**Whatcom Walking Friends Annual Meeting – May 10, 2023**

Carol Kleps called the meeting to order and mentioned the other group leaders, Joanne Knittel who was present, and Lee Cole and Lynn Colson who were not present. Carol thanked Elaine for hosting us again this year.

Next, we went around the circle stating our names and welcoming a few new members.

Carol presented a brief “state of the walkers.” It was observed that numbers were dwindling while we had a 6 day a week walking schedule. The recommendation was made to return to the Mon/Wed/Fri schedule with walks starting at 9 am. It may be the change in schedule, time or something else but there have been many more walkers joining the walks. Most days there are at least 5 or more. It was noted that walkers seem to self-adjust the pace of their walk to spend time with different walkers and ensure no one walks alone.

Kari Copher presented a Memorial Fund Report. Donations were made in memory of Elizabeth Dean’s husband, Ferrell Dean and Kari’s mother, Evelyn Kay. Kari reported that the fund currently has $140 enough for two donations. She then passed an envelope and collected donations to enlarge the fund. Kari also reminded everyone to let her know about the passing of a member’s immediate family so she could process a Memorial Donation.

Carol presented the financial report which Lynn had provided to her before going out of town. Member’s dues were voluntary last year, but enough was collected to donate $50 to Washington Trails Association and $370 to the Whatcom Land Trust. $93 was paid to Annette to cover website fees. Dues of $10 will be required for membership this year. Donations will be made to WTA. An envelope was passed and dues were collected for those who had not already paid.

There was a discussion led by Carol regarding special walks. Multiple suggestions were made which will be passed on to Lee. As the Special Walk Leader, Lee will help to make these walks a reality.

There was a brief discussion regarding the Hiking Group. The same process will be followed using the Hiking Sign-Up Sheet that has been in place for several years. Joanne will make some minor modifications to add some flexibility. Finally, there will be a hike at Washington Park on June 6th at which we will have a general meeting over our picnic lunch to share ideas and suggestions regarding the Hiking Group.

**Other discussion items (random order):**

Carol indicated that if anyone was interested in joining the leadership team they should email her. The first person to make the request on Saturday, May 13, at 9 am will be added.

A comment was made that some directions to walks are not clear on the website especially for newer walkers. Joanne requested that you drop her an email with the name of the walks that need clarifications made to the directions.

Martie Lopez announced she would be doing Docent tours at the museum. While in the past she organized special tours for the Walking Friends, the museum charges for any private tours so she recommended just joining her regular tours. She agreed to send out an email with her schedule.

Joanne said she would be sending out the Registration Form for 2023. New lists will be posted to the website and a new password distributed when there are a sufficient number of registrations submitted.