

Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors

Sunshine Community Gardens

3/21/23

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

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 6:34

1. Plant Sale

a. Report/Evaluation of 2023 Sale / Initial Recommendations for 2024

While the next board will be primarily responsible for the 2024 sale, we will start the process of evaluating the 2023 sale and developing any recommendations for 2024, particularly with respect to organizational structure

Marsha & Karl: Net profits were down a bit from last year: expenses were higher & we didn't have as many plants (we lost close to 800); we didn't get as many as we bought. The plant sale was a success in people coming together. Perhaps order more plants next year and consider raising prices or look at other ways to recoup some of the supply costs. Suggested we run numbers if we bought the same number of plants as we did in 2020 (bought more plants that year). We could disinfect the leftover pots to reuse. Soil would still be needed as well as the cost of gas for heating.

The plant sale task force did meet and had recommendations. Suggest more communication around the ordering of plants. The demand is there. We should research seed varieties and offer the latest. Also: Improve web presence.

Do we need to protect the tents ourselves? Even though Centex did so much, maybe we need to do more when plants are in the tents. Raise prices? Should we count the customers coming in the gate? Should we do pre-orders? Austin Organic Gardeners are having a plant sale. They don't have our selection, but they are doing preorders (limited). If we offered pre orders our queue wouldn't be so long. It was pointed out that taking pre orders is very labor intensive. Our large volunteer labor force could get volunteer hours, though. Perhaps we could limit preorders. What happens if you run out of a variety? Isn't it hard enough to fill our volunteer spots as it is? We would have to have a leader for presales and a team. There is a system that will allow for keeping track of the number of plants sold. This would need further exploration.

It was reiterated that the sale was really successful. There are areas we can learn from, but overall it was a terrific success, especially in creating community in the garden. We did have profit, and we have had such positive feedback from members. There are so many variables: damaged plants, etc. We had 664 plants that were damaged. Theoretically we shouldn't have to raise the price of nursery plants. Where did the profits come from? We sold most of the plants we received, so we should have made money. Number crunching needs to happen. Profits came to about \$14,000. We spent more money on herb tent supplies this year. Money went to refreshments and entertainment, signs, etc.: these were investments for next year. Why are the percentages of profits going down? We should explore this question. The plant sale was a success: great music, happy people, etc. It's hard to know how to make the crowds less in the tomato and herb plants. Outdoor tables might help with that, but weather (wind) could be an issue. Another potential crowd-lessening idea is to have tickets for certain times. We can at least begin exploring presale ideas, maybe not for next year, but for the future. Traffic control and direction could potentially help with the crowd problems. It was reiterated that it was a really great outcome. Jim expressed his personal appreciation for Karl and Marsha.

New Volunteers for 2024: Beth Reyburn is willing to help co-coordinate. Herbs have volunteers. Passalongs will now go to a new person. Compost still has Polly and Ray. Receipt Writers? Hopefully still Susan Wallar. Silent Auction will have a new leader. Entertainment: Stephanie Travis, Refreshments: Anita Keys, and Venders headed up by Steve Uecker. Communications: Kristin Phillips will also help. Carol and Debra will continue to help with the budget. One idea is to give garden tours during the sale. It would help folks explore and could reduce crowds. A tour guide could explain our outreach and our connection to TSBVI, for example.

b. Plants for Schools Report

We have donated approximately 750 plants (500 tomatoes, 60 eggplants, 100 peppers, 120 herbs) to 28 schools and 260 plants (200 tomatoes, 40 peppers, 40 eggplants, 80 herbs) to PEAS and SproUTing Teachers. 60 plants to TSBVI employees. Buying the plants gave us a better selection of what schools want. We will need to decide the amount to give to ABCT in April.

2. Reports

Approval of Minutes:

February Minutes Approved.

Treasurer's Report

Fees are paid; the water bill remains low. No big budget issues.

Plot Report

The list has gone down slightly. 2 recently vacated plots. People waiting for quarter plots have a significantly longer wait. Many people signed up in the last 2 months.

3. Termination of Gardener With Unpaid Dues (Carol's Email)

There is one gardener who has not paid 2023 dues despite numerous contacts and assurances that they would pay. See Carol's email for details. The recommendation is for the board to pass a motion automatically terminating gardener's membership if dues are not paid by April 1. If some extenuating circumstances come out later, the gardener can request the board reinstate their membership, provide reasons why, and the board decide whether to reinstate.

Immediate termination is suggested by one board member. Would we allow her back on the list if she somehow requested such? The board can always be petitioned.

Motion: We terminate immediately with notification s/he can petition for reinstatement (not guaranteed) as a gardener.

