

Westbury Community Garden
General Meeting - Board Minutes
October 15, 2024
6:30 – 7:39 PM via Zoom

In attendance, Marcia Hartman, Wayne Slaikeu, Dorthy Smith, Kat Elder, Ray Sher, Gary Edmondson, Bill Hancock and Maisha Tianuru

- I. Meeting called to order by the Treasurer, Marcia Hartman
- 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 Treasurer's report as written by Marcia Hartman. Approved.
- IV. A motion was made by Kat Elder and seconded by Dorthy Smith to approve more funds to purchase additional plants for the Bayou City Plant Sale. Motion was approved.
- V. A motion was made by Kat Elder to approve \$80 for our 15th anniversary logo development. Dorthy Smith seconded it. Approved
- VI. A motion was made by Kat Elder and seconded by Shelly Johnson to place the key deposit money into the donation account as income to the garden. Approved

Old Business

Bed Compliance – Dorthy Smith stated we are sending letters to those beds with issues, some respond, some don't. Currently B13 is one of those who doesn't respond but does open the email. She did however respond to Debbie's text regarding her bed. She cleaned it out but did not pull the weeds surrounding the bed. It is again filled with cosmos, nutgrass and assorted weeds. Dorthy

would like to send her a, "Sorry to see you leave letter". Ray Sher suggested we phone her and talk to her about her bed. Kat Elder suggested if you are sick or have a physical problem the gardener needs to contact us. They also need to respond to letters sent to them regarding their bed. Marcia Hartman said, "What if they are in a coma." She (B13) was at the plant sale and has been posting on the website so we know she is not sick or in a coma. The Board is kept aware of those who receives Courtesy, Weed and Sorry to see you leave letters.

Fall Classes – First class - Gary Edmondson stated the first class at the Shannon Walker library was taught by Roy and Shelly Johnson. They had 7 people attend and 4 were on zoom. Gary stated the library is a phenomenal place to have these classes. There were a few glitches with zoom but they were worked out.

Second Class – Hands on Class – Shelly Johnson taught the class, 4 people (2 gardeners and 2 visitors) attended.

Farm to Table – Is still in discussion. This will involve Julie Fordes.

Plant Sale Fundraiser – Bayou City Market. Customers were asking for plants, flowers and vegetables. We made almost a net profit of \$600.00 according to Kat Elder. Debbie is looking into purchasing more flowers. Do we need to authorize more funds (to be determined) for an additional plant purchase? Yes

Sponsorship Signage Location - By storage shed or a free-standing location by the fig trees. Kat Elder said, over by the shed had been ruled out since we might, in the future, purchase another one. Maybe between the Butterfly bed and the cabbage was another location suggested. The sign will be 5x8 feet. If it is free standing, we will need a city permit. Hazel Potvin thinks it might be something kids will climb. We need more information. Maybe we should take this up at the beginning of 2025.

New Business – Executive officer nominations – Marcia announced Shelly Johnson will run for Vice President, Debbie Gordon is willing to serve another term as President and Dorothy Smith will stay on as Secretary. Marcia Hartman will continue as Treasurer. Anyone can make a nomination. What do we do about committee chairs. They are appointed by the President.

November Workday - The 4th Saturday Workday is November 23, 2024

2025 Dues and Garden Agreement. Should we raise the dues again this year? We shouldn't price ourselves out of the market. Ray and Dorothy do not think we should raise the dues. We will leave the dues at \$96.00 for another year. We then need to help Debbie with grants and raising money to cover all our expenses. Marcia thinks if we want to cover all our expenses, we should charge \$200.00. Dorothy Smith felt that was too high. Shelly thinks we need donations to help cover expenses. Do we have a committee for revisions to the garden agreement? Kat Elder thinks we do need to make revisions to it.

November 9, 2024 - Potluck – Julie Fordes will teach a class Cooking with herbs and sweet potatoes. There is nothing definite about the date.

December workday Holiday Potluck. Not sure about this. We need to talk to Debbie about this.

December Workday – No work day. Might have some volunteers.

