

**Westbury Community Garden  
General Meeting - Board Minutes  
July 15, 2025  
6:30 – 8:00 p.m. via Zoom**

In attendance, Debbie Gordon, Shelly Johnson, Steve Goldberg, Kat Elder, Julie Fordes, Steve Goldberg, Betina Wolfowicz, Hazel Potvin, Dorothy Smith (absent), Wayne Slaikeu

- I. Meeting called to order by the President, Debbie Gordon.
- II. A motion was made to approve the July minutes as written and distributed to the board by Dorothy Smith. Approved
- III. A motion was made to approve the July Financial Report as written and distributed to the board by Marcia Hartman. Approved
- IV **Old Business – Master Plan** Hazel Potvin asked how much money we had set aside for the Master Plan. Debbie Gordon said grant money/seed money was set aside for the Master Plan. We requested double coverage for the handicap bed and this money has been set aside too. We don't want to spend much of our own money on the driveway, parking or detention ponds. Hopefully money from Harris County will provide for this. We should hear back from them on July 29, 2025. We have raised almost \$50K from all the small fundraiser we have had. Most of the money is for capital expenses. We still have \$75K in our regular account. Julie Fordes would like a bigger picture or a written explanation or maybe a talk at the Potluck regarding this. Julie also suggested we show the Tomato video. Debbie Gordon totally agreed and wants our finances and plans to be totally transparent. Debbie is totally familiar with the Master Plan because she has been working on it for a long time but not everybody is as familiar with it, as she is. One thing Debbie has been thinking about doing is taking the presentation she gave to Harris County and presenting it at the Potluck so everyone gets the big picture.

**McGovern Medical Students (Twelve - First- and Second-Year Med Students) Community Rotation** – Debbie Gordon will give them the Harris County Presentation. In 2026 the same students will return as second- and third-year med students and a new group of first year students will also come to spend another day with us. They are being asked to walk or drive the neighborhood and learn about the neighborhood surrounding the garden, what issues do they face, we know it's a food desert, how is the bus transportation, is it safe, are there sidewalks, are they safe to walk on etc.

**Website Design** – Steve Goldberg has been working very hard on our website redesign, changing the theme, the look and feel. The data is still there, the blog articles and the basic structure is still there but it has a new fresher look. I encourage you take a look at it. The URL is still the same. If you have questions concerning the website contact Steve Goldberg. Thank you, Steve for all your hard work on the website.

**Security Cameras** – I circulated information from Bill Burris, Willow Water Hole, to the Board. He thought cameras were a deterrent but not helpful in apprehending any vandals. The police do not respond. They simply ignore it. There is some value if cost is not prohibited. Kat Elder looked in to different types of cameras including wild life cameras. Julie Fordes talked with Don Findley and said we would need 4-5 cameras each estimated to be about \$1,000.00. Then there is another \$200.00 a month for the footage to be viewed, and archived. If you have Solar cameras on a pole or in a tree then someone has to climb up and retrieve the chip. We would definitely need Wi-Fi. It's a pretty big outlay. Willow Water Hole's cameras are around the parking area according to Hazel Potvin. If you have a suspect there is not enough information to identify them. But cameras are helpful in identifying types of vandalism being done. Debbie Gordon suggested posting signs (You are being monitored) and fake cameras. Let's check into the legal ramification of doing this. Shelly Johnson said there are legal ramification if you have real cameras and someone is injured in the garden. **PIFF** has stated they

have a couple of men who are parking themselves around the pink shed, far side, south end and smoking pot (marijuana) every night. Debbie Gordon reported this to **David Beeter, the Farm Program Director**. They also have a couple who are still living on the farm and sleeping under the pavilion. PIFF has posted signs and will report back to us on how effective the signs are in deterring crime.

## **New Business**

**Foerster Elementary School** – The principal at Foerster Elementary School asked us to help them get their gardens ready for the new year. Marcia Hartman and Debbie went over to Foerster to evaluate their garden. They have two 2.5 x 8 ft beds in one courtyard and in the other courtyard they have a magnolia tree. Kat Elder asked if they will maintain the area since they didn't last time, we cleaned it up. On August 2<sup>nd</sup> and August 9<sup>th</sup> Debbie Gordon, Julie Fordes, Pat Ray from Fon Meadow Community garden helped with the garden clean up. They removed weeds and old plants and revamped the surrounding area trimming bushes and trees. WCG purchased plants and seed packets. The Herb Society will donate some herb plants too. They would like us to build another bed for them. The principal said they are hoping to hire someone to help with their garden possibly Amy Herman, a former teacher and current WCG member.

**Volunteer Houston** – Volunteer Houston is now a program of Interfaith Ministries which is now **IM Houston**.

**Social Media Strategy** – Debbie Gordon talked with 3 volunteers from the NAACP for advice. The first thing they told her was we had to be on Instagram. She was also sent a 5-page document on how to promote the garden. Promote what you have for instance the Bees and all the other things we do. Debbie thought topics relating to each season would be something to talk about with Carlotta Griffin on Instagram.

