

Westbury Community Garden
General Meeting - Board Minutes
September 17, 2024
6:30 – 7:50 PM via Zoom

In attendance, Debbie Gordon, Wayne Slaikeu, Dorthy Smith, Steve Goldberg, Kat Elder, Ray Sher, Betina Wolfowicz, Hazel Potvin, 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 September minutes as written by Dorthy Smith. Approved
- III. A motion was made to approve the September, Financial Report by Marcia Hartman as written. Approved

Old Business

Weed Compliance – The beds are looking better but there are still some areas that need attention. Cardboard is down but presents a tripping hazard to both the young and old. Debbie Gordon will send out an email to gardeners to remind them to cover the cardboard with mulch or pine needles.

Classes

9/21/24 - 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. Here is [the link](#).

10/5/24 - Preparing for the Fall Vegetable Garden - Shannon Walker Library and Zoom – Teachers TBA

10/12/24 – Using Fall Herbs – Julie Fordes (Houston Herb Society)
WCG Pavilion, 9-11 am.

National Night Out – October 1, 2024 6-8 p.m. – WCG Garden Pavilion

We have a \$300.00 grant from **HEB** that we can use for this event. Water and juice drinks were provided by Thyra Burks from State Representative Shawn Thierry's office.

Costco has given us \$150.00. We will need to check for and remove any wasp habitating under the tables and benches. Volunteers are needed to help serve the food. Might ask Bellaire High School kids, who need service hours, to serve food. Debbie Gordon has flyers for the apartments across the street and will speak with the relationship manager there. Parking will be available on the street.

Items needed – Black Garbage bags, Microlife. Gary Edmondson stated that he and Ray Sher had already ordered it and it is scheduled for delivery to the garden.

Plant Sale - Debbie Gordon has ordered plants from Smith Nursery for the plant sale. Seth Rodecker is transporting the tent and tables to and from the plant sale.

Sponsorship sign – The sign will need to be permitted. Permit cost is a percentage of the size of the sign. Should it be placed near the shed?

Kat Elder wondered what would happen if we purchased a third shed; we would have to move the sign. Location has yet to be determined. Permit is on hold for now.

PIFF – PIFF needs a USDA Plant Identification number in order to obtain more grant funding. Becky Edmondson will handle the new WAIC lease agreement with them. Each farmer is currently paying \$108.00/year. Farmers are working on the trash and debris clean-up.

New Business

Elevated Bed E5, E6, E3 & E4 – These beds need to be cleared and soil ordered. Ray Sher will be in charge of finding **logs** around the property and ordering soil. **Hügelkultur** is a centuries-old, traditional way of building a garden bed from rotten **logs** and plant debris. These mound shapes are created by marking out an area for a raised bed, clearing the land, and then heaping up woody material (that's ideally already partially rotted) topped with compost and soil.

Invasive Plants - Mary Thomas's Mother has died. Dorothy Smith had sent her a letter regarding her **Tindora/Scarlet Ivy** (goes by many names). It is considered very invasive but Ray Sher and Gary Edmondson did not think it was. Mary planted it for her mother, who missed having it. It is native to India. We agreed she did not have to remove it. It's not on Urban Harvest Plant list. The Education Committee will make the decision on what is invasive. Perilla and peppermint were two of the other plants discussed.

Reports

A. Bee Committee Report – Steve Ewing – September 17, 2024

We have replaced the queen in Annie. We combined a colony that was removed from a cable box with Annie.

We harvested honey and got 2 gallons and 2 quarts. The bottled honey was delivered to Debbie. The Board can decide how to use the honey.

The Apiary Garden report – Kat Elder – Bee Committee – September 17, 2024

Still doing as well as possible without weeding undesirable plants. Hope the rains and watering committee are keeping our good plants happily growing.

Hurricane Beryl's south winds bent the Heights Apt. fence northward, giving our north property plantings more room!!

I am NOT seeing the masses of Bees on the Pink Coral Vine as in prior 2 yrs. Nor using our watering bowls & fewer flowering plants. Haven't checked the Spring plantings around the Apiary in a month- Steve & Mike will be monitoring.

B. Community Outreach/Fund Raising Report – Debbie Gordon – September 17, 2024

Fundraising

In Progress

- BOMD Community Development Grant - \$7500 max
- Dept of Neighborhoods Matching Grant (\$5000)
- Possible small Costco grant for Neighborhood Night Out Event

Successful

- HEB Community Grant for National Night Out - \$300
- Donation received for drinks for National Night Out from Aspire Youth Program and Rep. Shawn Thierry

Neighborhood Night Out

- Oct 1, 6:00-8:00
- Fajita tacos and fixings for 100 people
- HPD South Gessner Station and Precinct 5 Constables will attend
- Flyer attached – please come to eat and help host this event! Spread the word to other garden members.

