

**Westbury Community Garden  
General Meeting - Board Minutes  
March 18, 2025  
6:30 - 7:45 p.m. via Zoom**

In attendance, Debbie Gordon, Shelly Johnson, Dorthy Smith, Steve Goldberg, Marcia Hartman, Kat Elder, Ray Sher, Julie Fordes, Hazel Potvin, Maisha Tianuru,

- I. Meeting called to order by the President, Debbie Gordon.
- II. A motion was made to approve the March minutes as written and distributed to the board by Dorthy Smith
- III. A motion was made to approve the March Financial Report as written and distributed to the board by Marcia Hartman
- IV. **Old Business – Security issue 1** – Debbie Gordon spoke with HPD about security. She invited them to join us at the festival. According to Kat Elder and others, constables from Pct 5 have been parking on the driveway and observing. Debbie made a point to thank them. A crime report came out for the city of Houston indicating Westbury crime has gone down while crime in Meyerland has risen. An article about crime in Houston will appear this Sunday in the **Chronicle. Security Issue 2** - Locking the shed and compost area. If you unlock the shed or compost areas do not hand it off to someone else to lock up. You are responsible for locking the shed and compost area; if you open them. Shelly Johnson said she felt we could have a hard hand off letting someone know they are handing off the responsibility for lockup to another person and they acknowledge. Debbie said she is ok with this, as long as, it is made REALLY clear who is responsible for lock up. She also said it should be a board member. Kat Elder requested we keep the shed door closed when it's unlocked because it's too easy to grab a tool and keep on walking. Steve Goldberg suggested we buy new locks that are easier and don't have to have the combination visible when relocking. Debbie suggested he look into it, but not buy anything yet. We also need to run all of this by Wayne Slaikeu since he is in charge of site maintenance. We will discuss this further at the next meeting.
- V. **New Business - Weed Inspections** – Shelly Johson said, twenty-one people received 10 Day Weed Letters.

**Farm Dirt Compost** – Year to date net amount is \$982.00 this is what we made over and above what we spent on the dirt (\$792). We spent 1,600 on farm dirt. We also had a \$75.00 delivery fee. Our gain was \$800.00.

**Seeds** – We broke even on seeds. We sold 29 out of the 50 bags. We will take some to the festival to sell.

**Festival** – The first booth next to the NE corner of the pavilion is the WCG Booth. Across the walkway, closer to the cistern, will be the juice bar. People from the breakfast can have their choice of juices and if there is any leftover juice, we will let anyone who wants it, have it. The WCG Booth will be membership and fundraising. Since we are on the corner, we will have two tables the one facing the walkway will have membership information. The side table, will be in front of the B/C aisle, in front of the herb bed. We will be selling raffle tickets from the WCG booth, we'll also have Honey for sell. Steve Ewing will be the next tent over and he too will be selling honey. We have some left over bee's wax items, lip balm, honey almond soap and other odds and ends plus seeds we can sell. Debbie said she still has some of those plexiglass frames left that you can sit on a table that can hold signs. The credit card reader will be there for donations, and fundraising items and raffle tickets. We will accept cash, check or card. Jule Fordes inquired about selling the leftover food items. Debbie said she is not sure how much will be leftover. There might be a few yogurt cups left. Breakfast sandwiches and yogurt parfaits if there are any left those can be moved to the tent to sell after the breakfast. We are not going to bother with potatoes or salads that stuff we can bag it up and take it home or you can do whatever you want to do with it. The big task list has been sent out. Jaime Gonzalez confirmed he will be there. He may not need AV equipment. I did hear from Hazel Potvin, Ms. Barbados, was the costal preservation person for a long time and a friend of Jaime's, has an idea for AV equipment. Hazel will check on all of this tomorrow and report back. The video crew will be there and they have a lavalier mike. However, Jaime does not think he needs a microphone or speaker to speak to our group. There will be 2 camera people and a producer there. They already have a great interview of Kat. They want to meet Kat, Ray and Marcia again. Four videos will be made. Shelly Johnson would like the PIFF flap on the market stand, nailed down. Julie Fordes suggested we needed a first aid kit. We will have one. We will also have ant bite cream 2 tubes (after bite), aspirin, Benadryl, epi pen, and ibuprofen. The WAIC, Becky Edmondson has one table, Hazel and Allen Potvin have one, which is full. BOMD agree to buy a table and sponsor some of the driveway work. We will receive a check for \$7,500 from them for the driveway. Any Occasions Tents and Events; this is the company we are renting round tables, table linens and the fold up bar from to be delivered 3/21/25 between 1 and 3 pm. Most of the things we are renting are coming from the Houston Tool Bank (They will load the truck) 70 chairs, corn hole, tents, and 4 bar top tables with spandex covers. The rental truck will stay in Debbie's

