

Westbury Community Garden  
General Meeting - Board Minutes  
November 19, 2024  
6:30 – 7:39 PM via Zoom

*Steve Goldberg was unable to attend this meeting. A major glitch occurred and the recording stopped. Also notes taken by the secretary were destroyed when a water pipe broke in her home. Since Steve was not available for the meeting, the pictures of those who attended were not available to the secretary. Only those who spoke were noted in attendance.*

In attendance, Debbie Gordon, Shelly Johnson, Marcia Hartman, Wayne Slaikeu, Dorothy Smith, Kat Elder, Wayne Slaikeu, Ray Sher

- I. Meeting called to order by Debbie Gordon.
- II. Dorothy Smith the October Minutes are approved as read by the board.
- III. Marcia Hartman the October Treasurer's report is approved as read by the board.

**Old Business**

Griselda Gonzales is still working on getting the drawings permitted for the driveway and drainage areas for approval by the city. A major problem is the drainage on the PIFF property which is not up to code.

**Bed Compliance** – Dorothy Smith stated that **B13** had cleared their bed and planted a small crop. It is looking much better. **A6** has cleared their bed and planted and also is looking much better. **C10** – Grantly Payne is not in good standing with the garden. He only cleared part of his bed leaving the beans. **A11** needs to cut back her Tindora vines. Shelly Johnson inquired about the potato vines in B9 that she and Roy were constantly pushing back into the bed. It's a vacant bed. Ray said he gave Amy Herman permission to plant the potato vines in the bed.

Debbie Gordon said **E3** and **E4** will be raised soon. **E2** is Kim Nguyen's bed. Her mother has dementia and recently fell necessitating a hip replacement. Her mother is now out of the hospital. Her mother will receive 4 hours of care from a nurse each day giving Kim time to recover. Kim will move to **B9** and remain there since raised beds are now reserved for those 65 years and over.

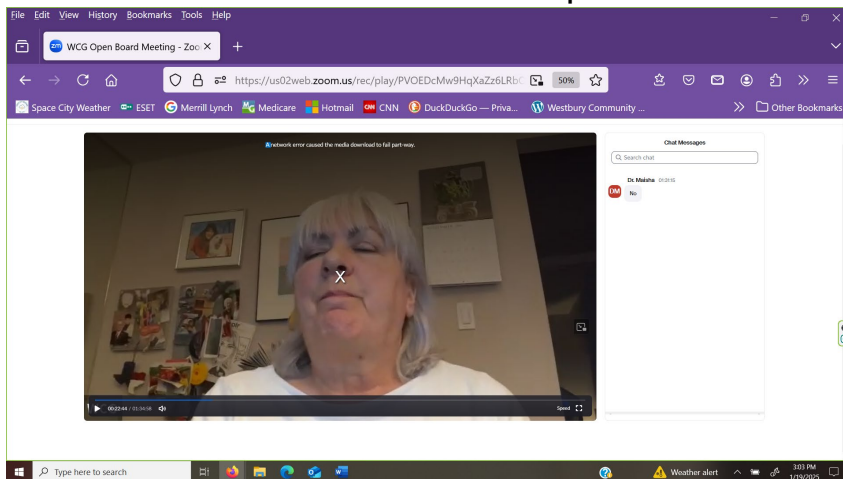
Ray Sher said if you need volunteer hours the **Clear the Bed Team** will be working to clear a few beds, Saturday November 20, 2024.

**Plant Sale** – Bayou City Community Market. We made \$912.00 from the sale of our plants. We can do this again in the fall. Kat Elder stated it was a lot of work and she did not wish to do it again in the fall.

**Seeds** – Shelly Johnson does not need approval to purchase seeds since we ALWAYS make a profit. Shelly will order seeds and sell them in February and March, in April she will order seeds for the fall.

**Sponsorship Signage** – Debbie’s neighbor will make the sign. It will have 2 - 8ft post (4x4) treated timber, the header will be 2x6 with Westbury Community Garden along with our logo on it across the top. Below will be 2x4 boards for donors who donate more than a \$1,000.00 colored coded indicating the amount given by color. Major donors are donors who give over \$50,000.

Network error caused the media download to fail part-way. This is what is in white above Debbie’s head in the picture below.



