

**Westbury Community Garden
General Meeting Board Minutes
April 18, 2023
6:30 – 7:37 PM via Zoom**

In attendance, Debbie Gordon, Franco Posa, Wayne Slaikeu, Dorthy Smith, Steve Goldberg, Kat Elder, Virginia Livingston, Ray Sher, Gary Edmondson, Betina Wolfowicz, Hazel Potvin, Debbie Gordon, and Marcia Hartman

- I. Call to order by the President, Debbie Gordon.
- II. A motion was made to approve the March, minutes by Hazel Potvin and seconded by Marcia Hartman. The motion was approved.
- III. A motion was made to approve the March, Financial Report by Ray Sher and seconded by Kat Elder. The motion was approved.
- IV. **Old Business:** The CD with Chase Bank is still outstanding pending signatures.

Founder's Breakfast – We have received donations, so far, totaling over \$6,800.00. From the auction we received \$781.00 and from book sales \$418.00 totaling \$1,199. We might receive another donation of \$1000.00 which would give us a total of around \$9,000.00. Our expenses are estimated to be over \$1,500.00. I would like to suggest we do the **Founder's Breakfast every 5 years** not every year.

Seed money fundraisers, we will continue to do them every year.

We are still working on our Diversity Forms.

- V. **New Business:** Earth Day (April 22, 2023) we are expecting three large groups Casa Sunzal, Ohio State and Kincaid High School.

Aston Macklin will be working on compost.

Franco Posa will rebuild the handicap beds. They are falling apart due to incorrect placement of bricks (seams should not line up) and cinder block size. Only 8x8x16 cinder blocks should be used and more should be ordered than we ordered in the past. Also 8 (W) x2 (H)x16 (L) caps and rebar. We will try to build 4 handicap beds (height 34") on the E aisle. Only the E13 bed was built correctly. We will try to build one bed at a time, Franco estimates it will take 2-3 hours. Delivery cost will be \$150.00.

We plan to work on de-littering the fence line.

Hazel Potvin is working on long and low signage for the Pocket Prairie.

The benches and tables under the pavilion need to be replaced or fixed.

Need more help with Specialty Gardens.

Ray Sher and Gary Edmondson are working on details to obtain Bob Randall's gardening book for garden members for a \$40 or \$50 donation.

Tomato Tasting – We need to increase admission to \$15.00. Auction items are needed.

VI. **Reports**

A. Bee Committee Report – Steve Ewing – April 18, 2023

We moved the colony of bees that was in the swarm box to the nuc (nucleus) hive in the apiary. Our plan is to have 3-4 nucs, let them grow and in 8-12 months sell them.

The nuc was named "Sweet Pea."

We are starting to see capped honey in the hives, which means that the spring "flow", meaning a good quantity of pollen and nectar, has begun. Hopefully the recent feeding of sugar syrup will be the last until winter.

Amy Hunter and I took a frame of bees from Devorah to the Bellaire Plantapalooza. We also had information about the garden. A lot of folks stopped by to see the bees. One couple was going to check on-line to get more information about the garden.

I will be going to a local Cub Scout pack, with the observation hive, and giving a presentation about honeybees.

I will be making the nucs for the apiary.

Apiary Pollinator Bed – Kat Elder – April 18, 2023

Apiary and pollinator bed also needs work. The flag was missing so I lent mine for the Founders Breakfast. (No visitors walked the Garden property). Only Becky Stemper is listed to help me & she has school duties. The Vitex for the Apiary requires garden volunteers to transplant from my home.

B. Community Outreach & Fundraising Report – Debbie Gordon – April 18, 2023

Community Outreach

- We have a request to do a Volunteer Day/Class for clients at The Menninger Clinic's Gathering Place. Will get details.
- Founders' Breakfast in the Garden **March 25**
 - Donations - \$6837.84
 - Silent Auction – \$781.37
 - Book Sale - \$418
 - Total Income - \$8037.21
 - Total Expenses - \$1508.98
 - Net - \$6528.23
- Next Event
 - Tomato Tasting **June 3, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

Fundraising

Large grant applications

- AARP Community Challenge – submitted; Awards are announced mid-May. \$46,000 for raised beds on E row and driveway/parking segment 1.

C. Compost Report – Hazel Potvin and Compost Team – April 18, 2023

Composting is going along well with the strong support of Betina and Amy and the anonymous donors of kitchen waste. This year, thanks to George, we have an enormous supply of leaves in the East bins.

