

Westbury Community Garden
General Meeting - Board Minutes
February 18, 2025
6:30 – 7:32 PM via Zoom

In attendance, Debbie Gordon, Shelly Johnson, Marcia Hartman, Wayne Slaikeu, Dorthy Smith, Kat Elder, Hazel Potvin, Ray Sher, Julie Fordes, Maisha Tianuru, Steve Goldberg, Steve Ewing, Santel Frazier and Betina Wolfowicz

- I. Meeting called to order by Debbie Gordon.
- II. Dorthy Smith - February Minutes are approved as distributed and read by the board.
- III. Marcia Hartman - February Treasurer's report was circulated to the board and is approved as distributed and read by the board.

Old Business

Audit

Marcia Harthan stated the audit was complete and we passed. We requested it so we could receive larger grant money. WAIC agreed to pay half of the audit \$1,700 and WCG would pay \$1,700.

Security

Debbie attended the WAIC meeting and discussed our security issues. No HPD or Constable was present. **DRT** (Differential Response Team) are officers who respond to the **business community** to reduce crime and improve the quality of life. They would respond to our complaints. We have visitors who have visited the garden property who have been seen selling and smoking drugs. Debbie said she approached a couple (non-gardeners) and very nicely told them to take their business elsewhere. Alimasi, one of the PIFF farmers, reported that he had seen them sleeping in the corner of his farm.

Festival update - Exhibitors

Wild Birds Unlimited Houston had a conflict and will not be able to attend.

Plant It Forward Farms (PIFF) will attend.

Students for Educational Environment will attend. This is an organization composed of students from various high schools. Students can actively contribute to educational environmental pollution prevention by learning about pollution, engaging in responsible actions like reducing waste and conserving resources, and advocating for environmental protection within their schools and communities. Students should learn about different types of pollution (**air, water, soil, noise, etc.**) and their causes and consequences.

Future Problem Solvers – Will have an exhibit on *Beat the Heat*.

Permaculture for the Nation – Ray Sher suggest Debbie talk to Suzanne Bonefas. Not an exhibitor

Fish bowl donations – Hazel Potvin needs more donations. Anything that's new or slightly used but in good condition, books etc. We encourage gardeners to donate. Al Potvin has gotten restaurants to donate, a barbershop and he even received a car care package. Marcia Hartman has donated a Bob Randall book; Debbie has some Texas Tomato cages and Hazel has a wind chime that has been donated.

Farm Dirt – An order was placed for 109 bags which is 2 pallets and 9 bags. Anyone who gives her a check she will give to Marcia Hartman. One bag will go to the fishbowl raffle. I will need help on 2/23/25 at 4:30 p.m. with unloading the truck. The dirt will be kept in the locked compost area. If you have prepaid you can also pick up your bags at that time.

Local Foods – Debbie picked up a gift certificate for Jamie Gonzales and a \$50 gift certificate for the raffle was donated by Local Foods.

Seed Sales – I have sold 5 core and 2 garden adventure bags. I have 41 core and 6 garden adventure bags left. Debbie stated that she and Dorthy will be at the Bayou City Market and will try to sell as many bags as we can.

Weed Inspections – We have some really bad beds and the B/C2 aisle down to the B/C5 aisle is covered with henbit and chick weed. We also have a problem with mint in one the D beds and the aisles surrounding that bed.

Clear The Bed Team – We will be working on clearing out empty beds March 2. Shelly Johnson requested that Ray and his team work on the aisles surrounding those beds too.

Volunteers – Betina Wolfowicz said South Texas School of Law is coming 3/25 and The Fountain of Praise Church is coming 3/15.

Sponsorship sign – Please look at the options natural wood, stained or painted green with wood lettering. There is no black outline on the letters. Natural seems like what everyone wants. Hazel Potvin suggested that it be sealed. Debbie said it would be stained and sealed.

T-Shirts – The deadline to order is 2/26/25. Types of payments are Zelle, PayPal and Credit Card. If you wish to pay by check let Debbie know.

Power washing of the sheds and restoring the table and chairs. A handyman will take the table and chairs home to restore them and return them and will do the power washing of the sheds on 3/15/25.

Banner for 15 anniversary – It will be 2' x 6' with grommets for hanging. It will say, "Growing Community through Gardening for 15 years". Debbie met a woman at the WAIC meeting who suggested we request the City of Houston Super Neighborhoods to pay for the banner since there is money left in their budget and it needs to be spent by June and we are part of the Super Neighborhoods. The banner will cost around \$100-\$125.00. Becky Edmondson told Debbie to submit the receipt to them. This is a cost that we don't have to absorb.

Donor Breakfast March 22, 2025 – We have seating for 48, 6 tables of eight. Two have been reserved, 7 or more individual have purchased seats. There may be more. WAIC is one of those who has reserved a table.

New Business – Debbie Gordon realizes how much effort it takes to run a garden and would like to thank the following people for their hard work in making our garden run smoothly for 15 years. You are very appreciated for what you do to make it all happen.