## IV. Reports

### A. Bee Report – Steve Ewing – November 19, 2024

**Good News:** My friend and fellow beekeeper, Cathy Findley, and I made a presentation on bees to the 3- and 4-year-olds at Westbury United Methodist Church last week. We used our poster size photos,

bee suit, honey comb and observation hive to illustrate the information. They enjoyed getting honey bee stickers and getting their hands stamped with honey bee stamps. They also had their pictures taken wearing kid sized bee jackets

**Bad News:** We have lost all three of our Langstroth colonies and our last Top Bar Hive colony, leaving us only one nuc. We will be talking with other bee keepers, but we think some of the colonies were robbed out due to the drought that we are having. When food (nectar and pollen) becomes scarce, the strong colonies attack the weak ones, robbing the food from the weak hives and the weak hives abscond. Two of them had queen issues that we are trying to figure out.

We will be cleaning up the apiary and preparing for the spring, when we will re-start with the bee removals that we will be doing. It is unlikely that we will be harvesting honey next year. We will also look toward expanding the apiary by 6' to provide more space around the hives.

### **Apiary Report – Kat Elder – November 19, 2024**

Desperately needs more work. Plan to transplant Black Eyed Susan's and other excess Natives and Seeds after weeding. Appears that the Spring plantings around the Apiary have survived.

Purple Martin Landlords

Dawn & Ross Asher, Mike Blaha and I cleaned the houses a 2nd time, closed them for winter and assessed what we need to make the severely damaged NE house workable by the end of the year. I again request that Board and Membership focus for 2025 on getting more member volunteering, to take the pressure from us hardworking garden leaders.

### **B. Community Outreach and Fundraising Report – Debbie Gordon - November 19, 2024**

#### **Community Outreach**

- Willow Waterhole MusicFest

## Fundraising

## Events

- Willow Waterhole MusicFEST - \$330
- Edible Flowers Class and Plant Sale - \$496

13 more snapdragons and dianthus to sell; 2 people interested

JJL Nursery cost - \$104

## Donations

- Former Salem Lutheran Church – We are blessed to receive a gift from the former Salem Lutheran Church for \$20,000. The church sold the property because repair of damage from Hurricane Harvey could not be done. They have decided to make some legacy gifts in the Westbury neighborhood. Church members were regular volunteers at the garden prior to 2017.

## Philanthropy Site Visits

- Garden Club of Houston – Nov 9
- River Oaks Garden Club – Nov 30

## 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
- ~~positiveNRG; NO~~
- Letter of Intent or Pre-App
- ~~Cullen Foundation, Letter of Intent; \$89,000 for TrueGrid NO~~
- 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
- Powell Foundation, preapp
- Baton Rouge 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
- Lloyd’s Register; investigating
- Ben and Jerry’s Foundation; 2024
- Keep Houston Beautiful Mayor’s Proud Partner Award; deadline Aug 2024; Award luncheon Oct.
- What conservation or education project can we submit?

## **C. Compost Report – Betina Wolfowicz – November 19, 2024**

1. Only 5 members in the Compost Team have been turning the pile. 8 or 9 people are not contributing anymore. It is time to recruit more volunteers

2. The pile in cage 1 is ready to bag.
3. We need to find new coffee and chaff donors. I will visit a couple of places
4. I have been collecting pine leaves from the neighborhood. We are at season's peak and everybody needs to do the same so we can mulch the aisles. **I left some in the outdoor shed, in a wheelbarrow. Those are meant for the pollinator garden, not for individual plots.**

#### **D. Education Committee – Gary Edmondson – November 19, 2024**

I have nothing to report since our last meeting, however, I have some observations and thoughts to consider as this year comes to an end.

This past year we have done the following:

- Seasonal Classes in the spring and fall. There were two in each season. One class was on Zoom and the other was hands-on in the garden. There were 5 to 7 people in attendance at each of the classes.
- Herbal class in the Spring: About 15 people attended; the numbers attending were larger because the herb society was invited.
- We did two weeding classes. Ray and I did these and we have been negligent in scheduling more of them. Ray feels like they are a waste of time.

We had 3 or 4 committee meetings. Very few people attended.

