

## **Friends of Midway State Park**

### **Annual Meeting of the Members**

**Sunday, September 6, 2015 - 2:00 pm**

#### **Midway State Park**

#### **SUMMARY OF MEETING**

- 1. Welcome and Introductions** – 22 Friends of Midway introduced themselves around the tables in Pavilion 7 at Midway State Park.
- 2. Overview of the Year**
  - **Planning, Design, and Fundraising for the Mini-Golf Course** – Bob Wooler offered an overview of highlights throughout the year as the Friends made plans to design and reconstruct the miniature golf course at Midway. He referenced the case statement prepared for mini-golf course funding that situated the American mini-golf craze as a 1950s revival, thereby fitting in with the overall theme of park renovation – restoring to its late 1950s heyday. The construction timetable calls for rough construction, infrastructure like plumbing, lighting, and drainage, and concrete work to take place in the fall of 2015, then landscaping and finish work in the spring, all in time for opening Memorial Day weekend. Bob showed a model of a themed tee /scorecard post which will be marketed through a year-end campaign for sponsorships with the goal of raising \$18,000. Picture themes on the posts would be of Chautauqua County attractions, many of them made from antique post cards. Members present endorsed the idea of the campaign.
  - **Completion of the new train station** – Six framed posters of Herschell rides and the miniature train are being framed by the Friends for the station platform. A clock suitable in design, size, and price is also being sought.
- 3. Financial Report** – Bob Wooler reviewed the status of the budget and dollars committed to the mini-golf course, noting that \$40,000 in grants from foundations and \$42,000 in individual and corporate gifts and sponsorships are also being sought.. Foundation grants from the Johnson Foundation and Chautauqua Region Community Foundation have been obtained.

#### 4. Conversation with Marla Connelly, Park Manager

- **Status of the park** – Marla reviewed the status of the park, highlighting the plans to move the roller coaster to the spot vacated by the Dragon, new pavilion sites, and her request for several new rides, including a Paratrooper and a large and small Ferris Wheel. Priorities for winter repair include shoring up the sinking carousel and rebuilding the Roto-Whip cars.
- **Upcoming priorities** - In that there was much interest in the restoration of the Hippodrome (roller skating rink), Marla spoke of two studies currently being done which will shape the business plan and design for the restoration of this iconic building. These are scheduled to be available in October. This year, a lakeside room on the ground floor of the Hippodrome, the “Sunset Room” is undergoing renovation and it is scheduled to be completed in late September in time for the mini-golf donors’ reception. Members toured the new room at the conclusion of the meeting.

#### Midway State Park Miniature Golf Course Case Statement

Across New York State, over 80 park and historic sites have active Friends groups, supplying with volunteer time and fundraising extra resources that are needed for maintenance, restoration, and improvement of sites statewide. The emergence and prominence of Friends groups for parks and historic sites is perhaps a sign of the times – probably the natural consequence of the collision of limited government funding in an era of many needs and a delicate taxation environment with the “can-do” spirit of local communities where average citizens are empowered to take action and raise money to support causes they care about, a phenomenon that is truly American. We’re not only seeing this phenomenon with parks, by the way. Public school foundations – friends groups that support local education – are growing by leaps and bounds in communities large and small across the country. In many cases, this public-private partnership is making a tangible difference.

#### The Friends of Midway State Park

In 2010, two years after the State of New York assumed control of Midway Park, a family amusement park on the eastern shore of Chautauqua Lake that has been in continuous operation since 1898, park management issued a plea to begin a Friends group for Midway. The state budget was still reeling through the great recession, and parks, recreation, and historic sites were suffering. A master plan for Midway *State* Park had just been completed which outlined bold improvements and restoration goals for future years. It was a recipe for a public-private partnership for this memory-laden park that draws over 90,000 visitors annually.

Over its first four years of operation, the Friends of Midway State Park have been quite successful in taking on and completing significant restoration projects: the iconic Chautauqua Choo-Choo, a miniature train from the 1950s that circles the park; and the

1946 Herschell Carousel, a dramatic example of partnership where the state’s rebuilding of the carousel roundhouse was complemented by the Friends’ restoration of the carousel horses themselves. These two signature projects, coupled with the quiet restoration of a host of on-site 1950s kiddie rides from the Herschell company have helped to establish a clear restoration theme that is part of a larger restoration goal that resonates with a major tourist theme in the Jamestown and Chautauqua county areas: we are champions of the 1950s – the heyday of amusement parks, Lucy and Desi, Robert H. Jackson, Roger Tory Peterson, and that relaxed understated throwback resort feeling one gets by circumnavigating the lake.

The Miniature Golf Course

Although the country saw more miniature golf courses in their first wave of popularity in the 1920s and 1930s, the postwar boom in amusements, the expansion of family life and leisure time in the post-war era, and the spectacular growth of the automobile helped the 1950s to be seen as the heyday of the American miniature golf course. As part of this trend, one was built at Midway Park. Over the years, and as with many of the park attractions that were not maintained well under the park’s private ownership until 2007, the mini-golf course fell into disrepair. It’s deterioration led to a lack of popularity, and this decline culminated in the demolition of three of the eighteen holes several years ago so the park could put up a new ticket booth.

As a result, we have the confluence of three forces that make 2015 the time for mini-golf renewal. Given the deterioration scenario described above, there is need, and given the 1950s restoration theme, there is a harmony. With the success demonstrated by the Friends of Midway with other restoration projects, and with over 200 active members,, there is capacity. What makes this the right time is that there is also a champion. This project is spearheaded by Peter Sullivan, a lifelong mini-golf enthusiast and neighbor of the park. He has adopted the cause and is rallying support for it from friends both local and distant. A compelling design has been produced by Adventure Golf Services, a worldwide leader in course design and development, and a budget and feasibility plan have been developed which breaks support for the project down into the following component parts:

Elements of support:	Needed	Committed
State in-kind services, materials donations, and site prep:	\$ 60,000	\$60,000
Hole sponsorships @ \$4,000 per hole:	\$ 72,000	\$72,000
Foundation support:	\$ 120,000	\$80,000
Feature sponsors, “Ball of Fame”, strategic opportunities	\$ 48,000	\$ 6,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$218,000</b>

**Friends of Midway State Park**

**Report on Finances: September 1, 2014 - August 31, 2015**

**Beginning Balance @ 9/1/2014** **\$3,087.12**

**Revenue: 9/1/14 - 8/31/15**

<b>Mini-golf sponsorships</b>	<b>\$32,000.00</b>
<b>Foundation support</b>	<b>7,500.00</b>
<b>Memberships / Donations</b>	<b>2,435.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$41,935.00</b>

**Expenses: 9/1/14 - 8/31/15**

<b>July 4 Fireworks (2 yrs)</b>	<b>\$5,000.00</b>
<b>Mini-golf course design</b>	<b>10,400.00</b>
<b>Carousel maintenance</b>	<b>225.00</b>
<b>Golf campaign design/materials</b>	<b>1,680.00</b>
<b>Insurance</b>	<b>1,430.00</b>
<b>State Registration Filing Fee</b>	<b>25.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$18,760.00</b>

**Excess or (Deficit)** **\$23,175.00**

**Ending Balance @ 8/31/2015** **\$26,262.12**