

Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors

Sunshine Community Gardens

11/9/21

Attendees: Jim Willmann, Kerry Drake, Debra Mariano, Steve Camp, Kay McMurry, Karl Arcuri, Carol Limaye, Marsha Riti

Meeting called to order, 6:03 p.m.

Unless explicitly stated otherwise, any statement is reflective of an individual board member and not the opinion of the board as a whole.

Approval of Minutes

- September All-Gardener Meeting
- October Board Meeting (addendum: take out background materials)

Minutes approved unanimously.

Reports

■ **Treasurer Report: Debra and Carol**

Summary: we're still fine in terms of budget for this year, though things can change with invoices for the plant sale. Right now we don't look like we need to go into savings. The plant sale expenses are recorded as prepaid items. A board member asked if there is difficulty taking money out of savings. There is not. Consideration might be given to finding a greater interest rate for savings. It was also asked how much have we reduced the reserves over the past year. Recently \$10,000 was pulled out. We have \$145,000 in savings. We should make it on the pulled out cash through the end of the year.

■ **Plot Coordinator Report : Kay**

There are 200 people on the waitlist. We have had 2 withdrawals over the last month; one was a termination. Three half plots are vacant, and they will likely be filled in the coming week. Average wait times for a plot have increased to about a year and half since the pandemic.

■ **VP Plot Compliance Report : Steve**

Tree issues are at play (banana--though not technically a tree-- & papaya). The garden is looking beautiful according to the VP. Some minor trouble spots, but overall, compliance is happening.

■ **Penalty Charge Assessed to SCG For Overfull Dumpster: Steve**

Steve is checking on charges that occurred recently for an over-full dumpster. We have not had this extra charge in the past. Steve has written a post for the WW that explains how we got fined and why. He suggested a sign when the dumpster is full that says: *"Do not add to this dumpster!"* Since we only have an overfilled dumpster at certain times of year, Steve suggested looking for where to store over-material until there is more room. The fine was 30%

of our bill, \$168.00, so we want to avoid this charge in the future.

🏠 **Replacement of Perimeter Fence by TSBVI : Jim**

Jim and Steve will meet with the TSBVI liaison, Brian McDonald, the director of grounds and operations, this coming Thursday. They will inquire what kind of fence and gate is planned for the replacement. Ron Valentine's chicken Coop is against the fence and this may be potentially discussed. It was suggested that they might discuss with the TSBVI liason how important a donation is for them from our plant sale this year, given we are not sure how well the sale will do, given the pandemic and weather variables. Also, it was suggested to ask if TSBVI has a contact for ABCT. It was mentioned that we may be able to upgrade the front gate (with upgrade costs being paid for by SCG). Also, the idea of exploring a gate scan code was suggested.

Action Items

1. 2022 Budget Related Items

- a. Reduced plant sale income (Maximum: \$10,000; Minimum: Net Loss)
 - i. Alternate plant sale budgets reflecting different income projections
Background: 2022 plant sale analysis by Debra and Carol
 - ii. Possible dues increase to cover loss revenue in 2021 and 2022
An average \$10 due increase will generate estimate \$2500 yearly

It was recommended that Debra and Carol work with Janet and Randy regarding expenditures for the plant sale. The sale may be reduced this year, as the pandemic is adding an additional variable to the usual variables. It is likely the sale will not be as big as it usually is. If we can make \$10,000.00 it won't affect the annual budget. Consideration is being given to how to mitigate pandemic issues: opening tents, etc. It was suggested we plan for a profit loss. The last plant sale we had was the most profitable to date. More people came and bought more plants. The weather was also beautiful. It was stated that it feels too soon to discuss raising plot fees during a pandemic when we have savings, even if we have a profit loss from the sale. Fifty percent of SCG income comes from the plant sale. It was stated that it is best to plan during good times, not bad; thus the exploration of raising plot fees. December is our commitment time when seeds go to Gabriel Valley. It was suggested to ask Randy to delay sending to GV as long as possible. Peppers in early December, and tomatoes and & eggplants in January. We will need to decide about whether or not to have an herb sale by mid December at the latest. Last year 4,000 plants were sold to gardeners. Debra and Carol will update the board on planning with Janet and Randy.