**Bill Edmondson** – Memorial Service is July 19, Saturday. People are being asked to donate to WAIC instead of flowers. Should we make a donation. Money donated to WAIC will help Willow Water

Hole, Westbury Community Garden, and Levitt Pavilion. Possibly plant a tree. Kat Elder made a **motion** to donate \$200 to WAIC in Bill Edmondson's name, and Julie Fordes seconded it. The motion passed 7 out of 10. Debbie doesn't know when this will be done, since Marcia Hartman is out of town till the end of August. Debbie, in mean time, will purchase a card to send to the family.

**Calendar Planning Meeting** – We had a meeting on July 23 to plan events, including classes and other events such as elections, fertilizer distribution, mulching the aisles, freeze wrapping trees, weeding around trees, trimming trees and other events that need to be placed on the calendar through 2026. Having things on the calendar helps leadership to know when things are coming up.

**Bylaws** – Term limits for the Executive Board. Hazel Potvin thought we should table this discussion for another time.

**New Shed** – We will table this for another time.

**Orchard Manager** – The position has been offered to Margaret Mitchell but she and Debbie Gordon have not met yet to discuss the position.

## **v. Reports**

### **Bee Committee Report – Steve Ewing – July 15, 2025**

#### Established Hives

Top Bar Hives – Pig Pen and Pilgrim both swarmed. The remaining colonies are both growing. We will see if we will get a harvest from them.

Langstroth (traditional) Hives – Aqua, which was in a small nuc, a Jester box, was moved into a 5 frame nuc. Wild Thing, that was in the 5 frame nuc was moved into a full size, 8 frame box. Both are doing well.

#### New Hives

My friend and fellow beekeeper, Cathy Findley, and I made a removal from a water control box at Evelyn Park in Bellaire. It was a large colony and was put into a Lang box.

Several other removals are on the schedule in addition to the colony in the swarm box located on my back fence.

### Continuing Education

I attended a monthly bee training class where half of the day is “hands on” work and the other half is classroom discussion. There is always some new information picked up in these classes in Austin.

### **Community Fundraising Report – Debbie Gordon – July 15, 2025 - No Report**

### **Education Committee Report – Julie Fordes – July 15, 2025**

We moved the sign that details composting instructions closer to the composting area. Looking forward to the planning session.

### **Membership Committee Report – Ray Sher – July 15, 2025**

#### 1. Unoccupied beds

- a. C10, D10, C11, E2, E3, E4, E5

#### 2. New and prospective members

- a. Stephanie Blakes and Anjanetta Irving are new members of the garden. They are sharing bed C12, and they will take care of the sweet potatoes and aisles until the fall. They will harvest the potatoes and plant vegetables. Stephanie has joined the watering and specialty gardens committee, and Anjanetta has joined watering. They did overpay for the remainder of the gardening year and will need a refund for overpayment.
- b. There have been several email inquiries for joining, but seem to lose interest after the introductory email is sent.
- c. Events and the Crier have seemed to help with interest in joining the garden. Stephanie attended the Tomato Tasting with a member, and at least one email interest mentioned the Crier advertisement.

## **Orchard Committee Report – July 15, 2025 – No Report**

## **Pocket Prairie – Hazel Potvin – July 15, 2025 – No Report**

## **Site Maintenance Report – Wayne Slaikeu – July 15, 2025 – No Report**

## **Specialty Garden Report – Kat Elder – July 15, 2025**

I treated more of the 2 native highly invasive Persimmon trees popping up in B1, C2, aisles and the south BF beds. Peggy helped me with the process to stop/kill the never-ending underground root system: prune back/herbicide application/ rubber glove cover protection of nearby valued plants.

When I can GET ASSISTANCE , I'll herbicide more sprouts invading the row 1-2 beds, main Orchard, orchard trees, pavilion floor and the BF beds and also kill or pull any more emerging invasive Hackberry trees.

The original cut down tree will require cut back/herbicide/ heavy applications of Epsom Salt and black plastic cover/ repeatedly until the many underground runners die. Unknown cost/effectiveness of finding and hiring a knowledgeable landscaper to do this.

I worked in the BF and B1 beds at the July workday with the help of a small, but energetic group of 1st time NAACP volunteers. Debbie led another very helpful group of outside Volunteers in the E and Wheelchair beds. Almost no Gardeners showed up.

### **Security/Monitoring Camera System:**

As I've had time, I'm researching the best wireless/battery/motion detection/ez review/night vision/cost comparison camera system for WCG. Reviewed Wildlife and Security camera ratings, but missed the many reductions on AMZ Prime Sale days. No info re WWH cameras from Bill Burris (Hazel contacted but has voiced opposition, despite Board and member interests).

No volunteers to help work in Apiary Poll Bed.

**Treasurer's Report – Marcia Hartman – July 15, 2025 – see report that was distributed to the board.**

**Volunteer Coordinator Report – Betina Wolfowicz – July 17, 2025**

We had elementary school kids as volunteers at the end of May, Debbie, Julie and I coached them in groups sorted by age with 3 different activities. It went very well and they paid a small fee to spend the morning with us.

- VI. Meeting adjourned**  
Respectfully Submitted by Dorothy Smith – WCG Secretary