

Minutes for the Friends of the Library Meeting –

6:30 April 18, 2017

Members in attendance: Mary Fran Desrochers, Chris Alquist, Tommy Gilpin, Nancy Bird, Cindy Barth, Emily Raffaelli, Gloria Melton, and Maria Bergstrom

New Members attending: Shannon Healy

Meeting called to order at 6:30

Old Business:

The book sale held in March was a great success (\$822 raised). We agreed that the Friday evening Sneak Peek (for a donation) worked well and should be repeated. There was a suggestion to have a “Treasures Table” at the next book sale for those books that are of high quality and would be individually priced. We will try this in a limited way at the June book sale to see whether it pays off.

New Business:

New Business was opened with two key questions put to the group by President Maria Bergstrom:

1. How should we focus the efforts of the Friends group? Specifically, how do we want to balance our resources between providing events for the community (which may also generate interest in and support for the library) and raising funds to support the library?
2. How can we increase the number of active members in the Friends Group?

A general discussion followed, the key points are summarized below:

1. Maria suggested that as the library faces a reduction in funding as a result of losing Chassell township next year, the Friends group should consider taking a more active fundraising role to support the library. Maria met with Dillon Geshel, Library Director, and identified three key areas of funding that the Friends might help with: program costs (like materials for story time), technology, and books & materials purchased for circulation. Any financial support the Friends could provide for these areas would free up the library budget to cover staff and building costs.
2. The suggestion was also made that some of our popular programs (like the Cinco de Mayo salsa contest or the children’s Christmas ornament-making activity) help to bring people into the library and also help the community see the value of our library.

3. Targeted fundraising—specifically for Kids Storytime, for example, or for particular collections of materials—seems like a natural fit for the Friends group. People like to see their contributions going toward something tangible.
4. There are some “easy” fundraising mechanisms we could explore that don’t require much volunteer time. Examples: collecting Econo Receipts, applying for the Keweenaw Co-op “bring a bag” donation program, and signing up as an organization for Amazon Smile (patrons can direct donations to a charity of their choice, Amazon donates 0.5% of eligible purchases when individuals choose our organization and shop through Amazon)
5. We could do some targeted fundraising events. Suggestions included: A family “Amazing Race” event to benefit library programs, a themed dinner night (“A Night in Tuscany” or a future “Cinco de Mayo”) to help purchase travel books or language-learning materials
6. We could also look into grant opportunities (perhaps Keweenaw Community Foundation) or individual Friends members could volunteer to help Dillon research and write grants.
7. We should reach out to recruit additional active members and/or find organizations that might want to partner with us for specific fundraising events. Suggestions included: Keweenaw Young Professionals, High School National Honor Society, local groups like Kiwanis and Rotary, using local school email list serve to recruit volunteers and/or publicize events, using local church bulletins to recruit volunteers and/or publicize events, making better use of media releases to local paper and radio stations.
8. We discussed the need to target different groups who use the library, including: families with children, teens, young adults, retirees. It would be good to think about different approaches in both fundraising and publicity that would reach these groups.

To put some of these plans into action, we came up with a calendar of events we would like to carry out in the coming year:

June:Book sale in conjunction with the start of the Summer Reading program. **Saturday, June 17, with set up on Friday, June 16.**No Friday evening event this time due to the need to have the book sale in the Michigan History section of the library.Nancy Bird has volunteered to be the coordinator.

July: We may participate again in the Chassell Strawberry Festival parade and/or have a booth

August:Family Amazing Race Event: details to be determined, Mary Fran Desrochers had the idea to put together a series of clues and challenges in the downtown area, families or teams would register (entry fee to support library programs), followed by a picnic on the waterfront by the library.

October:Book craft event in early October, our plan is to do a workshop on creating book purses using the donated Readers Digest Condensed books from our book sale. Maria, Mary Fran, Gloria, and Nancy will work on instructions for the project. Workshop fee would support library materials.

Also in October, the Friends could do the Treat Street candy giveaway as we did in 2016

November:Book Sale to coordinate with the downtown Ladies Night Out event, we would do the same Friday Sneak Peek (for a donation) that we had great success with in our March book sale.

December: We discussed the kids' ornament activity we have done in the past where kids can paint a pottery ornament. This has been a well-received activity but cost the Friends \$576. More discussion is needed as to whether we want to spend this much money. Possibly the pottery ornaments could be every other year, with less expensive options in between.

January: There is still interest in reviving the **Scrabble tournament**, possibly using the money raised for reference materials. Shannon Healy will consider coordinating this event.

February: We would like to sponsor a "**Love your Library**" event in February, details to be determined. Dillon Geshel usually hosts an event for Winter Carnival Fireworks, inviting library staff, board members, and Friends. We would need to coordinate with him.

April:Library Staff Appreciation lunch during National Library Week. There was also good support for bringing back the **Tax Freedom Drawing**, patrons can enter for a free library membership (if they live outside the district)

May:Cinco de Mayo Salsa event, tied into fundraising in some way.

Items for future meetings:

1. We need to clarify rules for using the library community room for fundraising. Maria will talk with Dillon.

2. We should continue to discuss how we view the primary mission of the Friends group so that it can shape how we prioritize our events and efforts
3. We should make a financial plan: how much money do we need to keep in our account, what are our goals for fundraising, what are our needs for the programs we would like to run each year?
4. Political advocacy, like our work on the Chassell ballot question in 2016, should be kept separate from other Friends activities. We have already established a separate checking account. We should discuss setting up a separate sub-committee for this purpose.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria Bergstrom