

**Westbury Community Garden
General Meeting - Board Minutes
February 20, 2024
6:30 - 8:15 p.m. via Zoom**

In attendance, Debbie Gordon, Wayne Slaikeu, Dorthy Smith (Secretary/absent), Steve Goldberg, Marcia Hartman, Kat Elder, Ray Sher, Betina Wolfowicz, Isaac Spencer, Gary Edmondson and Ana Lorena Jaramillio

- I. Meeting called to order by the President, Debbie Gordon.
- II. A motion was made to approve the January minutes by Elder and seconded by Wayne Slaikeu. Motion was approved.
- III. A motion was made to approve the January Treasurer's Report by Betina Wolfowicz and seconded by Wayne Slaikeu. Motion was approved.

Old Business

Garden Rental – Debbie Gordon, the Treasurer's Report, profit and loss, is \$2,841. There is much more activity for this month shouldn't it be closer to \$5,000 or \$6,000. Yes (Marcia Hartman)

Thank you Steve Goldberg for sending committee members their new members contact information. I hope everyone got their list. It is now up to you to contact all your new members and do whatever you need to do with them, schedule them or keep them informed of what is going on with your committee.

Betsy Longoria - She has given up her C13 bed, which will need to be rehabbed.

Compost - B2 needs compost. Betina has 2 bags left.

Farm Dirt - We need to order before the end of February. Delivery date will be around the first week of March. We have a little over a pallet, 50 bags are a pallet. Forty pounds equals 1 cubic foot, each garden needs 4 bags to lightly (1/2" deep) cover a bed. B2 will also need some premium soil. When we have kids volunteer we can have them fill the beds.

E Beds – Franco worked with the day labors and spoke enough Spanish to communicate with them. One of the day labors took the lead and helped organized the group. They completed E9 and E10. The center wall on E10 is crooked and will need to be redone. They worked 6 hours with a total cost of \$480.00 for labor (4 men at \$20 hour for 6 hours).

We will work on the E12 bed (Bert and Mike's bed) next then E3 and E4. We do have people waiting for the raised beds. Lorena has requested a raised bed.

Raised Bed Cost – Each bed cost approximately \$1000.00. Since we want all the beds on the E row raised we will need to apply for grants to cover the cost. In order to receive funding for the driveway and beds we are saying, "Senior citizens and disabled citizens need to be close to their beds." Our project is called, "Gardening within Reach."

Trees for Houston – We need to replace the trees we lost. I (Debbie Gordon) contacted Trees for Houston and their schedule is full for the spring. They requested I call them again in August. They will plant the trees and provide the trees.

Pilot Program – This is an outreach program to encourage people to grow their own food. Our target area will be the apartments across the street. We will give them one patio tomato plant, a 10 gallon grow bag and some Microlife. Debra Gordon will show them how to mix potting soil, 1/3 coco coir, 1/3 compost and 1/3 Perlite. We are hoping Home Depot will donate the tomato plants.

Debbie Gordon and Cora Lindsay will go by and talk to Home Depot on 2/21/24 with a letter stating what the project is. We think they will be ok in giving us 10 tomatoes.

Driveway and parking lot – Still working on funding for this. We have \$35,000 from various sources or possibly a little more. Need permit and engineering cost. Still need information regard engineering drawings and permitting process that is not in place yet. We will obtain the engineering and permitting cost and present it to the BOMD. We are hopeful of getting a grant of \$7,500 and that will put us well over the amount we need for the concrete and all of the permitting.

