

Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors
The Community Garden Initiative of Central Texas

Sunshine Community Gardens

9/6/22

Attendees: Jim Willmann, Steve Camp, Kerry Drake, Debra Mariano, Carol Limaye, Iris Slevin, Juan Pedro Maestre, Kay McMurry, Marsha Riti, Karl Arcuri

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

Meeting called to order at 6:05.

Discussion and Action Items

1. Spring Plant Sale Report (Marsha and Karl)

Marsha called Gabriel Valley Farms to ensure they are in business for the foreseeable future. Marsha is also checking into rentals of tents, tables, and port o' potties. Karl is coordinating individual meetings with sub coordinators. Karl will ask Randy about purchasing pepper, eggplants and herb seeds (along with tomato) to designate ordering. He will try to coordinate with Randy exactly what Randy will order: only tomatoes or also peppers, eggplants, etc. One member said the understanding is that anything ordered from GV will be handled by Randy. Karl will clarify. There will be a separate meeting with the herb tent people to find out about ordering and planting, etc., for their subcommittee. Herbs they are not able to grow we will consider ordering. At the AGM on Sat the 24th at 10 a.m. we will introduce Marsha and Karl, and we would like to introduce and recognize the sub coordinators. A list of current volunteers for the sale was read aloud, and the open spots were highlighted. It was suggested that open sub committee positions be listed in the Weekly Weeder in the hopes that other gardeners will volunteer for these positions.

Marsha and Karl were thanked for their volunteering and signed off the Zoom call.

2. Sunshine Hours (Multiple sub-decisions)

Background: August board minutes. Membership survey results, attachments (Jim's suggested action email; Draft site rule amendment language)

- a. Should there be a period of time each day when garden is closed
 - i. This was previously discussed and a straw poll was held at AGM
 - ii. See August minutes for board's previous discussion
- b. If so, what hours should garden be closed

- c. Should gardeners have vehicle access during time period automatic gate is closed but garden not closed
- d. If so, what hours

If a decision is made to close Sunshine for a period of time each day, it will need to approve a site rule amendment implementing that decision. *See draft rule language.*

Discussion and Action:

One board member feels that the garden should be open 24 hours for gardeners. Another board member expressed the opinion that it should not be accessible 24/7. The gardener survey was mentioned– the majority of gardeners wanted some time when the garden is closed to all. The majority of garden members said 10 pm to 5 am on the survey. Another board member stated being comfortable with an 11 pm closing time. Are we making exceptions for members who work beyond the closed hours? It was pointed out that in the survey the majority of gardeners opted for clear times the garden is closed.

The board approved that the garden will be closed from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. (6 for; 1 abstained from voting.)

From 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. the garden will be closed. No one should be in the garden except for emergencies. However, there are certain events where the board might make exceptions (i.e. lunar eclipse; *Sunshine at Night*, a community building, sanctioned and publicized event).

The board approved exceptions allowing after hours events to be voted on by the board. (6 approved and 1 did not approve.)

The gate will be open 6 am to 9 pm. What access should gardeners have from the hours the gate is not open, given that the gate would close first light and first dark? It was pointed out that as a non profit public space we agree to be open to the public from dawn to dusk. This is in our statement, so it is appropriate that the automatic gate opens and closes in accordance with this. One member is in favor of allowing people to access the garden outside of normal operations with their vehicles.

When the vehicle gate is closed but the garden is open, can gardeners access the garden with their vehicles?

The board voted unanimously that gardeners be allowed to access the garden with their vehicles at times when the garden is open but the automatic gate is not.

Draft Site Rule Amendment: A site rule draft was sent out prior to the meeting to board members. The site rules will need to be amended, and they will need to be ratified by membership.

Update to the site rule for vote:

1. Garden and activities closed at 11p.m. -5 a.m. (except for emergencies or special board approved events).
2. Auto gate time will be determined by board (light to dark)
3. Garden open, gate closed (vehicles and gardeners can enter when the garden is open but the gate is not)
4. Pedestrian gate locked at all times

5. Trailer and main tools locked at dark
6. Combo lock always locked without the combination showing

A formal vote on the actual wording for the changes to the site rules will take place in the coming days.

