

**Westbury Community Garden
General Meeting Board Minutes
June 20, 2023
6:30 – 7:20 PM via Zoom**

In attendance, Debbie Gordon, Dorthy Smith, Kat Elder, Wayne Slaikeu, Steve Goldberg, Hazel Potvin, Ray Sher, Gary Edmondson, Margaret Mitchell, Isaac Spencer, Dr. Maisha Tianuru, Betsy Longoria and Marcia Hartman

- I. Call to order by the President, Debbie Gordon.
- II. **Old Business** - A motion was made to approve the May, minutes by Kat Elder and seconded by Marcia Hartman. The motion was approved.
- III. A motion was made by Gary Edmondson to approve the May Treasurer's report and seconded by Debbie Gordon. The motion was approved.
- IV. Please have your reports in on time.
- V. A decision needs to be made about Bob Randall's book and an order placed.
- VI. Motor Home – Debbie Gordon contacted Bishop Murray with HPD and has not heard back from him as of this date.
- VII. Debbie Gordon contacted the District Attorney about repairing the Heights' fence. Lots of trash has accumulated in the (NE) corner and an attempt has been made to make another hole in the fence behind the grapes from residents of the Heights apartments.
- VIII. **New Business** – Our Tomato Tasting Event was very successful. We had 45 varieties. Should we limit it to 30 varieties next time? Kat Elder would like to be able to sell tomatoes at the Tomato Tasting Event. Is this possible? Marcia Hartman thought there might be a health issue to consider if we sold produce.

Weed Letters – Weed letter went out to D10 and B9 no response from B9.

Chinese Tallow Trees – We will remove the dead Tallow trees and remove the live ones at a later date. A permit might be required to remove them. Debbie Gordon will check into this for us.

Weed Warriors – Will remove weeds, Saturday, June 22, 2023, 7:00 a.m. Hope to have volunteers from Volunteer Houston to help us.

Clear the Bed Team – Bed B9 will be cleared by the team, since the occupants failed to clear the bed.

Mulch for Aisles – Debbie Gordon will order up to 75 yards of mulch. Each aisle should have about 3 inches deep of mulch. Another source of mulch is

pine needles. Marcia Hartman has a truck if we need to use it to pick-up cardboard.

Mowing – We will mow mid or later summer.

Renewals – Green Bridges (Herb Society), National Wildlife Federation (NWF), North American Butterfly Association (NABA), Purple Martin Conservancy Association (PMCA), and The Organic Horticulture Benefits Alliance (OHBA) They allow discounts for garden members at events.

American Community Garden Association – Urban Harvest recommended our garden for a ACGA tour in September, 28 – 30, 2023. There will be 4 buses touring the garden. Debbie Gordon would like for us to do this.

Summer Potluck (Mid – July) – Willow Water Hole, Westbury Community Garden, Platou Center were suggested as possible sites. Ray Sher suggested we have it in September. Debbie Gordon will place it in the Newsletter for more feedback.

IX. Reports

A. Bee Committee Report – Steve Ewing – June 20, 2023

- Becky and I made a presentation about bees to a 5th and a 4th grade class in Tomball, where Becky was teaching. We took an observation hive with two frames of bees from our apiary. It went very well.
- A friend and I will be taking part in a Vacation Bible Study at Chapelwood Church, toward the end of June. We will be talking about bees, their part in our food chain and will take an observation hive. The kids will be Kindergarten to 5th grade.
- We are sad to see Becky Stemper moving to Virginia, to help take care of her parents. She was an integral part of our bee program and will be sorely missed.
- We will be making inspections soon and determining the amount of honey that we think that we can harvest.

Apiary Pollinator Bed:

I came out before 6/3 to weed wild Poinsettia, Ragweed & remove trash & water thoroughly. The Pink Coral Vine is flowering beautifully on the fence trellis, as is the Salvia, Indian Blanket & Blue/Black Salvia. Flowering Frogfruit groundcover conceals the shallow water containers. My garden flag is still waving there.

I've lost 2 volunteers, Becky Stemper & Susan Adams & only have help from watering volunteers from the Water Committee. At the Apiary, we will be

planting my donated Vitex & American Beautyberry bush & any others Steve Ewing wants, but unlikely until the temps cool down.

