

Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors

Sunshine Community Gardens

6/13/23

Attendees: Carol Limaye, Iris Slevin, Marsha Riti, JP Maestre, Kerry Drake, Kay McMurry

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

Approval of Minutes from the AG Meeting taken by Carol - (previously sent in email)
Minutes Approved

Reports of Plot Assignment (Kay McMurry)

Kay reported there has been some flux in gardeners coming and going. There are four reassigned plots, and she is waiting for the check and contract from the 4th. Desired plot sizes remain heavy for quarter plots. Kay pointed out that wait times for plots of different sizes are not the same. Quarter plot wait times are longer.

Plot Compliance (Marsha Riti)

Marsha reported that there are 4 gardeners (4 people associated with 3 separate plots) who will require official letters of noncompliance. These letters will be going out.

Marsha and Iris reported about changing the protocol for sending out non-compliance letters, as they would like to divide the labor differently between the President and VP. The President (Iris) will give the VP the go-ahead to send out an email re a gardener's non compliance. Iris stated that she would always be in agreement about the letter going out before it would go out. Iris will be cc'd on the notifications that go out. A board member inquired about the role of the ZC regarding non-compliance. The ZC will still bring issues to the VP. Currently we are missing 3 ZCs. Marsha is filling in for these missing ZCs at the moment. Marsha is working on filling ZC positions. Marsha plans to have quarterly meetings with ZCs. Assistance with plot compliance was the number 1 issue for ZCs brought up at a recent meeting. The second issue was fostering more of a sense of community in the garden. Tomato tasting is planned as a result of the meeting with ZCs. Marsha and Iris are open to spontaneous events, new ideas, etc. They would like to try new things to involve the garden community in order to bring back the sense of being a part of a community in the garden.

There was an inquiry about whether or not the change in letters of non-compliance going out from the VP instead of the President would go against the Site Rules and if this would cause

concern. The Site Rules say the President sends the letter. It was pointed out that the redundancy of work is the concern, as the noncompliance goes from ZC, to a secondary ZC, and then to the President who is already engaged. Iris will review the Site Rules and make sure they are not being bent incorrectly.

The VP will inform the board of directors of any non compliance letters. Official non compliance letters will have a bcc, Marsha reported. It was stated that the President should send out the letter to stay with the order of the Site Rules.

The President and VP will review compliances; they will report on plot compliance discussions and who has been exited or who has an exception. In general, these will be reported on in terms of the Zone rather than the gardener's name.

Marsha and Iris will review the Site Rules and then they will let us know the final determination of who will send the official letters.

Audit Committee (Carol/Kerry)

The Audit Committee has been respectful of the billing season time, and will coordinate a time to meet with the treasurers in person in the future.

General orders presentation- listed below as our first Board meeting with new VP and P

Discovery:

- **List of all current 'Teams' in place and who is on those teams**

Board Members mentioned the following Committees:

Audit Committee

Children's Garden

New Gardener Success: Marsha has more ideas for helping new gardeners succeed. Concern about new gardeners knowing who to talk to, etc., has been expressed. Adopt a Fence

Beautification

Site Rules Committee (of the past included Kay, Janet, Mary Gifford, Cheryl Hazelton) worked out Site Rules and reported to the board

Education Committee

Plot Clearing (Currently headed by Bill C. and Bill G.)

- **Items board members would like to see addressed (that are not working well with a possible solution to add to the list) in order to get things on the table:**

Kay had two items: 1, a Moratorium on splitting plots lifted, and 2, she would like to see more quarter plots in the garden, and if quarter plot non-involvement is a reason to not have more quarter plots, she'd like us to work on getting quarter plot gardeners more involved.

Kerry: ZC have more rotating times to review plots for compliance- every 3 months or so-, so that all ZC play a role in seeing the whole garden (other than their own Zone), and to provide gardeners early intervention for issues of non-compliance and more uniformity in compliance to the garden as a whole.

Marsha: Have a Meet and Greet every month or quarter, where there is a get-together for new gardeners but also includes all gardeners. A "hang out" time. It would be a good way to welcome new gardeners.

Carol: Before billing, ZCs check with their Zone gardeners re those who might need waivers, and to remind them to work service hours before billing. Do all ZC know about their reports for looking at the VGB? Marsha will contact ZCs about getting together with Carol to review how to run reports. This season ends June 30, and gardeners have until July 7 to record hours. Bills are due in August. Bills go out July 15. The change of season is coming up quickly.

JP: People join the garden with different experiences. He would like to see a training program or mentorship between new gardeners and older established gardeners. This might be a way to maintain the initial enthusiasm of a new gardener. He'd like to see an initiative for mentorship. In the past, Kay says, there was a mentorship where Kay put people in touch with established gardeners.