Electric Poles – Amanda Howard sent an email regarding Plant It Forward they would like to put in 2 electrical poles for a cooling unit to keep their vegetables cool. Poles are about \$18,000.00 each. We would benefit from this if we decided we needed electricity down the road. Cooling units need a concrete pad and it can't be unsecured due to cooper theft. According to the electrician it needs to be placed as close to Hillcroft as possible. Becky Edmondson's thought this was a good idea. Kat Elder wanted to know if there will be lighting around it. It will be approximately (10 x 13). Gary felt there is still a lot of information we still need, especially a design plan. Marcia will take this back to Debbie.

Deposit for keys – Marcia has \$200 in a general ledger account and would like to move it out of there and into a donation account as income.

Mulch Pile – PIFF said we can have it. It belonged to a farmer with PIFF who has left.

Native Persimmon Tree Removeable – Kat Elder would like to remove it. Shoots are coming up everywhere. Kat will get a couple of estimates to take the tree down then the board will make a decision.

Weed Class - Wayne Slaikeu – Very few people with ten day weed letters have taken the weed class. Only one class has been offered.

Reports

A. Bee Committee Report – Steve Ewing – October 15, 2024

- I did a bee removal from a room at Siegel Suites, a hotel on the north side that is renovating their building. It is a medium size colony that I put into a nuc hive in the apiary. I hope to have a couple more removals before the weather starts to get cooler.
- We intend on having a few nuc colonies through the winter and selling them to other beekeepers in the spring. We have been told there is a good demand for Top Bar Nucs for \$300-\$350 each. We have two nuc colonies at the present.
- I will get a price for two more 6' fence pieces for the apiary. I plan on making a proposal to the board.

• The Apiary Garden Report – Kat Elder – Bee Committee – October 15, 2024

This north fence bed has been neglected and the soil extremely dried out. (two alternating volunteers on Watering Committee unknown days).

On 9-28-24, Betina and Jeanette volunteered to attend to the bed for HOURS of hard work removing weeds and uncovering the viable surviving pollinator plants originally

planted and reseeded.

Steve Ewing and Mike Blaha remain responsible for maintaining the vegetation and maintenance of the Spring tree plantings around the Apiary.

B. Community Outreach/Fund Raising Report – Debbie Gordon – October 15, 2024

Community Outreach

- Willow Waterhole MusicFest have setup help; Need tear down volunteers and booth volunteers for 11:00-1:00, 1:00-3:00, and 5:00-7:00

Fundraising

Grant applications

We have Letters of Support from

- Urban Harvest, Kim Perry
- COH Public Works / Green Building Resource Center, Steve Stelzer
- BOMD, Xavier Herrera

Letters requested from

- District K, VMPT Martha Castex-Tatum
- WCC, Cindy Chapman

Grant Apps Submitted

- Dept of Neighborhoods Matching Grant; max \$5000 match. Concrete work.
- Astros Foundation; \$10,000 for concrete work
- HEB; \$2400 for 3 elevated gardens in 2023.
- River Oaks Garden Club; \$3500 for 4 elevated gardens in 2024.

- Whole Foods Market; \$2000 for 3 elevated gardens in 2023.
- Clif Family Foundation; Feb, June, Oct; \$22,000 for concrete work
- 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.
- JPMorgan Chase – Network for Good; applied for website redesign.
- O’Quinn Foundation grant; \$22,000 for concrete work
- Positive NRG;

Letter of Intent or Pre-App

- Cullen Foundation, Letter of Intent; \$89,000 for TrueGrid
- Brown Foundation, pre-app completed; \$22,000 for concrete work

In Progress

- Turner Industries Fund / Baton Rouge Foundation
- Hancock Whitney Opportunity Grant / Greater New Orleans Foundation

More grant apps for 2024

- AARP, Community Garden grants; Applications open January, deadline March 15
- CenterPoint Energy; next cycle Feb 1 – Mar 10.
- Starbucks/Neighborhood Grants; \$1K-\$10K; ?2024 dates

C. Education Committee Report – Gary Edmondson – October 15, 2024

Here are the classes that were planned and what I know about each of them.

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.