Kat Elder

B. Community Outreach & Fundraising Report – Debbie Gordon, June 20, 2023

Community Outreach

- We had a request to do a Volunteer Day/Class for clients at The Menger Clinic's Gathering Place. Still need to reply and get details.
- Amy Hermann will represent WCG teaching garden topics at a 6-week summer camp for preschoolers (one hour/week) for AhavahKIDS in Stafford.
- Next Event
 - Tomato Tasting June 3, **10:30 AM – 12:00 PM**
 - Prep begins at **8:00 AM**
 - Scorecard price increase to \$15
 - Fishbowl drawings – need more non-plant donations; we have lots of plant donations.
 - Still need volunteers
 - 3 more tomato preppers (have 2)
 - 1 more for fishbowl set up (have 1)
 - 1 more for registration table (have 1)
 - Table and chair setup – have 1

Fundraising

Grant applications

- AARP Community Challenge – submitted; Awards are announced mid-May. \$46,000 for raised beds on E row and driveway/parking segment 1. Have not heard the results yet.
- Constellation Energy Community Grant - \$500
Application prepared by Matthew Simon has been reviewed and is ready to submit this month.

Donations

- Thanks to Michael Trakhtenberg (Betina's son-in-law) for his \$500 donation to WCG that was matched by his employer, CenterPoint Energy.
- Tarek Al-Romani with Total Energies is donating the cost of materials (almost \$1000) for one elevated bed conversion and the volunteer labor to do the build. E11 will be built on May 20.

- Blocks will be delivered by Lowe's on May 19. Betsy will meet the driver to make sure the materials are put near E11.
- Soil delivery for E9 and E11 will also be this week.
- Mike will be removing plants from the south/high end that they wish to retain. All other plants from the south end will be removed. We will build the low end but will try not to disturb plants until they are removed for the fall season. Then soil will be added to the low end.

C. Compost Report – Hazel Potvin – June 20, 2023

We will be working on building better gates between the bins. As mentioned last month, we had seen a design at the Fort Bend Agrilife Center and we want to use it to make turning the bins easier.

We will use smaller trash cans to make emptying easier. I am not sure what I will find but that is my goal. When the current intake barrel is full, it takes two strong people to lift it and empty it.

We will also try to keep a good supply of leaves at the Compost cages. Leaves are important to cover the kitchen waste and keep the flies down. They hold in the heat generated by the decomposition of the kitchen waste. We look forward to the high temperatures in the green range on the thermometers. This is what makes good compost. Betina had a soil test done on the compost generated this past season. She and I will take a look at the results and check to see if anything should be adjusted.

Hazel Potvin, Betina Wolfowicz, George Rejsek and Rich Keogh.

D. Membership Committee Report – Ray Sher – June 20, 2023

1. All beds are occupied except for E9 which will be elevated.
2. Two potential members have inquired but have not responded to the standard membership letter that we send out.
3. The community garden group needs an additional member starting in June.

E. Pocket Prairie – Hazel Potvin – June 20, 2023

Lots of the spring flowers on the prairie have gone to seed which is just what we want. That which is on display now is the elegant perennial native called *Liatris*. There are several kinds but we tend to have mostly *Liatris pycnostachya*, prairie blazing star. We started out with very few plants given to us and have watched them sprout all over the place as their seeds spread.

The prairie could stand a really good delimiting to keep the plastic that flies around in the wind from hurting the view of the summer prairie.

Hazel Potvin and Noreen Hoard – Master Naturalist

F. Specialty Garden Report – Kat Elder – June 20, 2023

Butterfly Beds:

With a small but energetic number of outside volunteers at the 5/20/2023 Workday, the front beds were spiffed up. I wanted the beds to be pretty and appearing well maintained for the 6/3/23 Tomato Tasting fundraiser. I believe this was accomplished. Two from the small Total Energies group joined us because the construction of the E elevated bed (moving heavy concrete blocks in the hot sun) was too much for them. The many tall yellow cone flowers were pruned back to allow movement of visitors at the entry walkway registration table.

We have too many Coneflowers & Fall Obedient Plants. Some were gifted to volunteers.

