

Friends of Midway State Park Board of Directors Meeting

February 5, 2011

Attending: Andy Hillman, Melissa Emhardt, Kathleen McCarthy, Kate Gross, Steve Hayes, Bob Wooler, and Matt Kraft.

Bob Wooler opened the meeting at 4:05 pm by asking Andy Hillman for an update on off-season activities and changes at Midway. Andy reported:

- The park has requested bids on starting to refurbish carousel horses.
- Taking off the seven layers of roofing on the roundhouse will be the first phase of reconstruction/restoration activity to be undertaken in 2011.
- Although there will be a 5-8% reduction in the budget this year, its effect on the capital budget is not yet known.
- The replacement of the roof on the Hippodrome will be expensive and undertaken in future years – not in 2011.
- Andy will be moving to Niagara Falls and the Niagara Falls manager Kate Gross will be taking over at Midway/Long Point. These changes are expected to be nearly complete by the time the park opens in the spring.

Andy's report on 2011 priorities tied in nicely to the plans for the Friends to mobilize a campaign around the carousel restoration where we can promote the themes of adopting a horse for repainting and for restoring the faded paintings on the rounding boards that depict local Chautauqua County scenes.

Kathleen spoke about the plans to co-host a lakefront buffer planting event with the Chautauqua Watershed Association on Saturday, June 4. The park will be preparing the site by borrowing a rototiller from Lake Erie State Park. Matt suggested he may be able to start young plants in the CLCS greenhouse in connection with a Chautauqua Opportunities project.

Discussion next turned to the subject of July 4 fireworks. Andy reported that approval has been received to use \$3,000 of the proceeds from the gift shop and \$3,000 in solicited donations to bring back fireworks on July 4. Bob suggested that there was considerable declared interest in this from the Friends, and that we would also solicit donations and could join in the effort to solicit corporate and media donations from around the area, perhaps using our 501c3 status to advantage in this effort. Andy is coordinating efforts with Angela Birdie, the PR staffer for the District; Bob asked to be invited to a meeting in the near future to coordinate.

Andy announced that the park had issued a new bid for food concessions for the next four years and that the submitted bids were being reviewed with a contract decision expected shortly.

General discussion then turned to the status of the Friends and the application to the IRS for tax-exempt status. Bob passed around the draft application which was in near-final form, as we are

currently waiting to have the formal Memorandum of Agreement with the state returned so we can include it as an attachment. Bob reviewed the projected budgets briefly. While we are anticipating \$17,500 in 2011, the amounts increase to over \$40,000 in 2012 and over \$70,000 in 2013 based on fairly aggressive solicitation of government and foundation funds to assist with Midway projects.

Kate spoke about the Lowe's Foundation opportunity and also called attention to the fine example of the Friends of Letchworth State Park and suggested we network with them. Steve Hayes asked if there was any formal link to Chautauqua Institution to attract families to Midway, and there was consensus that we wanted to strengthen those links if at all possible.

A final heartening development for the 2011 season was mentioned by Andy – the long-awaited museum would finally be open behind the gift shop and would feature games and relics from years gone by at Midway Park.

As the meeting moved toward conclusion, Bob reviewed a fairly brisk calendar of activities and projects for 2011, all of which need to be planned in detail in the fairly near future:

- Days of service / park work days shape up for the spring. In addition to the June 4 buffer planting, we could issue a call to action around the restoration and sprucing up of the mini-golf course, as plans are underway to reconstruct the three "lost" holes from last year. Friends, service clubs, youth groups, etc. could be welcomed for this.
- A Maple Springs Garden Tour on July 9, proceeds to benefit the Friends.
- Two "Friends of Midway" days would be designated at the park, one in July and one in August, where Friends would get the group benefits and we would host the Bill Ward benefit concert on one of the days, have a Skeeball-a-Thon benefit (or similar sponsor-donation type events) at other attractions throughout the park on the other, etc. Board meetings/annual meeting would also be held on those days.
- The Friends would mobilize two fundraising campaigns for 2011, one for Fireworks, one for the carousel restoration and would encourage ongoing membership, online donations for the causes, and we would also conduct a mail campaign, underscoring the need to continue to build our lists through media announcements and visibility initiatives with our brochures throughout the county.

To move this agenda along with specific plans for the 2011 season, the next meeting of the Board of Directors was scheduled for March 5, 2011 at 4 pm at 4780 Whiteside Parkway in Maple Springs. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bob Wooler