

# **Westbury Community Garden Board Meeting Minutes**

**March 17, 2026**

The Board meeting was called to order at 6:33. Members present were Debbie Gordon, Katharine Jager, Julie Fordes, Marcia Hartman, Betina Wolfowicz, Shannon Vitek, Cindy Chapman, Peggy Sweeney and garden members Kelly Huang and Tracey Schreiber

## **Old Business**

February minutes were approved by acclamation.

February's Treasurer Report was approved by acclamation.

Treasurer Cindy Chapman explained that our CD, which is divided between WCG (75%) and WAAC (25%), had been renewed for a 3 month term.

## **Plant and Seed Sale Fundraiser-Recap**

The Farmer's Market Plant Sale was deemed a success. It grossed \$1,154.00 minus expenses of \$235.76 for nursery plants and pots giving us a net of around \$900.

## **New Business**

### Harris County Precinct I Tentative Grant Timeline

The county grant awardees are announced around May 1. Once the award is granted and full monies given, there is an 18 month timeline for the project.

The first and second quarter through September is mainly dedicated to administration and permitting. That involves the following:

- Topographic survey
- Replatting from family housing to our new designation

At the end of the year, Griselda will need time to finish the engineering documents and change our project drawing to include the additional parking and the walking trails. The first two quarters of 27 will be dedicated to permitting. Construction will start in the second half of 2027. Debbie noted that that works well for the planting that will be done. As project engineer, Griselda will be on site through construction.

### Levitt Music Festival, March 28

Call for volunteers to staff booth

Our teaching topic is Composting with games and visual aids

Betina noted that it is also a big volunteer day at the garden for Fourth Saturday Work Day. She has a group of 15 scheduled and 9 more with Katherine Jager's students.

We have since cancelled the WCG booth at the festival.

## Extraordinary Caterpillar Documentary Screening -May 2

This film about the importance of caterpillars in our ecosystem is produced by the Caterpillar Lab and Homegrown National Park, the group affiliated with Doug Tallamy. WCG is partnering with the Houston chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas to purchase a reasonably priced screening license and promote the screening of The Extraordinary Caterpillar on May 2 at the Company Onstage near the Bellaire Triangle.

The Company Onstage, was formerly in Westbury Square and recently moved to 5720 Bellaire Blvd. near the Bellaire Triangle. The theatre seats 68. We are considering a ticketed matinee viewing with tickets around \$10 and perhaps a second show. We are able to serve refreshments. Projectionists will show the documentary film.

## Native Plant Makeover of Company Onstage Landscaping

The Houston chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas will transform the Company Onstage's small triangular parking lot bed.

## WCG T-shirts

We are going to permit individuals to order previously designed t-shirts on our Custom Ink account. Custom Ink allows everyone to choose and purchase their shirts individually on the WCG account. The shirts will be delivered in bulk and distributed at the garden.

We will decide which shirts to include-maybe the lime green WCG and the Tomato Road Art one. Marcia noted that the price of the shirts depends on the number of each type ordered.

## Mass SMS/MMS Software

WCG is exploring a mass texting software that integrates with our LGL (Little Green Light) software. Many people do not read their email and this might keep more people informed. Debbie continues to research the software and offered the following details:

- Membership would need to add a field on membership forms for members to specify if they wanted messages by text or email.
- SMS is a short text. MMS has more characters and pictures.
- Probably each blurb of the newsletter would have a link.
- There are varying fees for the number of messages. They come in batches of 100 for a specified price and go up.

Someone asked if it would work with What's App. We'll revisit this item.

## National Volunteer Week, April 19-25

Debbie noted that this is a good time for special treats for volunteers. She will submit a donation request for CostCo to provide some treats. She also noted that we have a pizza oven on hand but we decided a trial run would be helpful. Volunteer appreciation week includes WCG's fourth Saturday workday. Betina was encouraged to mention it on the Volunteer Houston site.

## Earth Day, Wednesday, April 22

## Keep Houston Beautiful Day, April 11 Events

- Platou Day-Boy Scouts will revamp the sign garden and clean up
- Westbury Park (near Parker)-planting activity
- Willow Waterhole-clean up

## Other New Business

Shannon says we have 5 or 6 vacant beds. E-2 and E-3 are donation beds now. Debbie says Shannon and Nadia have been busy interviewing and orienting gardeners. Shannon is recruiting mentors for new gardeners.

Katharine Jager will be celebrating her big 50th birthday on our March 28th workday.