driveway overnight. The truck will be parked by the E row which will make it easier to unload and setup for the festival. Wayne Slaikeu will also be allowed to park by the E row to make it easier for him. Kat Elder wanted to talk about the two 2x8 wooden boards left by Ray Sher in the compost area. It was decided that this issue could be discussed outside the meeting. A new port-a-potty has been delivered; TP and sanitizer will be placed in it on the day of the festival. HPD will not have a tent. There will be a food tent where we can sit and eat next to PIFF. Since Debbie has not seen the Pupusa Food Truck at the church in a while she would like Betina Wolfowicz (Spanish speaker) to call them and see if the reason is because of violations or permit issues. We will also have a Taco Truck. Coffee from Starbucks/Meyerland will be picked up by Dorothy Smith at 8:30 a.m. and delivered to the garden. Shelly Johnson asked if we had fire extinguishers. Food trucks are required to have them on their trucks. Are the people cutting the grass coming? Hazel or Allen Potvin will make sure it happens. Kat Elder inquired about cones, and parking. Who is in charge? Steve Goldberg will be in charge. The trash and recyclables will be emptied. Kat Elder said, Margaret Mitchell will treat the ants, we have in the front, area near the street. Setup will be from 7-9 a.m. the breakfast will start at 9:30 a.m. Allen Potvin will give a short talk about the Silent Auction which will be at 11:15 a.m. We will have a list displayed indicating the minimum bid for items. **The banner** for the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary has been placed in the specialty garden amid complaints from Kat Elder. It was explained that it needed to be visible from the street and in a location that did not interfere with mowing. Julie Fordes requested that it be fixed so it doesn't droop in the middle making it unreadable. Friday Debbie will have yogurts assembled at her house at 3 p.m. and Kat Elder will bring the granola and place it on the table the day of the festival. We will have simple decorations on the tables made by Julie Fordes. We need to warn people not to leave their valuables in their car.

**Sponsor Sign** – Need suggestions for a location. Someone suggested near the cabbage, near the driveway facing north so it could be seen when driving in or facing the garden south of the pavilion near the pomegranate trees closer to the street.

**Wheelchair accessible bed** – We received a super neighborhood grant for this project. The grant stipulates the work must be completed by the end of May 2025. The soil needs to be scraped from E2 and possibly placed behind or near E4 (between E4 and PIFF). We need to do the driveway and pour concrete for the foundation under the bed. Hazel Potvin and Shelly Johnson went to Rice University and looked at their handicap beds, evidently they have several different styles.

**Mural on Shed 1** – Debbie is currently working on a grant to do this. The approximate cost is \$5,500.00.

**Chip Drop** – The majority of the people present at the meeting determined we needed a chip drop for use in the aisles.

**Permitting** – According to the City of Houston our driveway needs to be near the cabbage and our exit has to be where our entrance is now. The driveway cannot be 12 ft. it has to be 15 ft. Kat Elder and Shelly Johnson felt this needed to be appealed. The driveway will cost will between 50-60 thousand. Having the driveway completed gives us more access to the community.

**Missing Tools** – Debbie is requesting an inventory be made of the tools in the sheds. How many of each kind so we know when any go missing. We will also need to purchase more tools.

