

Friends of Columbus Square Board Progress Report

August 2021

On behalf of the Friends of Columbus Square Board of Directors we offer our neighbors, community and fellow Friends of Columbus Square this update of the work we have accomplished since May when the Board was reformed.

Much of our early efforts has been on learning about the history of Friends, and its assets, its relationships with other entities in order that we the Board could be clear minded in charting the path forward.

One of the very first action steps was to focus on who we are, what our purpose is and how we will accomplish that vision. Those steps included affirming the *name* of our organization, updating our *mission statement* and firmly establishing our structure of committees and social network.

- Name: The Board had a deep and fulsome discussion about the name of our organization recognizing how polarizing Columbus is to our community right now. Setting aside our personal views of Columbus we agreed that to be effective in connecting Columbus Square and Friends to the needs of the park's community we have to stay aligned with the official name of the park. Should the park's name change in the future we will modify our name accordingly. Therefore, the name of our organization remains **Friends of Columbus Square**.
- Mission Statement – through a very collaborative process the Board drafted and adopted the following statement to be our guide star for our decision and actions going forward.
***Mission:** Friends of Columbus Square connects our vibrant, healthy, inclusive, and active park with our diverse community through collaborative leadership, stewardship, and engagement.*
- Thanks to the hard work of Steve and Sarah we have reestablished our:
 - Website: <https://www.columbussquare.org/>,
 - our Facebook page (Like us and share!): <https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Columbus-Square-103788065322638>
 - and a central email address for connecting with you: friends@columbussquare.org
- The Board affirmed the following Committees would be organized and led by community members, supported, and guided by the Board and empowered to self-determine goals and projects aligned with the mission and the goals of the Parks and Recreation Department.

The following is a brief update from each Committee. Please feel free reach out to each of the leaders if you are interested in joining in:

Programming and Events – Rachele Schneider programming@columbussquare.org

- Committee is actively reaching out via an email chain to those interested

- Initial success achieved in securing a Movie Night in the Park on September 24th presenting the 2016 animated movie **SING** starring the voices of Mathew McConahay and Reese Witherspoon. Please check our Facebook page for more information.
- Built a little library which is soon to be installed.
- Actively working on stencils for the ground of the play area.
- Actively coordinating with Rec. Leader Shara Gordon for a celebratory Ribbon Cutting opening of the Park and ballfield on September 8th.

Landscaping and Clean-up – Brian Wenrich - landscape@columbusquare.org

- Has starting on many tasks and has engaged with a number of individual neighbors
- Focused on future Love Your Park events and other clean-ups throughout the year - most recently last Saturday August 28th.
- Lots of effort in watering trees which has been a priority this hot summer
- Weeding and mulching of garden beds and tree pits

Fundraising – Steven Fabiani friends@columbusquare.org

- Initial efforts have been in identifying fundraising and donor recognition including naming of benches, and brick or paver paths
- Discussions are ongoing to closely coordinate with the other committees' needs and to identify fundraising sources both historic and new

Finance – Brian Collins treasurer@columbusquare.org

- Signatory control of Friend's accounts has been updated with the change in leadership
- Process for approval of spending and project budget allocations is in development
- Seeking a third community member to join the committee alongside Ross and Brian.

Community Engagement (Social Media/Networking/Communications) – Sarah Bryant and Steve Fabiani social@columbusquare.org

- Actively developed a new website for Friends – ColumbusSquare.org and are building its content
 - Actively developing a Facebook page for Friends of Columbus Square with a presence on Instagram to follow
 - Announcements about upcoming activities and postings of meeting schedules and minutes will be uploaded soon
- The Board had a terrific initial in person meeting with **Parks and Recreation Department** staff including Joe Brogan, District Manager, Tess Donne, Community Engagement Manager, and Shara Gordon, Columbus Square Recreation Leader as well as Ilene Wilder, President of the Columbus Square Advisory Council. We accomplished our goals of getting to know each other and to chart a path forward to success. We also discussed the future of the Advisory Council (more to follow in the next couple of months) and some of the current concerns with the park's reopening. We established a terrific initial connection which we are committed to continue to evolve and strengthen.

- We have also made great strides in connecting with other community entities in our area including Passyunk Square Civic Association, South Philadelphia Association of Dog Owners (SPADO), and others.

We have accomplished a great deal in the past three months, and we know we have a lot more work ahead of us.

We want most of all to hear from you. Please feel free to reach out to anyone of the Board members for information about Friends, our efforts and how you can join us in keeping our park Columbus Square active, inclusive, healthy and enjoyable by all.

Thank you,

Friends of Columbus Square Board of Directors

Ross Richards (President) president@columbussquare.org,

Brian Collins (Treasurer),

Sarah Bryant,

Steve Fabiani,

Brian Wenrich