Hazel noted that the leaves in the aisles are often full of seeds that drift to gardens. She suggested emptying bags of leaves with care and leaving most seeds in the bottom of the bag. Debbie suggested informing the Clear the Bed team.

Our new Clear the Bed team is led by Subhankar Baidya.

Dorothy Smith was in a car accident but luckily is alright. She had been working on clearing D-5 and moving to E-4. D-5 will be cleared on the 28th.

Hazel requested an updated orchard map.

Debbie is headed out of town.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:31

## Committee Reports

Please find all submitted committee reports below. Since the financial report is more confidential, I will continue to attach that with the minutes.

## Volunteer Report March 2026-Betina Wolfowicz

Fri, Mar 13, 9:31 PM  
to Westbury Community Garden-Board

On February 28 we received Katherine's students University of Houston. They diligently filled Dorothy's assigned elevated bed, removed weeds around it, mixed compost, worked with Kat on the specialty gardens, in the orchard, etc  
It was hard physical labor.

On March 6, we had medical students from the UT McGovern school. They were very productive! They weeded the aisles around vacant beds, they mixed compost, maintained the orchard trees, and worked on specialty gardens. But the star of the activities was the harvest: they collected kale, swiss chard, cilantro, all sorts of herbs, and other winter veggies to donate to our garden neighbors. They washed the veggies twice in a makeshift sink, dried them and packed them for transport.

We went together to the Heights apartments where residents collected some of the donated produce, and the students took the rest of the vegetables to a food pantry.

A big thanks to all the members who came to help direct the tasks! A great experience overall!

Betina

Fwd: Specialty Gardens Committee Report, Purple Martins,  
Site Maintenance addendum. 2-17-26 Kat Elder

**Subject: Specialty Gardens Committee Report , Purple Martins, Site Maintenance  
addendum. 2-17-26**

Little to report. Much more work is needed in the front BF beds.(weeding, adding seeds, deadwood pruning, excess plant removal, persimmon herbiciding). Hope to have ample volunteers & SG lead gardeners at the 2/28 Workday.

Nothing done in the Apiary Pollinator bed: clearing weeds & excessive native Frogfruit ground cover, pruning deadwood Coral Vine & adding coneflowers & planting native seeds. No volunteers to help to date.

Last month, Shelly & Roy Johnson replaced aisle cardboard & using their old rich aisle soil, transplanted aisle Bluebonnets around a few of the N40 Fruit trees. Peggy Sweeney & I are potting up some of the Bluebonnets removed from aisles at the recent short school visit. Can sell at upcoming bayou city market or transplant around trees & BF beds or gardeners can transfer a patch into their leased beds.

Just received my contact lists of 2026 SG Committee & Purple Martin Landlord members.

Purple Martin Houses: considerable efforts to repair / rehang the severely damaged NE house, proving futile. History & detailed Approval request sent to BOD for purchase of a better, larger assembled house, on a winch system, for us to maintain & elevate house. Vote due 2/17. Unknown when Martins will begin arriving to check out our housing. ( Will then prep cavities for nesting & open door access).

Site Maintenance: Almost completed with Shed 1 build out/ tool storage and organization of Shed 2. All hand tools purchased / some will be hung with temp. simple labeling ; will need more long handle round shovels & rakes in future.

Kat ElderSpecialty Gardens Chairman

## WCG Orchard Report, Feb., 2026

We did a great deal of pruning with the UHD students cutting out dead wood from the figs. Today, Mary Thomas and I took a look at both the north orchard and the front orchard to see how things were going.

### North ORCHARD

1. Grapevine, pruned vigorously and the trellis was repaired, is sprouting and will be fastened onto the wire as soon as they are long enough.
2. Mulberry is forming its little berries so when the berries are black and filled out, they can be picked but they do stain.
3. Pears are in bloom and you can see little pearlets forming.
4. The fig is looking good including the one planted for Bert
5. Citrus, I really think they should have far more blooms.
6. Peach tree, very few blossoms
6. Fuyu persimmon appears to be dead, no sprouting and the scratch test did not show any green under the bark.
7. Jelly palm looks good.

### Front Orchard

1. Fig trees, well pruned but need some touch up, vigorous growth,
2. Citrus, better blooming but could be more. Not much production expected.
3. Peaches seem to be doing well.
4. Persimmon seems to be alive but not sprouted yet. It passed the scratch test.
5. Loquat, this is a fruit tree which blooms in Dec. and produces fruit early in the cold months.  
We missed its fruiting time.
6. pomegranate, some small fruit is visible on the two bushes we have

Submitted by Hazel Potvin and Mary Thomas

## Specialty Gardens: March 2026

Kat Elder

Was able to secure a small group of excellent volunteers for spring preparation in front butterfly beds. No time to plant seeds or transplant of natives. The beds look great, but need more planting and seeding. The rose bush sadly has not survived. Will treat fire ants around the perimeter. Still need to expand the bed to accommodate our happy yellow *Thrysalis* bush, prune deadwood & remove another unwanted Hackberry.