Concrete and permitting - We need \$20,000 before we can start on the driveway and parking spaces by the E beds. The driveway will go up to E13. It will not turn the corner. The funding is really close. The driveway approach and the permitting will get done fairly soon. This will give us access to the E bed area from the left of the cabbage. The proper driveway will come sometime later this year, as soon as, the other \$20,000 is in place. We have accepted Debbie's neighbor bid for concrete work. The only thing holding us up is permitting. This can take up to a month and a half. Called engineering for the construction drawings. They did not a call back. It will probably cost \$5,000 for the document (Steve Stelzer is our contact in permitting office.). Debbie called Asakura Robinson (the Master Plan's landscape architecture firm) over a week ago and did not receive a call back. Debbie will call the engineering company directly, give them the job number from 2018 and say, "Can you give us the construction drawings. They will need several other documents for permitting." Then they should be able to put together the permitting package. I expect that to cost more than \$5,000.

Permitting itself is about \$750.00 I will need to confirm that with Steve Stelzer (Program Director CD Green Building, City of Houston.)

Betina inquired about the concrete work. It's the cut into the curb to the street and sidewalk.

New Business – Department of Neighborhoods \$5000 grant needs to be spent and reported on by the end of May.

House Keeping reminders – It would really, really help me if Board Members could get their reports to me before the weekend is up. On the weekend I try to get the agenda together. Last month was an odd situation. I was at the garden with the work crew building E10 all day and didn't make my usual request for reports. As a result, I didn't get reports from quite a few board members. I would ask again that you get your reports together and get it to me by Saturday. Otherwise, I will ask Dorthy not to include your report in the minutes and it will be shoved to the next month.

New Podium - It was delivered to the garden on 1/29/24. Our eagle scout was kind of tall and therefore the podium is tall. It didn't allow us to see Hazel or Kat's face when they stood behind it. He did build a step-stool and painted it but not very well. He gave us the paint and I need someone to put another coat on it. Once completed it will be stored on the bottom shelf of the Podium. The angle of the podium is not steep enough and water collects on the top. Virginia Livingston said she could make a clear covering to prevent the water from collecting on the top of the podium. Steve Goldberg is going to purchase a plaque and have our logo placed on it. It will then be attached to the front of the podium.

River Oaks Garden Club – They gave us \$3,500 for 4 raised beds.

Volunteer Needs – Betina needs more volunteers. She will be going on vacation and will need help. She will talk to all gardeners but the Newsletter might be better. Ray said she needs to describe exactly what she needs. Cora will be contacting middle schools for volunteers but they must have supervisors. Debbie suggest we have a certain day to have corporations and schools to come. Kat indicated she comes to every workday but few volunteers show up. It's frustrating. Ray said he has the same issue and to think about what you can do with those volunteers and don't worry about the other stuff. Rainard School and Solugen are our next group of volunteers to visit the garden. What is not completed during the week can be finished during the 4th Saturday workday.

DEI Forms – Debbie stated she didn't have time to organize them for this meeting instead they will be covered at the March meeting. This form covered ethnicity, race, age, and gender of gardeners, all of which we need when applying for grants.

Houston Junior League – 2024 Annual Spring Luncheon (fundraiser) – March 22, 2024. Sowing the Seeds of Compassion. It's all about the Community Garden movement in Houston. They are doing a video (documentary) and have talked to Bob Randall, Urban Harvest and me (Debbie Gordon). She was excited to hear about our outreach to the Post Oak apartments and our raised bed project, "Gardening within Reach." It seems that no one else is doing this. I hope this will lead to more fundraising

United Way – We are no longer in the running for funding from them. Their funding is now for, Employment solutions, healthcare solutions, financial stability and childcare.

Spending – No spending without prior approval. I am in the process of applying to Center Point Energy for an operational grant. We should do this every year (apply for an operational grant). There is no money for plumbing upgrades and seeds are on hiatus.

Reports

Bee Committee Report – Steve Ewing – February 20, 2024.

- By early March, I hope that we have warm weather and the group can inspect the hives. The main concern now is if they had enough resources (honey, nectar, pollen) to survive the winter. In the south, the cold weather is not a big issue for the bees, but starvation is.
- I am in the process of making 3 more "nucs", small hives to put either splits from the existing hives or removal bees into the apiary
- I will be putting in a request to expand the apiary 6'. The area we have now gets very crowded when more than two people are working with the hives
- I will be cleaning up the swarm box by the dumpster, re-baiting it and rehangng it, in the hopes of getting our 4th swarm in that box.

