

Committee Report Overview 12/17/09

This committee grew out of the strategic planning session of 9/24/09 where there was a consensus among County staff, FOSCP and the chapters: to revise our mission statement and to formalize the relationship among us. We think we have kept faith with the original **memorandum of understanding** between FOSCP and the Board of County Commissioners while providing a vision for the future.

FOSCP came into being because there needed to be a way to receive tax deductible donations reserved for the parks at the local level because, as FOSCP funding shows, people are reluctant to donate to administration. John McCarthy wrote to our chapter in March, '09:

“Another alternative is for the FOSCP to do some type of general fund-raiser for these types of expenses, or again, to have a small percentage of funds raised go toward the overhead. (would be hard to have a fundraiser just to fund admin/audit - as you say!)

I do know that with the exception of the audit, the FOSCP overhead is very low. When the idea of a friends group came up several years ago, the folks organizing it considered the various models that could be used: one friends group for all parks, or a separate friends group for each park (each park that had the vitality to support such a group). The former had the disadvantage of most of the enthusiasm (read: volunteer energy) being at the individual park level, the latter had the disadvantage of several groups having to obtain 501c3 status, and related report filing, audits etc.

Where the group landed was to have one umbrella friends group and then the chapters as they are formed (and forming) now. In order to encourage the formation of chapters - chapters were given the ability to keep all of their funds raised. Great for the chapters and yet leaves parent poor.”

In 2003, FOSCP was created as an umbrella 501(c)3 community support organization for the park system with the General Manager an ex officio member. The 15 member startup board, only one of whom remains, was handpicked, and was to become a board of chapter representatives as chapters were formed. We talked with several persons, in addition to Terry, who were present at the formative stage of FOSCP, including Rick Storsberg, park ranger in the Carlton where the first chapter was formed, (its elected officers are all original members, volunteers and donors), and Boyce Blackmon who was on the original board and served as FOSCP president during the time the Wilson house funds were received and it was moved to Urfer Family Park.

We hope, that FOSCP with these recommended changes can incorporate the best from its past--a rapidly growing list of thriving chapters who are very successful at raising funds and recruiting volunteers--as well as a vision of the future, a well-endowed foundation with annual investment income that will enable its chapters to deliver more resources to SC parklands while keeping administrative costs to a minimum of no more that 10% over the long term so that FOSCP will be competitive when donors seek out the best charities--those who deliver the most dollars to their mission.

We reviewed various versions of the mission and goals on FOSCP's web site, FOSCP brochures, and articles of incorporation. We looked at missions of comparable organizations to compose a statement of our “reason for being” consistent with our “not for profit” status under FS. Chapter 617. We think it describes for the public not only where we have been and where we are but also where we would like to be. Most notably, we added from FOSCP's web site, where there are 32 reasons for forming a chapter, the goal of forming chapters.

The recommended changes to the bylaws formalize what has been in practice for 6 years. Here is a quick summary:

1. We provide for membership chapters: this was a serious oversight in the original bylaws. Chapters have existed for 6 years without legal recognition--they received donations, they advertised to donors their tax

deductible status and assumed FOSCP had recognized them . At present, FOSCP has no membership provision, except for its own directors: “The Board of Trustees shall be the members of the Corporation.”

2. We increase the minimum number of directors from 3 to 5 with no maximum.

3. We provide that at least 50% of board seats be elected by the chapters, in contrast to the original intent which was 100% chapter reps. 50% will provide balance but not control and allow half the board to be fundraisers, donors, emeritus members, etc.

4. We provide for removal of a director (a common provision in organizations)

5. We permit chapters to share the mission, goals, name, direction of FOSCP but do their own accounting. This model is used by Friends of State Parks, Sierra Club, FL native plant society and similar organizations whose mission is not for profit, public support.

6. We define the fiduciary responsibilities of FOSCP to chapters whose funds they hold, and chapter responsibility for tax filing and audits.

7. We reserve fixed income to pay fixed expenses.

Some issues are better handled by policy/procedure rather than bylaws. Most importantly FOSCP should pledge to abide by FL Sunshine and Public Records laws: it acts in place of Parks and Recreation to open parks, contracts with Parks and Rec. to lease buildings, exists **for** and operates **on** public lands with a public address and phone, receives and delivers in kind services from a public entity, seeks volunteers and donations from the public, was created under a memo of understanding and will act in place of P and R to sell naming rights according to another memo of understanding.

These changes allow FOSCP to keep faith with its past and look toward its future as a foundation. Its mission, goals, bylaws should provide **Continuity** , by recognizing a proven base of donors, members, volunteers, **Consensus** and **Ownership** that foster commitment, and **Transparency** which builds trust.