At the Friday morning workday, was assigned only 2 volunteers for the Apiary Bed - did great pruning the Pink Coral Vine.

Still having difficulty getting the inactive SG Committee members to help lead, despite LGL requests. Peggy, Paul, Katherine & Johnsons DO come & stay to help lead when they're available.

### Purple Martin Houses:

-Wayne Slaikeu, Don Finley & I prepped all 3 older houses as soon as we saw/ reports of PM scouts. Will have to continue lowering houses to evict the European House Sparrow pests. Considering traps...

- Don helped me set the permanent post at A11 for the new 8 room PM house.

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On 3-14-26, four of our team helped me erect & prep the new house. Franco Posa, Ross & Dawn Asher & Don Finley. It's on a strong post (hard to detect!) with a metal pulley system to enable easier maintenance.

**- For Fall 2026, we plan to investigate replacing the SE Trio house polyester cord pulley system with a steel cable system. Also replacing the pole which is now leaning. I'll be removing more reusable parts of the old PM house, then discard it.**

**Sheds: I've completed the Shed 1 buildout: will be marking /hanging more new tools & ASAP adding the beautiful Tool Organization Photos Peggy Sweeney has designed. Eventually, will need a few more replacement pointed shovels & sharpshooters.**

**Still issues with missing buckets & putting wheelbarrows in the wrong places. Garden Leaders (or a stationary Site Maintenance member) should be at the Sheds to insure correct, & cleaned tool returns.**

**Add another short shelf to the right back of Shed 2? Still need to remove the old Shed 1 wooden dresser to ??**

**Kat Elder**

**Specialty Gardens Chairman**

**Purple Martin Landlord Team Leader**

**Site Maintenance Volunteer**

Steve Ewing

Bee Committee Report – February, 2026

- Have inspected all of the hives and they all made it through the winter!

Yea!!

- Although Pig Pen made it through the winter, we spotted that it has developed chalkbrood disease. Chalkbrood disease is caused by a fungus and is spread by spores that can enter a hive attached to pollen, robbing bees, or tools that were used in an infected hive. Once in a hive, the spores are accidentally ingested by the larvae and will kill them. When we spotted the disease, which looks like chalk, we cut out the entire infected comb and moved the hive off site. It is questionable if the colony will survive – fingers crossed.

- Right now, discounting Pig Pen, we have 5 Langstroth hives and 4 Top Bar hives, 3 of these being nucs or small hives. We are looking to sell at least 2 of the nucs. The Langs are all looking strong so hopefully we will be harvesting honey this summer, even though these hives are only a year old.

- We have 4 new members of the group: Deborah Lancaster, Delayah Smith, Xiang Thao and David Waddell. I look forward to getting them involved with the bees in the near future.

## Education Committee Report

March 2026

Julie Fordes

The Education committee continued to help the Outreach Committee distribute the flyer for promotion of all of our classes until the end of May. We made laminated posters to post around the garden, and at the apartment across the street.

We assisted Volunteer coordinator Betina and Outreach coordinator Debbie with lessons and experiences for the McGovern medical students who had a fine experience on March 6. See Betina's description in her report.

We are working with Betina and others to create a bank of activities that any gardener can do with visiting school groups. The activities will be kept in boxes in Shed 3 with the materials needed to do the activities.

We continue to field calls and plan activities and field trips at the garden from schools and scout groups.

Thanks to our teachers Ray, Roy, and Shelly for teaching out Tomato Classes both at the library and at the garden. We are fortunate to have such expertise.

## Herb Committee Report

March 2026

We have consistent workdays/gatherings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays. I have sent workday reminder emails to the 10 gardeners on the Herb Committee through LGL.

Other gardeners come to the workdays who are not on the committee.

The beds look great, on March 14 we put a couple of dozen bundles of fresh herbs on the bench by the compost/parking area.

We have an article on website encouraging gardeners to harvest herbs.

The March 21 is the class, Healthy Eating with Spring Herbs, taught by STU members is coming right up.

## WCG Site Maintenance Report, February/March 2026

### Don Findley

Good afternoon contained is the site maintenance activity report.