Steve Ewing – Bee Committee

Wayne Slaikeu – Site Maintenance

Betina Wolfowicz – Volunteers and Compost Committee

Julie Fordes – Education Committee

Gary Edmondson – Education Committee (prior to Julie Fordes)

Ray Sher – Membership Committee

Steve & Amelia Goldberg – Data and maintaining LGL

Issac Spencer – Citrus Trees

Becky Edmondson – Promoting our garden

Betsy Longoria – Membership Committee

Hazel & Al Potvin – Pocket Prairie

Kat Elder – Specialty Gardens

Shelly & Roy Johnson – Seeds/Shelly also does Bed Monitoring and is Vice President of the garden

Margaret Mitchell – Pest Control

Dorothy Smith – Secretary/WCG

Marcia Hartman – Treasurer/WCG

Shannon Vitek – Membership Committee

A special thanks to Debbie Gordon, President of WCG for making it all happen.

IV. Reports

A. Bee Report – Steve Ewing – February 18, 2025

With the weather being so cold, we are doing little with the remaining nuc. Opening the hive in cold weather will do much more damage than good by breaking the propolis seals that the bees have made on any cracks in the hive.

Cathy Findley and I made a beekeeping presentation at Martin Elementary last week at their annual Career Day. This is the second time we have participated in the event.

B. Community Outreach and Fundraising Report – Debbie Gordon – February, 18, 2025 – No Report

C. Compost Report – Betina Wolfowicz – February 18, 2025 – No Report

D. Education Committee – Julie Fordes – February 18, 2025 – No Report

E. Membership Committee Report – New Members for January & February – Shannon Vitek – February 18, 2025

Courtney Carter (Joined Community Gardeners in D3, D4, D5)

Jimmy Cox (B5) He has gardening experience, so no mentor needed.

Ladeja Morris (A10) She said no to being paired with a mentor during her orientation as she likes trial and error. We will send her the Planting Schedule and try again to pair her with a mentor. I have been texting with her a bit making sure to look for the seed packet email that was just sent. I also forwarded her the February newsletter and the compost ordering since she joined right after it went out.

Betsy Longoria plans to garden in E4 once it's complete.

Prospective members and orientations

Chris Morris was sent the letter to prospective gardeners, but ultimately decided against it due to time constraints. He is still interested in volunteer opportunities with the pocket prairie and orchard.

Abata had an orientation, but ultimately determined he lives too far away to be successful with us. There is potential for his brother to complete an orientation and they can garden a bed together.

Woman named **Samantha** talked to Shelly at the tomato growing class; hoping to hear from her

Ethan Smith had his orientation, but I still believe we are missing his GA. He has volunteered for IT and anything that involves technology.

To my best knowledge, we have no open membership inquiries.

Departing Gardeners

Beth Breen

Stephan Alaniz (Garden in E9 with Seth Rodecker.)

Amy Herrmann, Isaac Spencer and David Duran have not yet renewed. Betina is contacting David. Ray has emailed and texted Amy Herrmann and Isaac Spencer several times.

Gardeners Needing Help

Andy Wilhoit In E10 is having a knee replacement and needs someone to tend to his bed and aisles until April.

Committee updates

Based on the names received from Steve, all gardeners who had committee discrepancies between LGL and their 2025 Gardeners Agreement have been contacted. I received responses from everyone except for Jim Williams and Mike Blaha. Both have been emailed and called.

Based on the responses all members have had their committees updated in LGL. There was a pretty even split of members looking for a change in the committee memberships, those that wanted to stay on

their old committees, or simply forget what committees they are a part of.

F. Orchard Committee Report – Isaac Spencer- February 18, 2025 – No Report

G. Pocket Prairie Report – Hazel Potvin – February 18, 2025 - No Report

H. Site Maintenance Report – Wayne Slaikeu – February 18, 2025

Since we are trying to get the garden to look it's best for the 15th celebration, this committee suggests the following:

1. The sheds are showing their age with a coating of algae. We can get them to be cleaned and preserved for a reasonable price of 200 dollars that we should do if there are no objections.

2. We have a round table with 4 chairs highly oxidized that can be restored for 150 dollars that we should do instead of replacing them if no objections.

Doing both of these things will help the garden look better for future events for a minimum investment.

I. Specialty Garden Report – Kat Elder – February 18, 2025

Nothing much to report. Insufficient volunteers to do much in January. I and everyone else consumed with our growing beds, 3/22 plans & and other activities in progress.

A few of us are working to transplant aisle Bluebonnets. Texas State Wildflower into the front and north fence pollinator beds, around a few orchard trees and into pots to use/auction 3/22. Pruning can't be done until March after freeze danger; need volunteers to help. Purple Martins: the 2024 downed damaged NE house has not been rehabbed. Not gaining requested assistance from group members; will keep trying.

J. Treasurer's Report – Marcia Hartman – February 18, 2025

Can be seen as distributed to members of the board.

K. Volunteer Coordinator Report – Betina Wolfowicz – February 18, 2025

We had a very nice crew working with us on January 25. Some of the high schoolers came from Bellaire High School (returning school) but some, to our surprise, were from Klein High School. I checked the map, and that high school belongs to the Klein ISD which is pretty far from us (Spring, Texas). The school coordinator found us on volunteerhouston.org

V. Meeting Adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Submitted by Dorthy Smith – WCG Secretary