

Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors

Sunshine Community Gardens

2/9/21

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

Additional Attendees: Isabelle Encela

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

A quorum was present

Jim: Water will be shut off due to cold weather. This information will be submitted to the Weeder and put out as an email blast.

Approval of Minutes (Action)

1. January Board Meeting

JW made a motion to approve the minutes, and CL seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Logos Redesign/Process for adopting a New Logo: Marsha Riti & Isabelle Encela (Action)

There was discussion about the board votes on the new logos. The importance of involving membership in the vote was raised. Isabelle Encela reviewed the current top choices from board votes. She will work up another survey.

Board members expressed that membership should have a say in the final logo. It is also important to provide a reason for the change to membership. The fact that the previous logo is difficult in digital representation should be explained to membership.

Isabelle has reached out to Charlotte to coordinate with the educational committee. Videos are being planned for the education of new gardeners. Isabelle signed off at 6:20 p.m.

There was a motion to make the new survey for membership the vote for accepting the new logo. The vote passed unanimously.

(At 6:15, the board moved into executive session for sole purpose of approving executive minutes 8/11/20, and 1/18/21.)

Return to regular session: 6:21 p.m.

Reports

1. Treasurer's Report: Carol (Discussion) (Attachments)

January is doing okay and on track with previous years. 38 people haven't paid plot fees yet. Fees are coming in at the usual rate. Reminders will go out again next week. About 1 in 3 gardeners are providing donations. CTFB will send out an acknowledgement after giving. \$2800 so far to donate, hopefully it will be \$3000 when the time to donate comes.

Scheduling compost delivery is coming up. There was a brief discussion about keeping the same price structure. We will keep it the same this time and then consider a change next time.

2. Plot Report: Kay (Discussion) (Attachment)

Figure 1 on plot report: we are at 191, up 6 people from last month. Three quarter plots are available. Two are spoken for, but the paperwork is not complete. The average wait time is unchanged from last month. There is very little turn over this year. 7 plots became available. This is lower than usual. Question raised: If a current gardener wants to move to a different plot, do they get priority? The answer is there is no official policy. The full plot is the most common; smaller plots have more in demand. Sometimes couples join and want another plot. The determination of an answer to this question should be put under new business.

Old Business

1. Disposing of Waste in Dumpster or Compost Area: Preliminary approval of the attached committee report on disposal of materials other than diseased plants and development of a process on how we will make a decision on diseased plants (Jim, Kay) (Discussion) (Attachment)

For the list of non diseased plants there is a consensus. Bermuda and vine grass can go to compost. The bigger issue is diseased plants as there is not much consensus. The board will have to declare. Board members want to make sure we talk with the compost people (Randy & Janet). It is reported that Randy has been involved. There is no perfect answer to this as there are so many opinions. Should we make the description a little looser? We are not sure it gets hot enough to kill some of the diseases. Nematodes shouldn't go in the compost. Diseased plants to compost vs.

garbage. Should the compost monitors have the final say? Jim will consult several long-time gardeners. Jim will try to procure a consensus and will report back.

2. Assistant Treasurer/Secretary (committee report on its meeting) (Carol, Kerry, Doug, Jim) (Action)

We have financial policies and can include these to be readopted. The suggestion is made for a Motion of Understanding (MoU) between the treasurer and Asst. Treasurer. The treasurer will maintain accountability. Bylaws allow delegation with board approval. Delegating is a reasonable read of the bylaws. Although it is not required, it is good policy that a MoU be executed for approval: this would clarify what an assistant would do and how s/he would be accountable.

At this point we do not believe an assistant secretary is needed, but we may want to delegate certain tasks between the secretary and the web person. We also want to have the option to have an assistant role, should the need arise. We need to make the Asst. Treasurer position formal for the March meeting, before the nominations committee presents nominations.

Policies tend to get lost. Carol will bring back financial policies for the board to review. We can amend bylaws to authorize the board to recognize the board to adopt policies and list policies in an appendix with a brief discription so it is less likely to get lost: the appendix would be a listing of what the board has adopted.

We will take direction from the board for proceeding with assistant treasurer.

Question about payments and billing once a year? Would that be the assistant treasurer job or the treasurer's? Suggested: one person does billing and one person accepts payments. One is records and one is cash. Ideally, the treasurer will accept payments. The treasurer handles the cash (checkbook). The assistant does the recording. The code of conduct should go in the appendix so as to not to get lost.

