

## **Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors**

Sunshine Community Gardens

**1/12/21**

Attendees: Steve Uecker, Kay McMurry, Carole Limaye, Jim Willmann, Kerry Drake, Marsha Riti, Doug Zullo

Additional Attendees: Amy Grossman, Isabelle Encela, Kristin Phillips, and Jason Youngblood

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

A quorum was present

### **Beehive Request by Amy Grossman (Information/Discussion/eventual Action)**

Amy has a bee box and ordered bees. She would like to put them in the garden for pollinators, etc. She feels like the garden location would be ideal. Her proposal is behind the shed behind the lawn mowers and between the fence since it is removed from gardeners. Amy has an Environmental Science background and she said she would be mindful of the health and safety of the bees and gardeners. This would be her first beekeeping experience. She reported she would get advice and help from an experienced beekeeper. A board member asked her how she would prevent Africanized bees. She said she has done some research on it and will be taking lessons & classes.

Jim provided some history about Bee keeping at SCG. Beehives were once kept behind the trailer. Eventually, the bees swarmed cars at the garden with gardeners inside. Then, TSBVI students were swarmed. The school called SCG about the incident. Concern was expressed about a similar occurrence. It was stated that at the very least we would have to check with TSBVI.

A board member pointed out that the proposed location is a busy spot during the weekdays (the maintenance machines are there for TSBVI). It is also noisy with a lot of traffic and could cause disturbances to the bees. In the past SCG looked at where boxes could be placed and did not find an adequate spot far enough away from gardeners. Mowers also might be a problem. Bees were there for quite a while prior to the incident, but when they became aggressive, the bee keepers removed them from SCG.

Amy noted that bees in urban areas are possible. And that it could be a nice complementary situation with bees and the garden. She restated her interest in trying.

A board member pointed out that this experience would be great for educational purposes. Steve offered to look for other spaces for the boxes with Amy. Amy reported she ordered a gentle breed of bees, and she could make signs making folks aware of the bees.

A board member brought up concerns about mowing the area and how it could be disruptive to the bees. A suggestion was perhaps putting down something that doesn't need to be mowed. Another concern brought forth is the loud tractor that will be in that area. Again it is stated that we must check with TSBVI before we move forward. Is there a TSBVI rep for the garden? Probably Janet and Randy.

Steve said he will contact TSBVI and check about the hives and then meet with Amy.

A board member stated the previously suggested idea of a blind above the ground.

Board members expressed concerns about safety for gardeners and TSBVI students while experimenting with beehives. Historically, the incident with the bees created a problem. It was a problem for gardeners and TSBVI students. The keepers did everything right and it still went wrong.

Questions posed to Amy: Would the garden have any upkeep costs? And what is the plan if Amy can't continue the upkeep? Amy stated she would incur the costs associated and find other keepers if she could not continue to do it herself. Would she provide honey for the plant sale? She said she would donate to the sale if she was successful with honey.

Steve suggested revisiting after further exploration. One member stated that the risks of hurting our relationship with TSBVI is too high. General agreement is to revisit the request in February after gathering further information from TSBVI.

### **Introduction to Social Media Cultivators by Marsha Riti: (Information, Presentation, eventual Action)**

Introduction of Isabelle Encela – Isabelle is our brand ambassador, has been at the garden since 2019, and is a designer for IBM. Kristin Phillips is a science communicator for UT Austin and has been working on SCG's FB presence. Jason Youngblood is a video production person, a visual storyteller and photographer, etc.

Isabelle presented board members with a Social Media Strategy (Shared Screen)

Presentation:

What is social media? It is sharing content quickly via various tools. Why do this? It has the potential to create traffic to our website. It would provide access to our website and highlight how to join the garden or find volunteer opportunities. The presence makes us

advocates for the garden and community. Enhancing a social media presence creates better communication.

What we're doing now:

SCG Website and the Weekly Weeder. These are occasionally updated with relevant info. Weekly Weeder is the way we speak to our wait list, and there is not much traffic on Instagram. SCG's Facebookpage has a great source of content to share, over 300 followers, and we get some engagement with posts.

Opportunities: more people are moving to Instagram from FB. The IG community is increasing. We can visually show we are an urban oasis for organic food and flowers. Garden knowledge can be shared through this platform. It is a benefit to share more knowledge so it is easily accessible to gardeners, etc.

What is Instagram? It is a simplified FB, and focused on visual sharing. An example of an IG done well is Blooms Field. They share content about workday activities and goals that the garden has. Also, Neversink Farm: they offer pictures and videos on gardening. Another is Denver Urban Gardens. They highlight member stories and share their knowledge.

How could SCG do it?

- Showcase members, share meaningful info about our gardeners, share knowledge

- provide volunteer opportunities

- for WL folks: insights about how to plant, harvest, etc.

- how we transform what we grow: cooking, showcasing how veggies are used: how the gardening journey doesn't end after growing.

- highlight the impact of the garden on the community: how we engage with and share with the community: Composting, supporting Micah 6, TSBVI, etc.

Next steps: Update digital logo to help folks remember and recognize SCG. The current logo is challenging to depict in a digital way. Update IG profile: plan first few posts and create a schedule. Logo concepts were presented.

A board member questioned why the older logo is harder to read. Response: the logo is hard to transfer digitally and is not as legible. Attempts to integrate the old logo didn't work well.

Kristin Phillips signed off at 7 p.m.

There is a question about coordinating with the Education Committee. In the past the garden community has voted on the logo. There will be another round of contenders for logos presented to the board, based on feedback at this meeting.

Question about the social media team's volunteer hours. Their work does count for volunteer hours, and they are reminded to record their hours in the virtual green binder.