The library is a great place to have a class! Aside from the two instructors, Roy Johnson and Ray Sher, and their spouses, 7 people attended in person, and 4 attended via Zoom. The class went smoothly. The library has a large screen in a room that can accommodate about 15-20 people and the room could be expanded for larger events. The library did not have the cord needed for a hook-up to their screen, but I had one that was compatible. We started about 15 minutes late because of some technical difficulties. If we were to do this again, it would be best to have someone who is a host for those attending via Zoom.

Hands-on Fall Vegetable Gardening: October 5, 9 am at Westbury Community Garden Pavilion; Teachers: TBA

Roy and Shelley ended up teaching this since Ray and I were recovering from Covid. I heard that only 3 people came to the class.

Using Fall Herbs: October 12, 9 am at Westbury Community Garden Pavilion. Teacher: Julie Fordes

I have not heard from Julie about how this class went. I was unable to attend.

From Garden to Table: this is a cooking class with Herbs that needs further discussion and planning.

We have also discussed having a late fall or winter class, teaching how to start a habitat garden. This is also in development.

D. Membership Committee Report – October 15, 2024 – Ray Sher

There is currently 1 bed available for a new member.

There is one possible new member who I'm trying to team up with Virginia.

We have responded to a couple of requests for membership, but no return response yet.

We are waiting for E6 to be completed, for Scott Strang.

We have one more person waiting for a bi-level bed.

We sent an email to all members to remind them to log their volunteer hours and to complete their volunteer hours if they have not already.

E. Maintenance Report – Wayne Slaikeu – October 15, 2024

The posts at Northeast corner of A-13 keep getting hit by vehicles because of the sharp turn of the road. Will try to get the dumpster driver to move the dumpster back from the road, both to North and East of the present location.

We still need to make more Weed Classes available for members that received 10-day letters and required to take weed classes. Many aisles are not being cleaned properly. Also, the D-2 herb bed has covered weeds with leaves or mulch and probably by non-members. If Herb Society members are allowed to work in and around D-2, they should be required to abide by WCG Rules, including weeding and watering.

Users of the pavilion have not left it in the condition they found it when they used it. Perhaps a list of rules when using it should be posted under the pavilion along with what one needs to do to reserve and use the pavilion.

When non-member volunteers are asked to put up equipment, members should supervise them to make sure equipment is put in the proper shed and place.

F. Orchard Committee Report – Isaac Spencer – October 15, 2024 – No Report

G. Pocket Prairie Committee Report – Hazel Potvin – October 15, 2024 – No Report

H. Specialty Garden Report – Kat Elder – October 15, 2024

Much was accomplished in maintenance of the front Butterfly beds on the 9/28/24 workday. No outside volunteers, but 9 of the SG committee members responded to my email request to assist with Friday watering and Saturday bed maintenance. Much was accomplished by those helping with weeding, pruning & removal of 4 trees & excess prairie plantains (no one wanted the Purple Vitex). Kelly (Fang) came to help me weed & prune in B1 on Friday. Still need to add Margaret Mitchell's thoughtful donation of her home compost, add more Fall flowers and cover with any mulch we can find (looking at PIF dumped pile outside of their farm lease?)

I will motion the Board to approve removal/killing of the Highly INVASIVE tall native, non-productive Persimmon planted in 2010 along with the female native persimmon in the north BF bed, (which we still can't fully remove). We had previously thought we could use it for shade.

Reasons:

Its tree roots are continuing to invade Orchard Trees, both Butterfly beds, the front lawn, B1 and the B2 Herb bed, aisles and even under the Pavilion. It has proved IMPOSSIBLE to dig these pop-up trees and it's time consuming for me to cut & herbicide the many seedlings. You'll recall it being covered in tent caterpillars and dropping cats at the June tomato tasting. Its branches are also shading the remaining main orchard trees from essential sunlight, plus water & nutrients.

I. Volunteer Coordinator Report – Betina Wolfowicz – October 15, 2024

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 (me), weeding

vacant lots (Ray) and working with Kat. Friday October 25. But as I said. It is still up in the air.

No news to report from external volunteers. But lots of our gardeners came to help Kat on the pollination gardens. On the 4th Saturday. That is all.

VII. Meeting Adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by Dorthy Smith – WCG Secretary