Had insufficient Volunteers to weed in the Orchards, B1 & the Apiary Pollinator Bed on 5/20. I worked on them & trash pickup prior to 6/3.

Orchards:

I'm no longer responsible for leadership; Isaac Spencer will take over with leadership & reporting.

Kat Elder
Specialty Gardens Chairman

G. Site Maintenance Report – Wayne Slaikeu – June 20, 2023

I noticed someone watering more than one bed contrary to our watering rules. The person was not a member but a spouse of a member. Since they probably did not go through an orientation, they did not know our rules for watering such as leaving a hose on the soil of a bed and flooding the bed and aisles. We need to enforce our rule of any friend or spouse of a member, doing work in a bed, needs to go through an orientation and sign a GA.

A lot of beds need weeding but weeding is a waste of time if we do not have cardboard and mulch to keep the removed weeds from coming back quickly.

I noticed a lot of vegetables, especially tomatoes rotting on vines. We need to inform gardeners that leaving tomatoes to rot on vines, encourages undesirable insects to multiply and move to other beds.

An unneighborly gardener is one that has an unkept bed with rotting vegetables and weeds going to seed.

Wayne Slaikeu
Site Maintenance Committee Chairman

H. Treasurer’s Report – Marcia Hartman – June 20, 2023

Westbury Community Garden

Profit and Loss YTD Comparison

April 2023

	TOTAL	
	APR 2023	JAN - APR, 2023 (YTD)
Income		
Garden Income		
Donations to WCG		1,690.15
Fundraising	1,100.00	12,602.97
Garden rental	77.00	5,219.20
Volunteer Hours Paid		572.00
Total Garden Income	1,177.00	20,084.32
Total Income	\$1,177.00	\$20,084.32
GROSS PROFIT	\$1,177.00	\$20,084.32
Expenses		
Garden Operations		
Fundraising Expenses		1,641.14
Garbage/Trash/Dumpster	66.22	295.15
Garden printing, copying		10.01
Garden Supplies	21.38	49.47
IT	306.62	781.82
Legal/Professional/Bank Fees		
Fees-Stripe		107.56
Paypal Fees	6.60	140.49
Total Legal/Professional/Bank Fees	6.60	248.05
Memberships, dues	100.00	100.00
Portapotty	170.01	238.59
Raised Bed Project	504.66	671.30
Seeds	-395.50	-502.50
Site Maintenance		357.10
Soil sales to gardeners	0.00	-984.50
Soil, Mulch, Fertilizer		785.00
Square Fees		17.31
Water		239.76
Total Garden Operations	779.99	3,947.70
Total Expenses	\$779.99	\$3,947.70
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$397.01	\$16,136.62
NET INCOME	\$397.01	\$16,136.62

Bank Balances at 5/15/2023:

WCG Operating Acct \$33,136.36
Jumbo CD-WCG portion \$75,000.00

Jumbo CD combined \$75,000 from WCG with \$25,000 from WAIC. Matures 10/26/2023 at 4% APY.

I. Volunteer Coordinator Report – Betina Wolfowicz – June 20, 2023

First what's new:

Brandy Kitchen with the Rainard School is already planning for next year. She wants to bring a group of middle schoolers again next February, on Thursday Feb 29. I told her that we will be pleased to have them, but of course we will have to reconfirm at the beginning of next year.

I posted an announcement for this Saturday at Volunteers Houston, and it says we'll start at 7:00 am. At least I will be there at that time. It goes 7:00 to 11:00am

I also emailed our Southwest Key contacts (listed on the Spreadsheet for Volunteers 2023 on Google Drive). Southwest Key is a subcontractor of the Immigration Department in charge of refugees. These are children who are waiting for the courts to reunite them with their families. Most of them have either construction or gardening experience. We are very lucky to get them when they come!!!

And that brings me back to May: We got a group from Total Energies, but they only stayed for 1 or 2 hrs. The group from Southwest Key (Casa Sunzal) helped quite a bit in the deconstruction of one of the elevated beds, they mixed compost, and weeded another bed in preparation for elevation.

Stay Cool! Betina Wolfowicz/Volunteer Coordinator

- X. Meeting Adjourned at 7:20 p.m.**
Submitted by Dorothy Smith – WCG Secretary