Apiary Pollinator Bed – Kat Elder – February 20, 2024

Apiary Pollinator Bed: deadwood plant and Coral Vine pruning and weeding are a Priority for the 2/23 or 2/25 workdays. Frogfruit ground cover has provided winter protection for plants, insects & small animals.

Steve Ewing will be requesting Board approval for additional plantings around the Apiary.

Purple Martins: as soon as the Male Scouts arrive, our team will open the Apartments in stages to reduce takeover by the invasive European House Sparrows. Houses were washed before winter closures last Fall.

Community Outreach & Fundraising Report – Debbie Gordon – February 20, 2024

Fundraising

Grant Applications Submitted in Nov-Dec 2023

Awarded

- River Oaks Garden Club; **\$3500** for 4 elevated gardens in 2024.

2023 Applications Still Pending

- Garden Club of Houston; \$114,500; \$89,000; \$22,000; \$3,500. Prioritized funding for all, TrueGrid driveway/parking, concrete work, or 4 raised beds.
- Whole Foods Market; \$2000 for 3 elevated gardens in 2023.
- Astros Foundation; \$10,000 for concrete work
- HEB; \$2400 for 3 elevated gardens in 2023.
- JPMorgan Chase – Network For Good; **Status = Under consideration**

Grant Applications for 2024

Submitted

- First Horizon Foundation
- ConAgra Brands

In Progress

- BOMD Community Development Grant - \$7500 max

To Do

- AARP, Community Challenge grants; Applications open January, deadline March 15
- Starbucks/Neighborhood Grants; \$1K-\$10K; ?2024 dates
- Whole Foods Market – Community First Grant Partners
- Keep Houston Beautiful Mayor's Proud Partner Award; deadline Aug 2024; Award luncheon Oct.

What conservation or education project can we submit?

- CenterPoint Energy; next cycle Feb 1 – Mar 10. **(Operations Grant)**
- Mission Grants, Jehle Paul L Trust

Timeline for Raised Bed Conversions on E Row

We have materials for E9, 10, 12 and one more.

- **Monday, Feb 19 Build Day:** E9, E10, E12
- E8 tighten up; add more support; add premium soil –Sudie or Betsy may take this one
- Next: E3, E4 (JaMera moving to C4, C5)
- Break for summer
- E2, E5, E6 – Fall 2024 unless funding requires another completion date

Will require Kim, Shannon, and Beth to move to another bed.

Outreach – Cora Lindsay – February 20, 2024

Food For Families DEIAB (**D**iversity, **E**quity, **I**nclusion, **A**ccessibility and **B**elonging) outreach initiative is off to a great start.

Debbie has been instrumental in allowing me to get this off the ground with her deep connections in the community that has allowed the garden to recruit 10 neighbors from the Post Oak Heights apartment complex.

WCG stands for a lot. One of those things is inclusion, alongside creating a sense of safe belonging for all. Gardening is something that can feel exclusive and out of reach to some asset, income and time restricted members of our community.

This is one of many ways in which WCG seeks to create true belonging at the garden and increase accessibility for all.

Operations: Debbie has secured product donations, that her and I are solidifying tomorrow. Participants will attend Sunday's class to learn about tomatoes and pick up their patio potted plants to grow food at home.

Next Steps: We will check in with them via text and ask that they meet monthly at the garden with us to learn how else we can best serve them.

Other Outreach Committee work underway:

1. Committee's calendar for the year
2. Events planning for the year
3. Social media and other Marketing Channel planning such as PR pitches
4. Internal learning and discovery between various committees about goals that Outreach can assist with this year and into planning next year goals.