- b. Possible Additional Expenses in 2022 (NOTE: Some of these items are also on agenda as action items so may want to address those as "If adopted, 2022 budget adjusted as necessary.")

Cost Estimates of the following would be good for the treasurers to have for budget planning:

i. Trailer roof repair due to rust

There was some discussion of why we do not have a solid building, since the trailer will not last forever. Regarding the roof repair, we might be able to add a paint sealant to nurse along the roof. If we had to replace the trailer, even getting it hauled away would be a significant expense.

ii. Tools

(Bob Easter's opinion is that the loss of the welder to add metal handles will result in more broken tools.) Bob Easter has been repairing a lot of tools. We may be able to find another welder. Some concern about welded tools was expressed in terms of their heaviness. Replacement handles cost as much as a new tool. The cost will increase because of handles. Suggested: \$20 for tools for new gardeners be built into the budget for tool fees. The total budget will still remain the same. We may be losing tools or they are not being returned.

iii. New ACs for trailer (Janet Adams request) (Estimated \$200-\$300 per AC)

iv. Children's Garden (Estimated \$1000-\$1200)

v. Possible upgrading of gate as part of TSBVI replacing perimeter fence

Updated cost estimations will be given to Debra and Carol as soon as they are available for the preceding costs, also see following items in the minutes.

c. What has been the reduction/increase in reserves in 2020 and 2021 (est)?
(Adressed previously with the amount taken out of savings.)

d. What will be sponsored charity for 2022 dues statements?

It had been All Blind Children of Texas (ABCTX) but because of concern that ABCTX was not active, the sponsored charity in 2021 was the Austin Foodbank. Jim and Steve are having lunch with Brian McDonald with TSBVI Thursday and can try to get a contact name for ABCTX. It was noted that the new TSBVI commissioner is not as involved with SCG as ones in the past.

2. Service Hours Pilot

It is not clear if extensive additional discussion will be productive for this topic, so the board may just want to vote on various approaches which have been identified with minimal discussion. Background information was previously emailed: JHW Background; 2010 TSBVI Hour Letter. Increased dues would require site rules changes. A pilot program would need to have a January start date. Details of a pilot program would need to be provided at the December All Gardener Meeting. Programs would need to be structured so that results are evident.

Motion: Adopt proposed site rules amendment and plan a pilot program by no later than the Dec. meeting.

Seconded

Discussion: what if the board has no agreement on the pilot program? Potential pilot items: Reg hours for specific tasks like mowing the front lawn, overlap with TSBVI, incentivized workdays, increased fees for unworked hours, coordinated teams like for Micah 6, adoption

of an area to keep maintained. Note: a pilot program would **not** include no pay hours. It seems some consensus could be found, we hope.

Passed.

3. Waiting List Exceptions

This item was postponed at the last meeting. Kay has indicated: “exceptions have been rare since I've been plot coordinator. There's been a handful, probably between 5-10 over the dozen or so years that I've been plot coordinator.”

It was suggested we continue with the current modification, and this received a consensus. Kay will report to the board when and how it is handled. If unsure, she will share and discuss with the board. For current gardeners to take over adjacent plots she would discuss with the ZC first.

4. Plant Sale : Jim

The issue to be discussed is how decisions about mask requirements for the plant sale will be made. It is too soon to make a substantive decision, but I do want to be sure the board is in agreement on how the decision will be made given we are on State land. The consensus was that it is the board's decision.

5. Children's Garden

A background report from the Children's Garden Committee was previously emailed to board members.

Motion: move ahead with the Children's Garden, approved expenditures of up to \$1,700.

Seconded

Unanimously passed.

6. Volunteering at Sunshine

We are getting requests for volunteering at Sunshine. Because of Covid, Sunshine has suspended volunteers at Sunshine since early 2020. Now that Austin is back to Stage 3 guidelines, does SCG want to return to permitting volunteers?