**Self Defense Class** - When Debbie Gordon approached HPD they were not very interested. Kat Elder said the person she talked to was Sgt. Hernandez a constable. Kat Elder stated she had completed a 2-day (2 hour each class) hands on Pct 5 constable's Women's Self Defense class at Fonteno Senior Center. Kat asked the board to query gardeners interested in attending. If interested in attending contact Sgt. Hernandez, Pct 5 community resource officer. Board favorable to pursue, asked Kat Elder to do so. Need an indoor. space to conduct the class. Suggested places for this class to take place were Platou and Bayland. He would need audio and video. Marcia Hartman thought we should also advertise it in the Crier.

## VI. **Reports**

### **Bee Committee Report – Steve Ewing – March 18, 2025**

No real news this month. We are waiting for the flowers to be in full bloom and for the weather to be consistently warm before bothering the bees. We also do not want to disturb the bees before the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Saturday.

### **Community Fundraising Report – Debbie Gordon – March 18, 2025**

#### **Fundraising**

Awarded

Dept of Neighborhoods Super Neighborhood Grant Program (\$7000)

- Work must be completed and reported by end of May

Native Plant Society of Texas - \$600 for planting bioswales with swamp milkweed

- Work/report deadline October

Submitted

Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant / National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (federal); Deadline 1/30/2025

- Financial Audit – required
- In Progress

The Brown Foundation, no deadline

Ben and Jerry's Foundation, no deadline, rotating

Native Plant Society of Texas Houston Chapter 1/31/2025 \$2,000; For bioswale plant material. NPSOT withdrew this program for 2025.

O'Quinn Family Foundation

- Harris County Precinct 1
- Ongoing
- Final driveway and drainage/detention site plan in progress

Founders' Breakfast

- Sold out (actually oversold by 4 seats) \$4560. BOMD 8 seats are unconfirmed.
- Catering total – 69 (ordered 96 breakfast sandwiches, 16 lbs. potatoes)
- Silent Auction items – Service gift certificates – car care, golf, barber, art, food, etc.

15th Anniversary Festival

- 12:00-3:00 PM, March 22
- Free, open to the public
- Educational Booths
  - WCG Booth – Membership and Fundraising
  - WCG Honeybees
  - Garden Advice – Bob Randall and Gary Edmondson; Year-Round Gardening books for sale
  - Urban Harvest – Permaculture

- Herb Society of America – STU
- NPSOT-H
- Plant It Forward
- Bellaire High School, Future Problem Solvers/Beat the Heat
- Students for Environmental Education
- Art4Heath – Maisha
- Houston Police Dept.
- Honey Sale, beeswax products, essential oil mosquito spray
- Fishbowl Raffles – lots of great stuff!
- Outdoor Games – 2 Corn Hole sets (ToolBank), Garden Scavenger Hunt
- Food vendors – El Comal Taco Eatery, Pupusas by Torre Fuente Church

### **Education Committee Report – Julie Fordes – March 18, 2025**

Part 2 of the Tomato Growing Class was well attended by both garden members and the public. Home Depot donated 12 tomato plants and dirt; many participants were able to take a plant home. Thank you, Roy and Shelly.

We do not have another class planned at the moment. All of the Education Committee members are involved in the Founder's Day Breakfast and Festival. We are involved in fundraising, food preparation and educational opportunities at the festival.

### **Membership Committee Report – Ray Sher – March 18, 2025**

#### **1. Unoccupied beds**

- a. B10, C10, D10, C11, C12, C3, E2, E3, E4, E5

#### **2. New and Prospective New Members**

- a. Jimmy Cox is now gardening in B5.
- b. Shannon and Ray have done orientations with two new prospects, but they have not joined at this time.

#### **3. Renewals for the 2025 gardening year**

- a. We have Gardeners Agreement from everyone except Ethan Smith who gardens with Virginia Livingston.

b. All gardeners have either paid their 2025 membership in full or are on a monthly plan of paying.

4. All gardeners who have given up a bed either cleared the bed completely, made a substantial effort to clear the bed, or was removed from the garden with 10-day emails. No money was collected for clearing beds.

5. Publicity is in the Westbury Crier about beds being available. Other publicity will be going out very soon. If anyone knows of someone who may be a good member of the garden, please let Shannon or Ray know.