- **Survey to the community for what skills we have in the existing garden population that could be helpful like: plumbers, tool repairs, creative minds etc-**

Something to address is how to keep new gardeners going. The idea is that social events will help this. Iris expressed desiring a community that takes care of the garden and helps people come and stay. Pot lucks, teams, and groups: stewardships of the garden, events at the garden, things that bring a sense of community, like seasonal changes, tours of the garden, different ways people can contribute to social media– are all ideas. An idea was expressed for an International Night where international gardeners showcase different traditions from different countries where different things are grown.

There was a suggestion to hold workdays not just on Saturday morning.

Iris would like these ideas to keep coming, and requested board members text her or email her with ideas.

Discussion

- **Need for an additional 'Director'**

We can appoint someone or hold an election. This ties into the surveys for skill sets at the garden. Sign printing, tee-shirts, etc., as we work to fill gaps from people who have left the garden. It would be good to have apprentices for people who do major work around the garden. Iris would like to see us future-proof the garden so we don't rely on only a few people. Tool work, a small group could be taught about blade sharpening, etc. Spread the work out.

Information

- **Instagram and Facebook by Lexie Cobos / Weeder by Kristin Phillips**

Lexie is willing to help with the Social Media platforms from the garden. She would like help with spontaneous interviews.

It was noted that we have two facebook pages for the garden. Was access lost to one of the FB pages? This will get looked into.

- **Review of the data/website/social media initiatives and current feedback/next steps (Iris)**

The Database committee includes the website and what to do next. We all understand the website needs to change. The current website was coded, and not everyone codes the same way. The easiest way to move the website forward: currently it is on BlueHost, \$300/\$400 every 36 months. We can host a new website on BH, as well. We could move to a wordpress themed template for launching and managing and updating information. The current website needs to migrate. We need to employ a service. Security issues and volunteer accountability suggests we need to hire a service to help it migrate. Decisions about what is public facing, gardener facing, and particular information to archive needs to be made. Iris reported looking at narrowing the Weekly Weeder down. What do we need to keep? Board Members can email Iris with their thoughts and suggestions. Right now, it seems best to use Bluehost as a consulting service, and Iris will look into what the cost would be to create the website and move it. They allow us to have delegate accessibility. A consultation with BH should happen.

Consider the budget adjustments for this issue. In terms of website design, a community garden in North Austin, ADELPHI Acre, has a site worth looking at in terms of its organization and how its info is conveyed. It is a good launching spot for us for discussion. Board Members can peruse the site for ideas: <https://www.adelphiacre.org/>

Two limitations to the current website: it is not accessible to people who have screen readers. It would be nice to have a website that is accessible. Second issue: it is not scaled to phone use: Adelphi Acres does because it reformats itself.

Bill Cason and Jeff Monks both recommended getting a consultant.

We should consider data housing in general, not using personal emails for board related garden shares. Email addresses would be a domain name relative to the garden

platform. One Drive or Google Workspace could be options, and both are free for nonprofits, so no cost to the garden. We would be looking at migrating to using another format. The next data committee meeting is next week, and then communication will come to the board about the consultation cost. We would have a share point drive instead of zipfile, and a central place to house all the documents and all the archived data (Evernote would go there). We need to make sure we are compliant with housing personal information.

Iris and Marsha would also like to engage with other community gardens: what are they doing? What are we doing? They would like to embark on general outreach. A request for other community gardens to contact was made.

5. Motions - Main and any seconds to those motions

Marsha: A new gardener would like to provide volunteer funds and work from his rotary club for SCG. The idea is to install a Pocket Prairie (a small prairie— an ecosystem) in the front of the garden. We have lost many prairie lands, so restoring a diverse ecosystem, even in small pockets is helpful. Flowers can be interspersed. This rotary club would like to donate \$2,500.00 for supplies and a team of 10-12 to work half a day. Matthew is very excited about this idea.

Motion: Explore allowing the rotary club to donate money and volunteer time to work with the idea of an installation of a pocket prairie in the easement between the sidewalk and gate, under Matthew's direction.

Concerns: would it impair sight driving out of the garden? Does TSBVI need to sign off on this?

Iris will speak with TSBVI, and special attention to the proper height of plant growth will be taken into account.

Motion Seconded and Passed.

Timeline: The only parameters are to avoid the month of October, as the rotary club is scheduled elsewhere then. They will find the ideal time for planting a pocket prairie.

General Business

July 10 Sunshine will transition to a new waste management system. There will be a bit of time where all refuse must be disposed of off site from the garden. It is unclear if we can use the dumpster before it is taken away. Carol will ask if trash can be in it or if this would be an extra cost.

Meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.