Janet is the volunteer coordinator. Do we want to impose covid-related protocols for volunteers?

Motion: Allow volunteers and request that volunteers abide by the current health recommendations of the city.

Seconded

Unanimously passed.

7. Replace ACs in Trailer : Jim

Janet Adams requested the board consider replacing the AC in the trailer. I believe the only functioning AC is one in the Micah 6 cool room. (Cost: \$200-\$300 at Costco).

Question, has anyone checked the one in the office. Do we want to replace the ones that need to be replaced?

The consensus was to assess the health of the units and purchase if needed.

8. Creating 5' Boundary Along South End Of East Fence Line South Of Chicken Coop

Feb. 1 is a new billing season, and we should have plots 5' from the fenceline in accordance with our agreement with TSBVI. Some trees are growing on the fence line, and we need to keep it mowable. We need to have a boundary in order to keep it mowable.

Motion: Create a 5' boundary along the east fence line south of chicken coop, effective Feb 1, 2022.

Seconded

Passed unanimously.

There was discussion about whether or not this boundary should or would include Ron Valentine's chicken coop.

9. Plot G7-4seX Update and Possible Decision

The gardener in G7-4sex agreed to move and co-garden a raised bed with another gardener. However, the raised bed gardener is immunocompromised and wants to make sure a co-gardener is vaccinated. The G7-4seX plot is not up for a new gardener yet until we figure this out. Kay will follow through with checking on the status of the two gardeners. If there is no response, we will start the termination timeline for plot G7-4seX. It was noted that in the future we should have in writing new agreements with gardeners.

10. Banana Tree (though it's not a tree, but an herb)

There are two large banana trees (10'-11') in Zone 3. A gardener in the plot to the west of one of the banana trees complained that it is shading his plot in the early morning. The VP and ZCs in Zones 2 and 3 decided the shading did not constitute excessive shading as prohibited by the site rules. The gardener accepted that decision.

A banana tree is technically not a tree since it does not have a woody trunk, so it was decided that the site rule prohibiting trees was not applicable. A complicating factor is the banana trees have been there for a number of years.

The question of whether the site rule prohibiting trees applies only to a strict definition of "tree" is something the board may need to consider. There is a plot in Zone 8 that is entirely planted in 10' high papaya trees. Papaya trees are classified as trees even though the trunk is not as woody as most trees. As a practical matter, there is little practical difference between a banana tree and a papaya tree, stated one board member.

The current issue of the banana plants is resolved: they don't cast shade. However, we might need to look at the spirit of the rule alongside the technical issue of trees. We will potentially have a 10-12 ft. tree (or large, difficult vegetation that the lay person would consider a tree) to deal with when a gardener leaves. Should we amend site rules? We do have a rule about not shading a neighbor's plot. Is the site rule sufficient or do we need to amend it? At some point we should look at the rules with an eye about the common understanding of the definition of a tree.

11. Date of December Board Meeting and All-Gardener Meeting

The board needs to set the date of the December All Gardener meeting, and it is probably best to hold it after the December board meeting. Given that the second Tuesday in December is 12/14, the board may want to move the board meeting to the first Tuesday 12/7. We also need to decide if the All-Gardener meeting will be in person or via zoom. Second Tuesday is 12/14 and the following Saturday is 12/18. The first Tuesday is 12/7 and the following Saturday is 12/11.

Consensus was to hold the board meeting 12/7/21.

12. Christmas Event

There was consensus that Sunshine will not have a winter party event. There will be a Nancy Seifert celebration event December 5th.

13. Returning To In Person Board Meetings

Jim would like to return to in-person meetings, perhaps in January. Several board members had different conflicts with making an onsite 6 p.m. weeknight meeting. Jim suggested moving the time to 6:30; however, this is a difficulty for some who do not drive at night. Two board members are not in favor of in-person meetings at this time. Saturday morning was also suggested, but was not well received by some members. A member expressed liking meetings via Zoom and felt they are productive. Another felt there is no rush to move to in-person meetings. Jim will consider and update the board about our future meetings. December meetings will be via Zoom.

Adjourned 8:09 p.m.