Plant Sale Fundraiser

- Oct 12 and 26, 9:00 – 1:00
- Bayou City Community Market at Westbury Baptist
- Thanks to Kat, Betina, Hazel, and Debbie for propagating/transplanting some plants for the sale
- Veggies and Herbs have been ordered from Smith Nursery
- Seth will transport the tent, weights, and tables on Oct 12

Harris County Precinct 1

- No update yet.
- Prep (same as last month):
 1. Getting updated quote for 1 driveway/parking segment and the whole driveway/parking project
 2. Need quotes on bioswale earthmoving and planting

Driveway Funding (same as reported June/July)

- \$6,281 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.

Gardening Within Reach – E Row Elevated Beds

- Blocks, caps, and posts have been purchased and delivered for the next 2 raised beds – E6 and E5. Work will start this month. Two gardeners are waiting for these two beds.
- Soil will be ordered soon.
- Goal is to convert the next 2 beds (E3 and E4) by the end of 2024.

Onsite Sponsor Signage

- Need to choose a location for the sign.
- This sponsorship campaign is about to start in 4Q 2024.

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. Compost Report – Betina Wolfowicz – September 17, 2024

The compost group was minimally active during the summer. We have started taking turns mixing now that the weather is a bit cooler.

We packed ready compost in buckets and bags. There are still some in Cage 5. Anybody can take a bag while it lasts. It still has some leaves and it is not fine dust but it does the job.

Coffee and chaff contributions are paused. We will find out the cause and see if they will restart them or if we need another source.

I have been collecting pine leaves from neighborhood. We are at season's peak and everybody needs to do the same so we can mulch the aisles.

D. Education Committee Report – Gary Edmondson – September 17, 2024

I have the following updates from last month:

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.

This next week an article will be sent on when and how to pick sweet potatoes and cure them.

Here is what is planned for the rest of the year. I will be continuing the planning for some these classes and events.

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.

E. Membership Committee Report – September 17, 2024 – Ray Sher

Beth Breen is moving from **E6 to C12** to free up E6 to be elevated.

Scott Strang is moving from **C12 to the next E bed to be elevated.**

Shannon Vitek is moving from E5 to B2, to free up E5 to be elevated.

Seth Rodecker moved from B2 to E9.

Thomas Lee, new, the son of Any Herrmann (A9) is joining the garden and will be in A10.

There are currently no beds available.

We have a waiting list for elevated beds, including Betsy Longoria. If anyone knows of a current gardener who would like a bi-level bed is at least 60 years old and has a physical need, please let Betsy or Ray know.

We have posted a list of garden volunteer jobs for people who need hours. There are many gardeners who either need volunteer hours or who have not recorded hours worked. In the next two weeks, we plan to ask gardeners if they need help posting their hours

F. Pocket Prairie Committee Report – Hazel Potvin – September 17, 2024 – No Report

Specialty Garden Report – Kat Elder – September 17, 2024

Had no one to weed and deadhead at the monthly August Workday (only Betina on Compost, Julie Fortes (anti-inflammatory D2 bed) and I came to work on common areas). There is a BAD turnout of gardeners who should know that the 4th Saturdays are workdays. The Butter Fly Fall Garden is blooming Swamp Sunflowers and Purple Obedience Plants that are ready to pop for a colorful show. Lots of Ragweed in Specialty Garden bed to remove as I have time. If I can get committee volunteers and I have a Purple Vitex that still needs removal to the Apiary, or another garden location. Suggestions welcome.

I concentrated my work on the B1 Pollinator collection. I removed spent plants, weeds, plants near the B2 aisle and cut and killed the Persimmon tree sprouts which keep popping up from spreading underground roots.

Note to Board: The 2010 Persimmon tree removed from the north Butter Fly bed is still invading the large one (planted in 2010) is also invading underground. It was retained for shade before we realized it would get so tall, attract tent caterpillars and its deep root system would invade all surrounding areas. It should have been cut and killed; will take future work to kill its invasive roots. Lower limbs continue growing requiring removal. Board needs to consider action.

H. Maintenance Report – Wayne Slaikeu – September 17, 2024

Would you rather walk down an aisle with loose cardboard or an aisle with a few weeds. There are many aisles with curled cardboard and bricks. What happened to the weed classes that were to remedy this problem? Many aisles have covered weeds with mulch and no cardboard.

A couple of longtime gardeners are growing papayas that are violating our rules of no trees in beds. How do we make our rules clearer?

Wasps have been found and sprayed under tables and benches under the pavilion. Warn gardeners of this danger.

I. Volunteer Coordinator Report – Betina Wolfowicz – September 17, 2024

No news to report from external volunteers. But lots of our gardeners came to help Kat on the pollination gardens. On the 4th Saturday. Also, we are discussing sharing high school volunteers (not confirmed) with Plant it Forward. If that happens, we will have approximately 20 people to coach in the compost (with me), weeding vacant lots (Ray) and working with Kat. Friday October 25. But as I said it is still up in the air.

IV. Meeting Adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Dorthy Smith – WCG Secretary