Summary: Bring the garden to the people. For members of our community who otherwise wouldn't have bandwidth, resources, or the confidence to create a space for themselves within our existing community we are bringing them a pot, a tomato plant and teaching them they can grow food on their patios.

Education Committee Report – Gary Edmondson – February 20, 2024

On Saturday, February 3 the classes committee had its first class for 2024. It was a Zoom Presentation on Tomatoes. There were 8 people in attendance.

Remaining scheduled classes are the following:

Hands on Tomatoes at Westbury Community Garden: Sunday, February 25 at 3 pm. Experience everything you need to know to have productive tomatoes: planting, fertilizing/soil preparation, cages, harvesting and mulching. Presenter: Roy Johnson

Planting the Spring Vegetable Garden, Zoom Presentation, March 2 at 3 pm: Learn about the vegetables you can begin planting for the spring and summer garden. Find out the about the best varieties to plant, when to plant, how to prepare the soil, spacing of the plants and mulching. Presenter: Gary Edmondson and others can join in teaching as well.

Hands on Spring Gardening at Westbury Community Garden: Saturday, March 9 at 9 am. Focus is on demonstrating how and what to what to grow with seeds or plants, where to plant, soil preparation, using trellises and cages where needed and mulch. Presenter: Gary Edmondson and whoever else wants to join in.

The Education Committee is meeting on Zoom this coming Saturday at 3 pm and welcoming potentially 6 new members to the committee. We will discuss what other classes might be planned for March thru May.

Membership Committee Report – Ray Sher – February 20, 2024

It's been a very busy winter for the Membership Committee, processing leaving members, adding new members, pursuing members to renew and getting beds ready for new members.

There are several people who have joined the garden recently or within the last six months, or who are in the process of joining or getting orientations before joining.

- Jennifer Gilbreath (A8) – She is in the process of paying and completing the GA and DEI forms.
- Fang (Kelly) Huang (A12) – She has been at the garden a few months.
- Seth Rodecker and friend (B2) – We are scheduling an orientation. Seth is a returning member.
- Bing Wang (B10) – He is in the process of completing his forms and paying.
- Peggy Sweeney (D9)
- Prasad George (D10) – He has added a second bed in addition to D11.

- Subhankar Baidya and Kaberi Datta Baidya (D13) – They have added a second bed in addition to D12.
- Lorena Jaramillo (E9).
- Sudie Stennis and her gardening partner Terrance (E8 when completed).

JaMera Gilbreath has moved from, her E row beds to C4 and C5. She will continue to harvest from her old beds until the plants give out.

That leaves C13 (Betsy has given up her bed and has chosen to help mentor others in the garden, especially new members).

There are two gardeners who have not yet paid for 2024, but they say they will.

There are 8 who have not completed a DEI.

There are 2 who have not completed a GA.

We are working all the issues that remain open.

Orchard Committee Report – Isaac Spencer – February 20, 2024

January'24 offered plenty of cold days and nights in which members of the garden along with the assistance of volunteers accomplished compiling multiple bags of leaves, insulating approximately 9 citrus trees in various spots of WCG. Maintaining the leaves position required galvanized cattle fence panel to surround the trees, then placing a bucket of water near the base of the tree stump, only afterwards pouring leaves around the trees then wrapping them with frost blankets and tying string around the blankets ensuring its wind/weather resistance.

When the covering was removed, it was noted that not one tree in WCG Orchard was lost. As we enter Spring, I find it imperative to purchase Citrus Fertilizer Spikes to ensure our trees are healthy as possible and yield a great harvest during their respective season. In additional, ground borders are easily disconnected allowing mulch to spread further than intended; therefore, Bender Boards would work flawlessly if we were able to secure them in the near future.

Pocket Prairie – Hazel Potvin – February 20, 2024 – No Report

Specialty Garden Report – Kat Elder – February 20, 2024

Little to report. Only 2-3 gardeners came to the January Garden Workday. Very cold weather and little work to do. Too soon to plant with danger of a later freeze. Only picked up trash, did some weeding, planted some seeds, worked reorganizing the sheds and putting bags out for David Duran to future service the trash cans which were empty/ some missing tops.