3.Vines on Fence (Multiple sub-decisions)

Background: Membership survey results. August board minutes. May AG meeting minutes. Attachment (Jim's suggested action email)

The TSBVI fence along 49th St west of Sunshine is a good example of what a clean, weed wacked fence looks like.

- a. Should vines be permitted on new fence
- b. Should vines be volunteer or uniformed designated vine;
- c. Should other plants also be permitted;
- d. Should there be some cleared sections
- e. Should other fence shields be implemented such as decorative canvas panels
- f. Should the fence line be kept cleared until plant/vines are selected and planted.

Discussion and Action:

The majority of gardeners are in favor of vines/plants on the new fence, based on the survey. Should the vines be volunteer vines (Carolina Snail Seed Vine and Clematis, for example)? Uniform planting of vines? Painted sheets? Some open panels?

One board member expressed preference for uniform vines rather than all volunteers. This was also the gardeners' preferences on the survey. A board member pointed out that it's easier to get the volunteer vines to grow, though, as they do it without our intervention.

There was an idea floated about each portion of the fence being adopted by a zone. Each zone could maintain the upkeep and time to keep the fenceline attractive. Assigning different fence lines to different zones could be a way to get the garden community involved. However, it was pointed out that this might be difficult to enact and coordinate.

If we do want some uniform vines/plants, it was suggested we should ask knowledgeable gardeners about ideas for planting. We would like to ask some knowledgeable gardeners about selected plantings to accompany the volunteer vines. Four members were suggested to ask for input: Randy, Ila, Susan P., and Matthew.

The board voted unanimously to attempt a uniform planting of vegetation on the fence as much as is possible alongside volunteer native vines.

The board unanimously agreed to ask Susan P., Ila, Randy, and Matthew for a list of designated vines that could be used for uniform planting on the fence line. The list is

requested to be submitted to the board by November 2022.

To facilitate the new plants and vine growth, to the extent possible, one member said it would be helpful to keep the fence clear until the planting of the suggested plants takes place. One member would like us to not clear any volunteer vines until decisions are made. Another member suggested that if we are trying to prevent invasives, we don't want them to get a major head start. It was pointed out that the two most common vines are native. As a practical matter most of the vines won't be growing until the spring. Cutting the vines back won't kill the vines. It's easier to clear if you don't have to work around other growing plants and this will give us a chance to dig out the hackberries, said one board member.

The board majority voted to maintain a fairly clear fence line (no intense digging or killing of volunteer plants) until the selected gardeners come up with recommendations for the plantings along the fence line. (6 were for this; 1 member was not.)

An all gardener email will explain the decisions we just made so that gardeners understand why the fence line is being maintained to some degree. A non-board group will help make the decision for recommended plantings. This is a decision that is changing the way things had been done, based on the survey, and the desire to gather input outside of the board was expressed.

4. Confirmation of Weeder editor(s) changes

Iris updated the board on meeting with Maria and Kristin and that everyone appears agreeable to the new arrangements. Responsibilities will look like this:

1. Kristin will hold the responsibility of editor and will continue with ensuring the Weeder comes out weekly.
2. Maria will be co-editor and will assist with content and back Kristin up in the event that there would be any unexpected occurrences in Kristin's life.

Going forward, all content and Weeder communications for publication such as notices, updates, etc., should be sent to both Kristin and Maria to maintain continuity. Both are agreeable, and the board is supportive of this arrangement.

(Iris signed off of the board meeting due to an engagement.)

5. Raised Beds

- a. Would it be desirable to increase the number of raised beds?

These raised beds are designed for persons with any sort of disability. A member questioned whether Ila had been consulted, as it was reported that it is hard to find people to tend these raised beds. It was questioned whether or not we are asking the right groups to help fill the raised bed spots. Will we be able to fill the beds? Ila's opinion is that they may not get filled up, according to one board member. It was pointed out that older gardeners may need raised beds, and many in our garden population are getting older.

How much room do we have to add more raised beds where they are now? It is estimated the space could have another 6-9 raised beds. However, it was pointed out that it does not necessarily have to be a raised bed— we are looking to provide an area that can keep a clear perimeter without the worry of bermudagrass or general weed encroachment.

b. Is the best area to expand raised beds the plots adjacent to the current raised bed area or another area of the garden?