Motion: Continue to work on this. Seconded. (Carol will work up something for review prior to the March meeting.) Approved unanimously.

3. Beehive request (Steve, Marsha) (Action)

Steve went to the garden with Amy and had discussions with several people. The TSBVI head of facilities was talked to (Brian McDonald). Approved by TSBVI; they are okay with the beehive. The latest thinking is placement by the container as it's a dead end. There would be a fence around the beehive. There is enough room to go around it.

Concerns raised: bees swarm and the hive must be managed. There is concern expressed about Amy being a new beekeeper. The previous keeper was experienced and still encountered problems. Suggested she start a beekeeping team like the chicken coop. Concern raised about liability issues and the Directors and Operators insurance. Foraging bees aren't aggressive like bee boxes. Some board members expressed the risk makes no sense for a volunteer organization with members known to have severe allergic reactions to bee stings. We could focus on native bees. We would need the agreement in writing from TSBVI. Alternative: native bee houses to suggest to Amy? Bee houses require some upkeep. Native bees: more upkeep. Help her find a place for hives?

A motion is made to not approve Amy's request for beehive, and it is seconded. 2 board members abstain from voting, and 5 approve. The motion passes.

4. Update on surveillance camera and weather station: Doug

Weather Station:

Can it be mounted anywhere? Bill talked about the garden port, where electricity is available. To use the wifi the station it is a bit more expensive, but it is a one time expense. We want to get the rain gauge and solar power if possible. General consensus to move forward with a more expensive device that has what we want.

Camera:

The condition of the gate is not great. There is likely electricity. Doug will get with Bill and take care of doing this. The plan is to install the weather station first, and then the gate camera. Who will monitor the gate camera? It will likely be a volunteer.

5. Code of Conduct / Harassment policy / Mediation of conflicts (Marsha)

We need a subcommittee to address these issues.

Marsha suggested we should think about how we garden members can be held to higher standards. How can we encourage gardeners to treat everyone with fairness and kindness? We need policies. The garden should have some code of conduct plus a way to enforce. It is important to protect membership and help people find boundaries.

A board member pointed out we have a current set of rules. Essentially complaints are reported to the board or the police are called in extreme instances. The policy is in the site rules. Site rule 1.e.17 (pg. 4) Do we need a code of conduct? Maybe not a

harassment policy. We need something to address inappropriate behaviors. Harrassment is in the policy. We may need to elaborate on the policy.

We could have a rule review process with a committee including people not just on the board. We had a site rules committee before.

A question was raised about the definition of harassment. Negative behavior may not be harassment.

Paying attention to how people feel vs. how it appears is another consideration. Can there be consequences other than termination of membership?

It was suggested we ask for volunteers or put a note in the Weeder in order to form a committee.

A motion was made to have a subcommittee form from board members and non-board members to create a code of conduct. The motion is seconded and unanimously passed. (Marsha and Kay agree to be on the committee as representative board members.)

New Business

NOTE: These are items to put on the board's radar for future action. At this meeting, we probably need no more than an introduction of the issues and the reason for raising them.

1. Policy on email blast (Is board approval needed When?)

There was discussion about email blasts and when we should send information quickly or wait. Do we need board approval for sending out information, say, regarding the water being turned off? It was suggested that nothing be put out after 9 p.m. if it has to do with something other than immediate garden business. In response, another board member mentioned the occasional need for a blast to go to Sharon in a timely manner. There was discussion about the email that went out regarding Covid vaccine sign up links and whether this was appropriate to send via email blast. It was pointed out that it did get majority board approval, though not everyone read the email draft prior to sending. There were differing opinions about this situation. Discussion informally ensued about paying for more advanced settings with MailChimp. Informally agreed to.

2. Review of Bylaws for needed nonsubstantive and noncontroversial amendments (Jim)

(A 30 day notice is required for amendments so we should have any amendments perfected by mid-April for a member vote at the annual meeting in May.)

- a. Adopted more than 10 years ago and periodic review desirable
- b. Some financial provisions may be more appropriate for paper based than electronic based system
- c. Nominating Committee provisions relating to serving until successor elected, staggered terms, etc.
- d. Board decision by email – state law permits decision by majority if bylaws provide for but current bylaws require unanimous written consent

Things have changed such as email votes, etc.

3. Expand service hour waiver to include waiving of TSBVI hour (Jim)

Consider this for people who work many hours but don't have the TSBVI hour.

Motion to adjourn meeting. Seconded and unanimously approved.

Adjourned at 8:07 p.m.