Must get help at the February workday in BF beds, B1 & Apiary Bed to get ready for the Spring plant emergence.

Discovered 🚫 that the larger of the 2 Wildlife Habitat Piles a group of us created last year with Board preapproval, had been completely removed. This was constructed there to provide shelter, safety and breeding for birds and insects throughout the seasons and was especially important for the winter. And is also a criterion for the garden to acquire Certified Wildlife Certification and grants. Unknown who was responsible for removal without ANY permission to do so.

Site Maintenance Report – Wayne Slaikeu – February 20, 2024

Last month I asked gardeners to report thefts, and vandalism issues to management. We now have an Incident Report Form on our website to make reporting easier. Contact Debbie, Steve, or Wayne for where the form is and how to fill it out. Details are in the 2-8 Newsletter.

Also in the Feb.8 Newsletter is an article on gardeners who want to supplement their beds with a 40# bag of Farm Dirt Compost and they can order it for a special price of \$6.25 if ordered through WCG and ordered and paid for by 2/29. Details are in the 2/6/24 Newsletter.

I will soon be monitoring beds and aisles and sending 10-day letters for non-compliant beds and aisles concerning weeds and also problems with plants infested with diseases and insects. Details are in the 2- Newsletter.

Our committee will be checking hose supports for stability. Any gardener having a hose support problem or one not supported firmly needs to contact Wayne.

Since gardeners are getting ready to plant spring vegetables, Fall and winter non-producing plants and diseased plants need to be removed, and remember, Brassicas, diseased plants, insect-infested plants, and seedy weeds need to go in the dumpster and not in compost bins.

Treasurer's Report – Marcia Hartman – February 20, 2024

Westbury Community Garden
Profit and Loss
January 2024

WCG-Garden Income

Donations to WCG	29.08
Fundraising	4,650.00
Garden rental	2,841.00
Volunteer Hours Paid	285.00
<u>Total WCG-Garden Income</u>	<u>\$7,805.08</u>
<u>Total Income</u>	<u>\$7,805.08</u>
GROSS PROFIT	\$7,805.08
Expenses	
WCG-Garden Operations	
+Garbage/Trash/Dumpster	128.19
PIFF portion	13.73
<u>Total Garbage/Trash/Dumpster</u>	<u>141.92</u>
Legal/Professional/Bank Fees	
Paypal Fees	60.44
<u>Total Legal/Professional/Bank Fees</u>	<u>60.44</u>
Portapotty	50.72
PIFF portio	00
<u>Total Portapotty</u>	<u>50.72</u>
Water	77.23
<u>Total WCG-Garden Operations</u>	<u>330.31</u>
<u>Total Expenses</u>	<u>\$330.31</u>
<u>NET OPERATING INCOME</u>	<u>\$7,474.77</u>
<u>NET INCOME</u>	<u>\$7,474.77</u>

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Chase Bank 2/15/24

WCG Operating.....\$57,132.49
WCG Portion of CD..... \$75,000.0021

Volunteer Coordinator Report – Betina Wolfowicz – February 20, 2024

I am trying to come up with ideas on how to accept volunteers from outside organizations when it has become a bit hard to recruit members from the garden to guide the activities. One possibility is to include a request for group leaders in the newsletter. For sure Debbie has been doing this all along but I am talking about a sign-up sheet to have a fixed group of volunteer leaders who can be contacted every session and be frequently present, besides the usual collaborators. Just like being part of the apiary, watering or compost committee. Other than this, we have Solugen coming on the 23 of February and Rainard school on the 29 of this month. We already signed up a group from Corgan for April 27 and there has been an informal inquiry not formalized yet

IV. **Meeting Adjourned at 8:15 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted by Dorthy Smith – WCG Secretary