Seconded.

Approved with one abstention.

4. A gardener with limited income and some other challenges.

Motion: We waive dues and tool fees for the 2023 first year and reevaluate for next year.

Amendment: Service hours are still required to be worked.

Seconded.

Unanimously Approved.

5. Waste Disposal

a. Nonrenewal of WM Contract

The 180-90 day window (before the end of current contract) for giving notice of nonrenewal will close April 1 and notice must be actually received by WM by that date. The board needs to make an official decision about whether or not to give notice.

b. New Contract with WastePlace/CTR

The Board needs to decide two items:

1. Do we want to continue disposing of Sunshine waste through a combination of front end dumpster biweekly and roll-off dumpster as needed

2. Do we want to contract for a front end dumpster with biweekly pickup with WastePlace/CTR. WastePlace is a new model for waste management services and there are some unknowns but it appears to be the best option at this time. See Debra/Carol emails.

The general sentiment is to terminate WM. Additional research on WP shows they subcontract with CTR. There are no additional fees, and it is \$79/mo. It's a two year

contract, but there are many advantages. We must finalize if we give notification of nonrenewal to WM tonight.

Motion: We should give notice to WM about nonrenewal and begin a new contract with WP/CTR, if they satisfactorily answer questions posed by the Treasurers and then give WM proper notice of the new bid.

Seconded.

Unanimously passed.

6. Plot Assignment

Two questions/issues have come up relating to plot assignments which the board may want to have input on.

a. Assignment of Plot To Secondary Garden When Primary Gardener Moves to Smaller Plot

A situation has come up in which a gardener of a full plot has requested to downsize to a half plot and to have her current full plot be taken over by the secondary gardener. The request is out of the ordinary in the sense that the normal situation in which a secondary gardener takes over a plot is when the primary gardener leaves the garden. Both Kay and I believe we should permit the secondary gardener to take over the full plot. There are some extenuating circumstances which may be relevant which Kay will share with you at the meeting.

The board discussed the details of this matter in executive session.

Motion: Allow the secondary gardener of a full plot to become the primary while the primary gardener moves down a plot size.

Unanimously passed.

b. How Abandoned Property Left On Plots Should Be Distributed

A plot was recently assigned on which the previous gardener had left 2-3 retail collapsible tomato cages worth approximately \$20 each. The practice is to give the new gardener assigned the plot any items left on the plot. A question has come up if this is the best practice if the items could be used by Sunshine (e.g. in Micah 6, tomato test plot, etc. or sold at plant sale).

One board member expressed the benefit of leaving items on a plot for a new gardener because it could help new gardeners, particularly those who can't afford supplies. Also pointed out that as the garden has enough money we should give the new gardener any extras left over. Another issue brought up is the timeline of waiting for people to remove items from plots and determining if the items left could be used by the garden. Plots will get filled faster than people can evaluate the items; could delay plot reassignments. It was suggested that a ZC or the VP could fairly quickly

evaluate items left on a plot as to their usefulness for the garden as a whole. It is also written that property left on a plot becomes the property of SCG.

The Free Pile was brought up as a source for gardeners. If there are items that could increase revenue for the garden (silent auction or passalongs) we should consider using them, while leaving some things for the new gardener.

There was no motion made.

7. Front Gate Status

Jim met with TSBVI representatives, and they cannot provide a timeline for completion. They were supportive when he indicated Sunshine might look at temporary fixes (e.g., putting in a manual opening swing gate) if it may be six months before the gate would be completed. Jim is trying to get estimates of the costs of temporary fixes and should have more information.

A partial bid is \$2,700.00, probably less than that. This is if we use the existing posts and attach panels to manually operate the gate.

Another option is that it would be possible for a contractor to come in and isolate and tie in to the existing hardware for Sunshine to use until TSBVI is able to install. One member expressed concern with tying into the TSBVI system. One downside is if our electricity went out the gate would be unusable.

There was a suggestion to do an old fashioned manual gate.

Jim will proceed with trying to get a firm bid from Viking Fence.

Is the concept of spending around \$2,500 to fix the gate problem worth it to board members?

General consensus seemed to be continuing to look at costs of a manual gate.

8. Adopt a Fence Status

The adopt the fence program has not had a great response – 11 gardeners; 29 panels. See diagram showing panels currently adopted. The board needs to address next steps. Jim's recommendation is not to have vines on panels not adopted with the exception of the panels along the compost area.

9. 2023 Elections

Any discussion which may be needed.

The slate has been given to Polly Porter. Up for reelection: President, VP, and Treasurer.

Adjourned 8:37