Coffee grounds: Thanks to Ross, we have a comfortable supply of coffee grounds. We are putting the coffee in containers that drain such as trash cans with holes in the bottom. It allows easier access to the coffee grounds which get incorporated with the compost when the piles are turned.

We never expected that we would still have homemade compost to give the gardeners but we do. I have taken my white buckets home because a lot have not been returned. Filled orange buckets remain available to gardeners or the gardeners have to fill a bucket as needed.

D. Education Committee Report – Gary Edmondson – April 18, 2023

The following has come out of the April 26 Education Committee meeting:

- Bob Randall is willing to sell his book to community garden members at a discounted price and the last thing I know is that I was working with Debbie and Marsha to determine a price. I will be contacting them soon. Bob Randall needs to sell quantities of 10 books. Bob's price was \$35 per book with us picking up the books at his house.

- Hazel led several tours of the prairie on April 1 and 2.
- Ray Sher built a power point presentation of insects and what to do when they are found in the garden. He needs assistance posting this on YouTube.
- Ray is compiling a list of mentors for the garden.
- Juli, Hazel and Gary are doing a class on May 13 called Surviving the Summer Garden.

I have to admit that I have not been following up on much of anything since Ray ended up in the hospital on April 2 with a broken femur.

E. Membership Committee Report – Ray Sher – April 18, 2023

There are still three Gardener's Agreements that need to be completed. David Duran, Shari Mather and Kim Nguyen.

Subhankar in bed D12 is out of the country for a month because of his mother's death. The Weed the Bed team is taking care of the bed while he is gone.

F. Pocket Prairie – Hazel Potvin –April 18, 2023

The prairie area is abundant with wildflowers. This year three groups so far have visited to see what we have and learn about the wide range of plants there. You really have to see it, at least once. I have written an article to acquaint our gardeners with this segment of the WCG and invited them to submit pictures of plants they'd like identified. Encouraging prairie tours and identification of native plants overlaps with the work of the Education Committee.

We do want to put up an affordable sign along Greencraig and along Dunlap to raise awareness of the prairie. The prairie is recognized by both the Houston Department of Natural Resources, Native Prairie Association of Texas, and the Native Plant Society. I have the treated logs for posts. I envision a sign about 2 ft off the ground and 2 ft below ground (with or without concrete) with a long board that has the name of the area routed into the long board. Need to find someone to rout the letters.

The Natural Area

This area is along the north steel fence and east fence. It is looking pretty dense with growth. There is a nice thick carpet of dewberries which give food and protection to birds, reptiles, and small mammals. There are also some native plants like seaside goldenrod which is thriving there. Bees and butterflies love it.

The trees along the Valero line were weeded and mulched by a group of college students who loved being in nature. One girl collected insects as she

worked and one guy pressed a whole lot of wildflowers from the field before he went home. I treated for poison ivy as best I could on April 17. The area needs to be cut but I'd like to see the poison ivy wither first. If it resprouts, I will re-treat it.

G. Specialty Garden Report – Kat Elder – April 18, 2023

ORCHARDS:

Wayne helped me survey the conditions of the 3 Orchards last week to assess these conditions:

1. Did our Citrus planted 3/21 & 3/22 survive the 2nd deep freeze (December, 2022?) NO, most did NOT in the N40 & Main Orchard, despite Ray & Gary's led valiant efforts to protect them. Most ID tags are gone so I used my Orchard map to mark Grower tags on surviving Citrus. Will add better tags when time. Even the large Ujukitsu Lemon in the Main Orchard is now dead. New Kumquat, Fuyu Persimmon, Acres Home Pear & Dwarf Mulberry Survived the December freeze.
2. Condition of surviving trees & their planting beds? Most in all Orchards need deadwood and sucker pruning, weeding and fertilizer.
3. Based on the above, where is the best place to plant the single Satsuma. I was able to locate, and purchase at Caldwell's and hold for the Garden? In the N 40, replacing the dead Cara Cara Orange.
4. Condition of the Fig trees? Are all in states of neglect, in need of significant dead wood pruning, weeding, new wild Persimmon shoots & fertilization.
5. We have UH donated fig trees in main compost which we should sell for donation. Unknown how many were Bid/Sold at Founder's Breakfast 6/3 TT Auction should be a final solution (with maintenance by garden volunteers until then).