One member would like to see the raised beds be adjacent to the current ones for these reasons: a better use of space and easier to maintain granite paths in the same area. Also the parking is better, easier, and more available close to this area. Eventually we could make a handicapped space.

The board approved expanding raised beds in the same area where current ones exist if and when garden space becomes available. (This vote was 5 for and 1 against.)

6. Front Gate Driveway Improvements To Address Water Flow Problem (Steve)

Background: Attachment (If available, revised estimate if use asphalt) Approval of costs/bid. Steve

Iris, Kay, and Jim met with the contractor on Saturday 8/27/22. He said asphalt would be a better choice than decomposed granite. Asphalt is a more expensive option but he said the job is small, so probably not that much increase in total cost. He will provide a new bid based on using asphalt.

Steve reported that the initial bid was \$6,300.00. The contractor agreed to reduce the cost by \$300. The lifespan and swale is included.

One board member wanted to take this expenditure to the AGM and get membership feedback as \$6000.00 is a significant amount to pay. Another member pointed out that the board is elected to make such decisions, and another delay might mean we lose out on the decreased cost while rain is also causing problems with gravel run off on the new gate.

All board members were in favor of hiring the contractor for asphalt improvements.

The contract will proceed, prior to the AGM September 24th. (5 board members approved the improvement to proceed, and 1 board member opposed proceeding before sharing the information with members.)

7.Site rule amendment re waste disposal

Background: Attachment (Draft rule amendment language)

Current rules refer to khaki weed and diseased plants going into the dumpster unless board policy provides otherwise. The new policy does provide otherwise, so it could be confusing for site rules to refer to khaki and diseased plants going into the dumpster. The board will approve new formal language of site rules in the coming days.

8.Update on Plot F3-5 switching as primary and secondary gardeners

The two gardeners have not responded to the offer to waive prorated plot fee if they switch now.

As of the setting of the agenda, no response had occurred. However, the secondary gardener replied to Jim just prior to the board meeting, and now the wheels are in motion to switch the primary and secondary gardeners on this plot.

9.PA System for AG Meetings (3 mins)

Karl Arcuri suggested a need for voice amplification after the May AG meeting. The board needs to set a budget. The cost is estimated at \$300-\$700 for a purchase. Do we know of any gardeners with expertise in this area? Generally, the board members seemed to feel comfortable with this amount. Many expressed a preference for wireless mics. It was pointed out that they could be used at the plant sale and be a part of the plant sale budget. One member suggested Bill Cason as a potential resource for mics. JP ran a quick google search and found that most were under \$500. JP will send some links and Jim will ask Bill about any recommendations.

10. September 24th AG Meeting Planning

- Spring plant sale changes
 - i. Intro of Marsha and Karl
 - ii. Report by Marsha and Karl including intro of sub-coordinators
- Update on expected date new automated gate will become operational
- Report of board decision re vines/plants on fence
- Ratification of Site Rule Amendments
 - i. Refunds applied to service hour fees (Rule I.E.4.)
 - ii. Late recording of service hours penalty (Rule I.F.4.)
 - iii. Waste Disposal (Rule IV.G.)
 - Rule amendment reflecting revised disposal policy that khaki weed and diseased plants do not go into dumpster
 - Policy Revised 8/16/2022 (Need to share but doesn't need to be ratified by membership)
 - iv. Sunshine hours and gate operation (Rule VII)

Minute Approval and Reports

Approval of Minutes: Kerry

July–Minutes approved.

August–Minutes approved with two edits.

Ratification of Email Votes

The late recording of service hours penalty email vote was ratified.

Reports

Treasurer: Debra

Debra reported that bill collecting was completed. This means no money coming in until plot fee charges. We are doing ok. One water bill was really high and really hurt us, but the recent rains have helped.

Plot Coordinator: Kay

No difference in how long it takes to get a plot based on size. Wording suggestion: remove “evicted” and say instead “membership terminated” since we are not renting plots.

Plot Compliance: Steve

People are working their plots (based on the amount of compost Steve moved to the roll off dumpster– it was very full). Several changes to ZCs have been underway, and Steve will send out an email with the potential new ZCs.

Motion to Adjourn was made, seconded, and approved.

Adjourned at 7:52 p.m.