

Westbury Community Garden
General Meeting - Board Minutes
August 20, 2024
6:30 – 7:48 PM via Zoom

In attendance, Debbie Gordon, Wayne Slaikeu, Dorthy Smith, Steve Goldberg, Kat Elder, Ray Sher, Betina Wolfowicz, Hazel Potvin, Debbie Gordon, Shelly Johnson, Bill Hancock, Maisha Tianuru and Marcia Hartman

- I. Meeting called to order by the President, Debbie Gordon
- II. A motion was made to approve the July, minutes by Kat Elder and seconded by Debbie Gordon. The motion was approved.
- III. A motion was made to approve the July, Financial Report by Debbie Gordon and Hazel Potvin. The motion was approved.

Old Business

Illegal Dumping – Debbie Gordon talked with Rachel Lockhart Folkerts, Plant It Forward Farms (PIFF) regarding their clean-up. Rachel stated they had hired a company to do this and it will cost \$5,000.00. District K will provide “No Dumping” signs and possibly cameras. The new owners of the apartments have installed license plate readers (LPR) which hopefully will also help with lowering crime in the area.

Mowing of our Property - Hazel Potvin said the next mowing of our property will be in early December. Debbie Gordon didn't think we could wait that long. The east field needs mowing now. We currently use Westbury Mowing Company. Debbie Gordon wondered if it would be cheaper to rent a mower (riding). Hazel Potvin said you need operator skills. Debbie Gordon stated keeping up the appearance of your property helps with keeping crime down.

Harris County Precinct 1 – No action from them but they are still interested in funding us. Everything had to be permitted, drainage (swales), moving dirt and Truegrid for the driveway. We are still waiting to hear back on this. We almost have money for the driveway curb cut, and parking area. If Harris County comes through, they may pay for it. PIFF will not be able to help us with the driveway.

Braes Oaks Grant – The grant is for \$7,500 and will take several months before we find out anything.

Herb Society – The Herb Society has donated a convertible bench (turns into a table) that looks like wood uses TimberTech, is made of up to 85% recycled materials and is very sustainable. The Herb Society requested the bench be placed near their D2 bed and that it be firmly anchored. Hopefully it won't be stolen if anchored well.

Bayou City Market – Is 9/14 and 9/28/2024 and 10/12 and 10/26/24. This is the second and fourth Saturday of the month. The market is at Westbury Baptist Church, 10425 Hillcroft Street, Houston, Texas 77096. We will buy plants from Smith Nursery for \$19 a flat which is 18 plants per flat and 21 per flat for herbs. We plan to sell them for \$3.00 each and hopefully make a profit. The Herb Society sell their plants for \$4.00. Their plant sale is November 2. We plan to buy plants 2 days before the sale. Hazel Potvin would also like to sell coneflowers.

Urban Harvest Distribution – October 5, 2024, Westbury Community Garden.

New Business

Website – Steve Goldberg is working on a new website.

ChipDrop – We received mulch on 8/8/24 and we need to order more.

Fall Vegetable Class - Ray Sher and Roy Johnson will teach fall Vegetable Gardening, September 21 at 2:30 in the Shannon Walker Library Conference Room. The class is in person or can be attended by Zoom.

Cooking with Herbs - From Garden to Table: this is a cooking class with Herbs that might be combined with a potluck: It is still being developed. Location would be at Westbury Community Garden with Julie Fordes teaching the class.

Seed Packets – None – Hopefully in 2025.

National night out – October 1, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. We will have Tacos and the works for 100 people. HPD Gessner station and Precinct 5 constables will attend.

IV. **Reports**

A. Bee Committee Report – Steve Ewing – August 20, 2024

Mike Blaha and I replaced the sun shade screen over the apiary.

Mike and I were not able to get the queen from the Annie hive – she flew just as I was about to grab her. We will try again next week.

We harvested honey and got just over 2 gallons of honey. This will be bottled and taken to Debbie. The Board can decide where to sell the honey.

Thanks to Andy Wilhoit on the E row for donating an extractor and Hazel for the use of her filters.

The dearth, or lack of flowering plants, is requiring us to feed sugar syrup to some of the hives.

A colony was added to the apiary from a cable box removal. This may be the source of the queen to replace Annie's queen.

The Apiary Garden report – Kat Elder – Bee Committee – August 20, 2024

As Margaret Mitchell and I can, we are pulling out the Ragweed, wild Poinsettias & Bermuda to allow room for the Natives planted to grow and spread. This bed is not getting enough water since we've not had rain.

When we checked in July, the plantings around the apiary (watered by Steve Ewing & Mike Blaha) were still alive. I have no new Bee Committee members to help.

B. Community Outreach/Fund Raising Report – Debbie Gordon - August 20, 2024

Submitted

In Progress

- BOMD Community Development Grant - \$7500 max
- Dept of Neighborhoods Matching Grant (\$5000)
- HEB Community Grant - \$3000 requested for shed 2 replacement -- REJECTED
- Urban Harvest Permaculture grants – none for 2024
- USDA-NRCS – Reviewed Grants.gov website. Contacted Agent Jay Knight for suggestions.
- Brookshire Bros Charitable Foundation
- Possible HEB grant for Neighborhood Night Out Event – if we host an event

Harris County Precinct 1

No update yet.

Prep:

- Getting updated quote for 1 driveway/parking segment and the whole driveway/parking project
- Need quotes on bioswale earthmoving and planting

Engineering Documents for Driveway Permit Set

- The Permitting drawing was reviewed by 3 board members, PIF Rachel Folkerts, and Past President, Virginia Livingston.
- Phone meeting with Griselda on Aug 16 to review questions and changes

Driveway Funding (same as reported June/July)

- \$5,009 spent on raised beds so far.
- \$50,638 raised for driveway so far (none spent) (includes BOMD grant still in progress)

- May need to cover a \$7100 shortfall temporarily if permitting is approved before more funds are raised.

