FRIENDS OF BEACON HILL PARK

2022 Annual General Meeting Minutes

April 20, 2022, at 7:00 pm

By Zoom

1. **Welcome** Joan Halvorsen

Joan Halvorsen, President, welcomed everyone to the AGM.

1. **Establish Quorum** Maureen Applewhaite

Maureen Applewhaite confirmed that we have a quorum.

1. **Agenda Acceptance** Joan Halvorsen

Tom Epplett moved, and Maureen Applewhaite seconded that the Agenda be accepted. Carried.

1. **Minutes of 2021 AGM** Joan Halvorsen

Ron Mahoney moved, and Pete Lowry seconded that the minutes be accepted. Carried.

1. **Treasurer’s Report** Tom Epplett

Joan Halvorsen on Tom Epplett’s behalf presented the financial statement for 2021. Maureen Applewhaite moved, and Peter Lowry seconded that the 2021 financial statement be accepted. Carried.

1. **President’s Report** Joan Halvorsen

Our purpose is, “To Promote & Protect the Natural & Cultural History of Beacon Hill Park.” To this end we continue to be very involved in legal proceedings. The Honourable Mr. Justice Punnett sided with the Friends of Beacon Hill Park (FBHP) in his ruling of February 24, 2022. He ruled that, “The Trust does not permit use of the Park for temporary sheltering by persons experiencing homelessness. Such activity by the members of the public is contrary to the purpose of the Trust: preservation of the Park for the use, recreation and enjoyment of the public.” This was great, and we likely could not have wished for a better ruling as it spoke against any type of sheltering in the Park.

However, the BC Ministry of Attorney General submitted a Notice of Appeal of Justice Punnett’s order on March 23, 2022. The grounds for appeal are not yet known.

Friends of Beacon Hill Park will continue to defend the Park.

As a brief background, in 2020 sheltering in the Park increased dramatically when the City of Victoria allowed 24/7 sheltering. In July of 2020, the City initiated an injunction against sheltering in sensitive ecosystems implying people could shelter in other designated areas. At this point the FBHP believed this was in contravention of the Park Trust, as it made sheltering an official use. The court ruled that FBHP could not take part in the injunction as it was a statutory injunction in which a citizen group could not participate. The court did say that a Civil Claim would be an equitable injunction which a citizen group could pursue in court.

So, in November of 2020, the FBHP filed a Notice of Civil Claim against the City. In negotiations with the City, the FBHP then put this claim on hold in February of 2021, provided that the City ask the BC Supreme Court to provide direction as to whether sheltering was allowed under the Park Trust. To get this direction, there were four days in court in September of 2021 in which the City, the Attorney General, FBHP, Together Against Poverty and two people who had been sheltering took part. We were the only ones that took the position against sheltering.

As I indicated earlier Justice Punnett ruled in our favour against sheltering, and then the Attorney General appealed. We have filed that we want to take part in the appeal. We will oppose it and are waiting to find out the details of the appeal.

Our legal proceedings continue to be a long and costly process. We are so grateful to everyone who has supported us to date. We will be setting up a new GoFundMe to continue to defend and protect the Park. Please watch our website at [www.fbhp.ca](http://www.fbhp.ca) for details. We will need a lot of support to see us through on this.

FBHP have a new website and a database to go with it. We are excited about this as it provides a wonderful way to communicate with our members and with the public about the Park and about the activities of FBHP. We have connected with many organizations in Greater Victoria that are also concerned about nature. We encourage input to continue to make this a vibrant website. A special thanks to Director Tom Epplett who has taken a lead role with this.

Roy Fletcher who was a Director and the President of FBHP decided to step down after many years of dedication to Beacon Hill Park and to the Friends. Roy’s main interest in the Park has always been looking out for and looking after the natural areas. To protect the Park, he took a major role in defending the Park at the City level, and at the Provincial level in court cases. We thank Roy for all the contributions he has made over many years to preserve and protect the Park.

We are hopeful that we will soon be able to resume restoration activities in the Park. We are also looking forward to reinstating Camas Day next year.

Thanks to our members and our donors for looking after our beautiful Beacon Hill Park.

1. **New Business** Joan Halvorsen

There was discussion about the BC Ministry of Attorney General’s appeal, restoration in the Park including resuming a formal working relationship with the City Parks department as per pre-Covid, and invasive species removal.

1. **Election of Board of Directors**  Maureen Applewhaite

A Notice for Nominations was sent out inviting any members who were interested in standing for election as Directors to contact FBHP at that time as we would not be accepting any nominations from the floor. This was to allow the opportunity to explain ahead of the AGM, the responsibilities, expectations, and the fun nature of the Board. Maureen Applewhaite moved, and Bob McKechnie seconded that we accept the slate of Maureen Applewhaite, Tom Epplett, Joan Halvorsen and Pete Lowry as Directors. Carried.

1. **Adjournment** Joan Halvorsen

Ron Mahoney moved adjournment at 7:25 pm.