- \* Continued review and repair of hoses, hangers and back flow valves
- \* Tightened loose hose connections throughout rows B, C and E
- \* Removed/destroyed old wood pallets from rear grass of area row E beds.
- \* Completed emergency water leak repair on E row bed during workday event
- \* Relocated storage box containing isle cardboard to outside rear of storage containers
- \* Relocated fence posts near compost area to outside rear of storage containers
- \* Assisted Kat with digging and placement of new Purple Martin house post
- \* Assisted with set up, breakdown and storage of hub plant distribution
- \* Repaired hose hanger on bed B 11, additionally replaced hose, back flow valve and placed new hose lock

## March Membership Committee Report

03/17/2026 Shannon Vitek

### 1. Unoccupied beds

a. A10, D5, E2, E3, E10

b. Dorthy Smith is currently working on prepping D5. The Clear the Bed team will help finish next Saturday

c. E2 will be used for donation crops by Betsy Longoria and her donation team

### 2. Existing, new, and potential gardeners

a. Amy Herrmann is interested in leasing A10 again. Bed will be offered to her if it is still available mid-April and we have no interested party

b. David Waddell joined and is gardening in C5. He is an art teacher at HSPVA. He joined the Apiary, Compost, and Seeds & Plants Committees. Shannon is mentoring him

c. C6 was offered to Diana Afia, but she has not sent forms or payment at the time of writing this report - 03/13/2026

d. Abi and Nik Preece have joined and are gardening in C9 with their 3 children. Abi joined the Herb Committee and Nik joined IT. Shelly is their mentor.

e. Heather Erdmann joined and is gardening in C11. She will update us on her committee selections. We need to secure an interested mentor for her

f. Xiong Thao joined and is gardening in D4. She joined the Apiary, Compost, Clear the Bed, Fundraising, Herbs, IT, Orchards, Pest Control, and Pocket Prairie Committees. Ray is her mentor.

g. Dorthy Smith has started gardening in E4

3. Volunteer hours - new members were sent a reminder email on how to record volunteer hours, and they were reminded of their volunteer commitment

## FUNDRAISING REPORT- Debbie Gordon

March 17, 2026

### FUNDRAISING

#### SPRING PLANT and SEED SALE

o Gross funds raised: \$1154.00

o Expenses: \$235.75; Bank Fees: 19.52

JJL Nursery - \$135.00, Seeds/Supplies - \$78.75, Tomato Seedlings - \$22.00

### 2026 SPONSORSHIPS

Linda Korb \$1000

Westbury Area Improvement Corp. \$2000

## GRANT APPLICATIONS

### Awarded

NPSOT Bring Back The Monarchs To Texas

- o Extension granted to end of June, 2026, or return the \$600.
- o NPSOT will send an invoice for \$600.

### Submitted

Harris County Precinct 1

Applications open Jan 1

Apply Jan 5 – Feb 28, 2026

Awards – May-June

If awarded, 18-month timeline. Construction Q3-Q4 2027.

Total cost: \$890,000; Requested: \$845,500; WCG Match: \$44,500 (5%)

### Upcoming Grant Opportunities

Dealy Family Foundation – Texas only. LOI due Jan 18 (submitted); Application due Aug 1.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH REPORT

Green Friday at Heights at Post Oak

- o In conjunction with UT McGovern Medical Student Volunteers
- o March 6, 1:00PM

Levitt MusicFEST

- o Willow Waterhole
- o March 28, 11AM-8PM
- o Set up at 10:00

o Theme – Composting and Persistence of Litter

The Extraordinary Caterpillar documentary screening  
(Homegrown National Park + The Caterpillar Lab)

- o The Company On Stage, 5720 Bellaire Blvd.
- o WCG co-hosting with NPSOT Houston
- o Saturday afternoon event; May 2??; ticket price around \$10

Westbury Pocket Prairie 2nd report 2026-Hazel Potvin

Peggy and I attempted to survey the Pocket Prairie to make a report for the March board meeting.

Usually we find puccoon in bloom . It is a lovely prairie early bloomer but we could not find it.

Noreen however, did go back and find it

The prairie is suffering from lack of water. We will not have the usual display since the winter season has been so dry.

The corner at the bust stop does have Indian Paintbrush in bloom and we saw lots of milkweed that has popped up.

I will be giving a tour on Sunday, April 12 and Peggy and Noreen will probably be there too.

The prairie does need de littering.

Hazel Potvin and Peggy Sweeney and Noreen Hoard.