Sponsorship Levels and Onsite Signage (see attachments)

- Improvements were made to the Sponsorship Letter – Thank you!

Economic Impact: Updates to organic food prices for the Yield Calculator showed that one 100 sq ft plot can yield 362 lbs. of produce when planted 3 seasons; 2024 value = \$576! Compare this to the 2016 calculation based on the same crops and yields = \$366.

- Carpenter recommends 5' planks for each donor on sponsorship sign, bolted to the posts just like the header boards, so the planks are not swinging free and can be placed tighter together to discourage/prevent climbing. We can still add/remove/rearrange planks as needed year to year.
- Need to choose a location for the sign.

Construction:

- Razak Quijada (Westbury handyman/carpenter) volunteered to install the posts and cut the wood planks
- Mohamed Kamel (Westbury neighbor) has volunteered to do the computerized router work
- WCG would do the painting of planks, header, and logo

C. Community Outreach – Cora Lindsay – August 20, 2024 – No Report

D. Compost Report – Hazel Potvin and Compost Team – August 20, 2024 – No Report

E. Education Committee Report – Gary Edmondson – August 20, 2024

The Education Committee has now presented 2 Managing Weeds classes on Saturday, August 3 and 10th. More will be scheduled in September

The Committee met on August 3 and we came up with the following classes for the Fall:

- Fall Vegetable Gardening: Zoom and in person; September 21, 2:30 pm at the Houston Public Library in the Conference Room at the Shannon Walker Library; Teachers, TBA
- Hands on Fall Vegetable Gardening, October 5, 9 am at Westbury Community Garden Pavilion; Teachers: TBA
- Using Fall Herbs: October 12, 9 am at Westbury Community Garden Pavilion. Teacher: Julie Fordes
- From Garden to Table: this is a cooking class with Herbs that could be combined with a potluck: It is still being developed. It would be at Westbury Community Garden.

F. Membership Committee Report – Ray Sher – August 20, 2024

- No new requests for membership that we know of.
- · We Expect that to pick up once we have a touch of cool weather in the fall. Will need to evaluate movement from and to E2-E6 before reaching out through the Crier and Southwest News for new members.
- · Beds A10 and E9 are available. E9 is covered with plastic. A10 will need to be re-weeded and covered. I'll be back in town on September 6 and can organize the Clear the Bed Team for that. I would like to go easy on the team; they just did a great job on C12.
- · In the fall, Shannon Vitek (E5) will move to B2 and Seth Rodecker will move from B2 to E5, when it is elevated.
- · We are talking with gardeners about moving to the E-aisle beds when they are elevated. So far, Seth Rodecker, Scott Strang and Betsy Longoria have asked for elevated beds. Peggy Sweeney prefers to remain in her bed.
- · We are putting together a list of volunteer garden jobs that can be done between now and the end of the year. We plan to send that list in the weekly newsletters and via text to those gardeners who we know don't check email. The goal is to help gardeners satisfy their 12 volunteer hours.

G. Pocket Prairie – Hazel Potvin –August 20, 2024 – No Report

H. Specialty Garden Report – Kat Elder – August 20, 2024

- Happy that the July workday was rescheduled to early August. I welcomed the help from Hai Duong, Events & Volunteer Manager at Urban Harvest

and The AMH Realty adult volunteer group who came on Friday 8-2-24. (photos Hai & I snapped should be shared on the Urban Harvest and Westbury Community Garden (WCG) websites).

- Hai brought supplies, gloves for WCG, snacks, plastic hand washable /recyclable water bottles and “Urban Harvest Cooling Towels” for necks and heads (washed reminders are in Shed 2).
- I led at the rescheduled 8-3-24 a.m. workday continuing work in the butterfly beds for 5 hrs. with Jeanette & Margaret later: Sadly, my request for help to the Specialty Garden committee and Debbie’s Little Green Lighthouse (LGL) request for help in prior week NEWS received minute responses from 3 (those I asked hadn’t read the emails or “can’t come”). Bed soils already dry despite prior mulching. Margaret brought her home mulch we didn’t have time to spread.
- The untreated invasive Persimmon & Hackberry sprouts from underground roots, are growing daily in the BF beds, Main Orchard, B1 Pollinator & C2 Herb beds. The large Persimmon needs pruning of the larger low branches: suggest we locate a small, evergreen, non-invasive shade tree then act to kill this Persimmon (covered by tent caterpillars this year).

I. Site Maintenance Report – Wayne Slaikeu – August 20, 2024

After approval of Weed Classes to be required of gardeners getting ten-day letters and new gardeners, and even though gardeners are being furnished with mulch, I am still seeing aisles being covered with cardboard and mulch before the weeds are removed. Either not enough gardeners are attending the classes or the ones attending are not implementing what is being taught. Not using methods being taught will result in more wasted time and returning weeds.

This has been mentioned before but needs to be told again. The faucets are attached to PVC pipes that are brittle and break easily when hoses put stress on the PVC pipe. Gardeners need to be told to not pull hoses beyond their limit and cause stress on the PVC pipe. Recently a PVC pipe was broken due to stress and resulted in a repair bill of over \$800.00. Also, gardeners should be told to inspect PVC pipes above ground and report to Site Maintenance any PVC that is not fastened securely to a good support such as a metal pipe or rod.

J. Treasurer's Report – Marcia Hartman – August 20, 2024 – Unable to convert to Word without a subscription to PDF. Check your emails for report.

K. Volunteer Coordinator Report – Betina Wolfowicz – August 20, 2024 – No Report

V. Meeting Adjourned at 7:48 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted by Dorothy Smith – WCG Secretary