A board member asked about Jason's role. His role is creating video content. He will prepare it for IG or FB. He will set up google drive so content can be dropped there for the team to access it. It will be content ready. Getting the community involved is a good first start. Also he has plans to have the calendar overlaid with Central Tx Gardeners' schedule, tips.

Isabelle will update the logos and create a survey. Sharon is amenable to content being added to the website.

Initial idea is that this is for Social Media, not the website. We can address updates to websites at another point.

Mention is made about checking with the creator of the original logo.

Jason and Isabelle leave the meeting at 7:17.

## **Reports**

### **Treasurer Carol Limaye: Presentation/Action (Attachment)**

Summary: The budget was reduced from last year. We can dip into savings a bit; we are doing well with reserves. Donations and education are our reductions in expenses. Online conferences are cheaper than in person ones.

Proposed budget:

We can adopt the budget and put it on the website. We can review the budget midyear.

**A motion to adopt the proposed budget was made, seconded, passed unanimously.**

Billing:

Bills go out Friday. 82 people will owe hours for spring.

Some consideration will be given to the wording of the form. We can dedicate payments for TSBVI hours as a donation.

Primary and Secondary gardeners: how do we get secondary gardeners to consider donations. Should Sharon send an email to secondary gardeners? Steve will write up an email for secondary gardeners for board review. Carol will have revised forms tomorrow. Suggested that Steve add his wording to the Weeder.

More example emails will be forthcoming.

### **Plot report – (Kay) (Attachment)**

185 people are on the list.  $\frac{3}{4}$  plots being filled. Table shows wait time in days for time frame for getting plots pre pandemic, during pandemic, etc. This is the most people on the waitlist we've ever had, and it's still growing.

### **Minutes (Action)**

Approve November & December minutes

**Motion to approve all minutes was made, seconded and approved unanimously**

### **Agenda Items**

#### **1. Creating Assistant Treasurer Position- (Discussion & Action)**

The treasurer's responsibilities and workload have increased over time (billing, plant sale sales) and has reached a point that is too much to expect of a single volunteer treasurer. Sunshine has been very fortunate not only that Carol was willing to assume the additional responsibilities and workload but also that she had the experience necessary to do so. It is unlikely that Sunshine will continue to be as fortunate. Carol's term as treasurer ends May 31 and she is ineligible to seek re-election. Request the board begin discussion of creating an Assistant Treasurer position. I see the Assistant Treasurer being an ex officio member of the board appointed by the board (could be discretionary). The Assistant Treasurer would function under the Treasurer. The Treasurer would remain responsible for financial aspects of Sunshine.

Would both members be on the board? Bylaws ex-officio non voting member, asst treasurer. Why appoint rather than elect? you want technical expertise. Accounting principles adhered to. Treasurer could long term, manage cash, oversee assistant treasurer. Might want to consider for secretary, too.

Pursue concept of the Assistant treasurer position.

**A motion was made to form a subcommittee. It was seconded & approved. Passed unanimously.**

Subcommittee to form re. Asst. Treasurer & Asst. Secretary. Kerry, Doug, Carol, Jim will be on a committee to explore.

#### **2. TSBVI Hours- (discussion item no action needed): Tabled**

Without the awarding of TSBVI hours for removing khaki weed, I think there would not have been enough tasks for gardeners to complete their hours. Procrastination

is partially, but only partially, the problem. It may be that with the increase in half and quarter plots over the years that we just have more gardeners than TSBVI tasks. The board may want to consider options such as reducing TSBVI hours to 0.5 hour per plot (at least half and quarter plots), expand tasks which qualify (Micah 6, gardens around trailer, etc.), or letting TSBVI hours completed during the first 3 months of the season count double. An option might be to do a pilot for spring season.

Make Khaki weed pulling a yearlong TSBVI hour. There are many hours that qualify for TSBVI hour. We can discuss in Feb.

### **3. Disposal of Plant Waste in Dumpster or Compost Pile: Jim Willmann (Tabled)**

Attached are results of the survey I sent out. Only 12 people responded but I think it was probably representative. Comments may be the most helpful part of the survey.

**Based on the survey, it is probably possible to get consensus (at least a compromise consensus) on everything except diseased plants.** I think it will be hard to get agreement on disposing of diseased plants and ultimately someone will just have to declare what policy will be. There simply are too many issues that gardeners don't agree on - can gardeners identify diseased plants, does Sunshine compost pile get hot enough to kill disease, volume of waste diseased tomato plants represent, disease affects only some parts of plant, not all diseases spread through compost, etc., etc.

If we want more composting of Sunshine plant waste, I believe will have to get gardeners to "buy in" to value of composting so they will put in the extra effort to do things like cutting off roots, separating waste, etc. Maybe Sunshine could promote itself as a "Zero Landfill Waste" site.

Steve's larger kiosk sign approach will help educate gardeners about some of the nuances of plant waste disposal, e.g., cutting roots off of larger plants such as okra, eggplants, etc.

Jim will work with Susan, Kay, and Ila to come up with compromised consensus. Long term figure out the compost situation. Handbook doesn't agree with the webpage. Compost rules (diseased plants,) discrepancies. Will report back in Feb.

Report on survey re-ordering plants from Jeff and Jen

Gardeners were requested to complete the survey by Saturday. Jim will try to send the board an email prior to the meeting so doesn't have to be on Zoom meeting agenda.

**Reminder for 6 pm Tuesday for executive session:**

- Discussion on complaints and conduct and proposed policy
- Discuss specific complaint (Executive Session)

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and unanimously passed.

Adjourned 8:21 p.m.