I am proposing a new direction or priority for education. Ray and I have been discussing some of the challenges that the garden has been facing. Weeds are a major issue and people not planting their beds are another. I propose a mentorship program as our priority for the new year:

1. Find good gardeners/ mentors who are willing to connect with new gardeners and existing gardeners who are struggling to plant and weed. Mentors ask mentees what they need to plant successfully and offer assistance/ education in weeding effectively. Most importantly, mentors should set up seasonal meetings in the garden during the year to support the mentees as well as be willing to speak with them when

they are having problems. This is a way for people to get to know each other and hopefully improve the overall quality of the garden.

2. When there is a weed problem in the garden, we propose first checking to see if that gardener has a mentor, and if not, they should be assigned a mentor. The weed notice can still be sent out. This is not meant to replace the letter.
3. Mentors should count their time spent mentoring as volunteer hours.

I would like to have this on the agenda for the next meeting.

#### **E. Membership Committee Report – Ray Sher – November 19, 2024**

1. There are currently 2 beds available for new members.
2. Ethan Smith is a new member who still needs an orientation. He is sharing a bed with Virginia. He is a nurse in the medical center.
3. We have responded to a couple of requests for membership, but no return response yet.
4. Scott Strang will be in bed E6 when it is completed.
5. We have one more person waiting for a bi-level bed, but she will need an active partner.
6. We sent Individual emails to every member who has not completed their volunteer hours for the year.

#### **F. Pocket Prairie Report – Hazel Potvin – November 19, 2024**

Report on the Pocket Prairie: three cheers for RAGWEED

Mowing has been scheduled for Wed., Dec. 4. That means that the area between PIFF and the prairie will also be mowed and the east field at the garden as well.

currently the prairie is full of blooms: goldenrods and swamp sunflowers plus Maximilian sunflowers and an intriguing pink flower called prairie

false foxglove or prairie agalinis. The prairie always is a surprise and this year this false foxglove seems to be super abundant.

I had the privilege to meet Cathy Finlay who is a bee keeper working with Steve Ewing. She wanted to see our prairie and what we have for pollen plants. I always thought that the goldenrod and swamp sunflower were great for pollen and I was always saying that in my reports. The truth is the ragweed is the plant with the best pollen source for honey bees because it is a late season pollen source that the bees use to get ready for cold weather and dormancy. Sad to say, due to the lack of rain, the ragweed did not bloom and produce lots of pollen this year. Instead, the bees relied on asters and any other flowers in the aster family so let's show a little respect for the ragweed!! I just love learning something like that. It goes to show all plants have a purpose.

### **G. Specialty Garden Report – Kat Elder – November 19, 2024**

There was no organized workday in October.

I was preoccupied with growing, potting and selling plants on both 10–12 and 10–26 for the WCG fundraiser. Debbie, Betina, Wayne, Hazel, Tracy, Margaret & Seth also volunteered. Very little garden member interest in buying our vegetables and flowers.

The 10-26 workday was not announced to the members (not that it would've mattered as only one SG member attended with no gardeners there). The front beds and B1 are looking quite well.

We have 1 more Workday scheduled for Saturday 11/23/24. Specialty Gardeners and anyone needing volunteer hours is invited to come from 1:30 to 4:30 or 5 PM. To work on the butterfly beds, B1 pollinator bed and the Apiary pollinator bed.

Bid to remove the nonbearing, invasive, insect infested, large canopy front orchard Persimmon tree & grinding the stump is \$300 from Torres Tree Service. I will request a board approval to remove it. We will have to continue to herbicide the sprouts coming up all around the tree.

Had hoped we could keep this unfortunately planted native tree for shade (and its companion native female, which produced unpalatable



fruit and whose roots also continue to spread), but it is NOT workable ; only requires more work for us.

A new Board-Approved, fast growing, shade tree can be selected to be planted closer to the driveway Spring, 2025.

#### **H. Treasurer's Report – Marcia Hartman – November 19, 2024**

Can be seen as distributed to members of the board

#### **I. Volunteer Coordinator Report – Betina Wolfowicz – November 19, 2024**

Apparently, the volunteers from Kincaid miscommunicated with Urban Harvest and came to WCG this past weekend. I wouldn't know if it wasn't for an email from Hai. I do not know what they did, if they stayed or who led them. They are NOT coming this Saturday the 16 of November.

#### **V. Meeting Adjourned**

Respectfully Submitted by Dorothy Smith – WCG Secretary