### **Orchard Committee Report – Isaac Spencer – March 18, 2025 – No Report**

### **Pocket Prairie – Hazel Potvin – March 18, 2025 – No Report**

### **Site Maintenance Report – Wayne Slaikeu – March 18, 2025**

Many tools are disappearing. If tools are borrowed when the shed is open and the shed is locked when you are done with the tool; I encourage gardeners to leave tools in the locked compost bin instead of taking home in order to bring them back later.

The combination lock on the compost gate has not been locked properly. The lock has to be put through the hole in the latch, to make it secure.

Some unusual trellis mesh has been left in the compost area that needs to be put in the dumpster. Leaving trellis wire of any kind leaning against the compost fence is dangerous.

### **Specialty Garden Report – Kat Elder – March 18, 2025**

Despite the SG Committee attempts to beautify the front Butterfly Beds, I question WHY the (unexpected) decision was made to place the large festival banner INSIDE the south BF bed. This blocks the plantings, signage and statuary and potentially damages the plantings.

A far better location would have been to the north in the open area of the main orchard where no damage would have been done making the banner more visible from Dunlap.

Despite the absence of volunteers anticipated 3-15-25, the Specialty Gardens committee members have worked hard at varied times to manage the front butterfly beds and the B1 pollinator collection in advance of the 3-22-25 Festival. Bluebonnets are in bloom in front; native flowers, bushes and trees are beginning

to come back after the freezes.

Peggy, Shelly, Roy, Margaret, Kelly, Paul, Don and Jeanette have helped me at varied times mulching, transplanting Bluebonnets and Shelly's potted Zinnias, with final deadwood pruning, weeding and watering. For B1 the AB group watering members and the Garden Watering Team volunteers, scheduled and managed by Shannon Vitex, will hopefully aid with sufficient water needs without any rain. B1 looks nice but plants aren't up and ready to bloom since the last freeze. The honey bees and insect pollinators are looking for flowers...

Insufficient time and manpower to complete work in the Apiary Pollinator bed where Margaret has worked, treated ants and watered. The long hose and sprayer were stolen a 2nd time and will be replaced with a theft prevention hose lock in the next few weeks. Margaret kindly loaned a 25' flexi hose to reach most of the beds but not the grape vines.

I'm sad that 2 of the always helpful WCG watering team members are no longer present and leaving openings: Beth Breen and Mike Blaha (also on my Purple Martin team and Wayne's Site Maintenance). The Watering Team NEEDS MORE MEMBERS; assignments aren't made beyond July when Shannon will also be gone having her baby and Ray/Gary will likely be out of town. These are EZ Volunteer hours for members- need an SOS for the critical summer months for common area plants and trees.

I removed the recycling and David Duran agreed to remove trash in the Pavilion on Friday. We need a recycling container in the pavilion.

**Treasurer's Report – Marcia Hartman – March 18, 2025 – see report that was distributed.**

**Volunteer Coordinator Report – Betina Wolfowicz – March 18, 2025**

For the Anniversary breakfast we have the Bellaire Honor Society to work the shift 7-10 am. From 10- 1 pm we will have the Kinkaid Honor Society. There will be only 5 students/group.

Students who have exhibits in the afternoon festival will help dismantle everything after it is over. An extra volunteer contacted us through our website. She will come to the festival and stay to help at the end as well

We got 2 people on our list this far who want to come on March 29. Can one of you can come and coach them? If nobody needs their help I will come and mix compost with them or weeding.



The big group of Ohio State University alumni will come back Saturday April 26.

Maybe these dates (March 29 and April 26) can be added to our calendar on the website.

### **Composting**

I was reading the arboretum blog on composting. They say that besides the usual fruits and vegetables we can add any other food scraps as long as it does not have meat in it. So, bread, pasta, and rice are all good contributions. And soiled cardboard such as pizza boxes are also good.

We are now 10 people in the committee and everybody is pretty motivated to mix.

Cheers! Plants are growing!

- VII. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.  
Respectfully Submitted by Dorthy Smith – WCG Secretary