourselves on.

**Recognizing Toni Gatto-Chinery's service:** There was a discussion of the need to recognize Toni for her service to the Friends. In the past we have recognized the services of board officers when they leave office with a resolution, a copy of which is printed on parchment, framed and presented to the former officer. Dan offered to do a draft and share it with Ken prior to presenting it to the board for their consideration.

**Adjournment:** A motion was made by Leah, seconded by Ken to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.