My conclusions:

1. Maintenance of the WCG Orchards are NOT A PRIORITY of either the WCG BOD nor the Membership. (Only want to harvest fruit). I've repeatedly, futilely, sought help over prior years for SG membership, 3 Orchard Mgrs. at workdays & non workdays & garden volunteers to come help & assist in planting and maintenance. Only Wayne Slaikeu & Ray Sher, Gary Edmondson, Franco Posa & Becky Stemper (with weeding as she can & Watering Committee volunteers) are helping to assist. SG Orchard Volunteers are busy in other BOD projects, bed/aisle clearing, compost, weeding their growing beds or just don't attend. Ray & Gary are now unable to commit time to us due to Ray's unfortunate femur break/rehabilitation. Our best to him for a speedy & full recovery.

When I cannot attend scheduled workdays, nothing gets done. I was out of town for my brother's memorial in March & ZERO was done in the BF Beds, Orchards, B1 pollinator bed and apiary and pollinator beds. Days before the Founders Breakfast, I worked in all areas, picked up trash, did some weeding/spruced up the beds around the Pavilion and picked up trash/relocated loose cardboard in aisles (ignored by the Membership who left it there).

When I do attend almost every workday to lead, I have to jockey to snatch good volunteers; most I can get, require instruction & direct supervision. I have had no SG/ Orchard volunteers since early last year except Ray & Gary.

2. Until the Garden steps up to assist with committed garden volunteers, SG will not be planting any more fruit trees & I will only continue to do as much as I personally can (will be less than prior years). Please expect the orchards to dwindle further.

POLLINATOR BEDS:

Firstly, I was disappointed that NO speaker at the Founder's Breakfast even mentioned the WCG Butterfly & Pollinator Beds throughout WCG, which provide year-round Pollinator Services & Beauty to the whole WCG land.

Secondly, broken record: WCG needs to step up & encourage membership to volunteer & commit to assist with SG. If Becky Stemper leaves us this summer & has no replacement Watering Committee Manager, the BF beds, Apiary Pollinator Bed & Orchards are in serious danger with the climate changes we're experiencing.

APIARY POLLINATOR BED: also needs work. The flag was missing so I lent mine for the Founders Breakfast. (No visitors even walked the Garden property). Only Becky Stemper is listed to help me and she has school duties. The Vitex for the Apiary requires garden volunteers to transplant from my home.

H. Site Maintenance Report – Wayne Slaikeu – April 18, 2023

The D-9 faucet has been repaired.

Since WCG main water valve does not close off completely, a tool to close off the city main water valve to the garden was purchased. Will send a message to all gardeners that all water faucet problems need to be reported to site maintenance members Wayne Slaikeu, Steve Goldberg, or Don Finley, since they will be the only ones permitted to use the tool.

Some thefts of bags of Farm Dirt Compost and vegetables have been reported, so will remind gardeners to report suspicious activity of visitors to management and take pictures, if possible.

Need to inform gardeners covering their aisles to cover cardboard with leaves and not use small pieces that do not stay covered and can cause gardeners to trip on them.

I. Volunteer Coordinator Report – Betina Wolfowicz – April 18, 2023

We had a group on April 8 from the University of Houston that worked with Hazel Potvin on the area near the Valero station. They cleaned the area around the trees and the fence, but they also had time to marvel at the beautiful native plants now in bloom in that area. Hazel reports that it was very satisfying to observe their curiosity and engagement with nature!

APRIL 22, EARTH DAY: PLEASE COME AND COACH!!!!

On this upcoming Earth Day we expect 3 groups.

Ohio State University Alumni: repeat volunteers, known to be hardworking, they will be anywhere from 10 to 30 people. Debbie will train some of us on how to build an elevated bed, she will order materials and hopefully we will be able to build E9 with 10 of the volunteers. Franco and Mike offered to coach this group.

Kincaid Upper School Math volunteers: they will be anywhere from 10 to 15 people, 15 to 16 years old. Together with some Ohio State Volunteers they will work with Kat on the pollinator gardens and mulching the orchard trees.

Casa Sunzal: there will be 3 people from this organization for recent immigrants coming to work with us. They can probably mix the compost with me (Betina).

Any extra volunteers from any of these groups can work on weeding aisles, removing unwanted plants, general tidying and beautification.

VII.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Dorothy Smith – WCG Secretary