

Westbury Community Garden Board Meeting Minutes

May 19,2026

The board meeting was called to order at 6:31. Members present were Cindy Chapman, Kat Elder, Steve Ewing, Don Finley, Steve Goldberg, Debbie Gordon, Marcia Hartman, Katharine Jager, Hazel Potvin, Peggy Sweeney, and Shannon Vitek.

Old Business

The April minutes were approved by acclamation.

The Treasurer's Report was delayed as the profit and loss document was not yet available.

Oak Tree Trimming Complete

- Virginia and Taylor Livingston donated the \$1350 tree trimming.
- Kat Elder also secured a drop-off of mulch for the garden.

Allotment Garden and Do Not Pick Sign Verbiage

- Please hand out English/Spanish Allotment Garden brochures to visitors.
- Don Finley has mounted the security cameras
- Several gardeners report interlopers-a man in camo frequently here on the weekend, walking up and down aisles taking pictures and talking on the phone and a couple, who bring their own bags.

No Tropical Milkweed Policy

- Please speak to gardeners if you see the tropical milkweed. Our policy is Educate/Eradicate.
- Sweet potatoes are also banned for two years to curtail infestation. Some are appearing. Please advise pulling them out.

The Extraordinary Caterpillar Event

- It was deemed a success.
- We, along with the local NPSOT chapter, made \$792, 722 of which we spent on theatre rental and licensing fees.
- Cindy Chapman mentioned seeing Company Onstage manager/actress, Katherine Noser, at the recent WAIC meeting. Katherine raved about the new native plant garden WCG helped plant outside the theatre.

WCG T-Shirts

- Debbie reports that 9 people in the survey indicated that they would buy the Tomato Road t-shirts. Only 3 preferred the WCG lime green t-shirt.
- The Tomato Road shirt will be reprinted with no set-up fee. Debbie will announce the sale and ordering procedure and perhaps advertise it in the Westbury Crier.

New Business

World Bee Day, May 16

- Steve Ewing recounted his presentation at WCG where families were excited about the observation hives, the bee stickers and the bee jackets in which they could pose for family portraits.
- Steve has presented at Shannon's daughter's preschool and has had requests from area Boy Scout packs. He also gets requests for bee removal in his bee wrangler mode.
- Cindy Chapman noted that nearby Anderson and Forrester Elementary would benefit from bee activities.

Tomato Tasting, May 23, Cancelled

Rainy outlook, slow growing forced cancellation. The rain date on the 30th does not look good either.

Compost Shade Structure

- Funds -\$5,000- come from the Seed Money Campaign.
- The contractor, who did the Parker shade structure, had questions about required permitting for the support poles. Does permission come from BOMD or WAIC?
- The same contractor noted that commercial quality sails were not necessarily better than cheaper ones.

Resiliency Event at Bethel's Family Church June 27th, 9:00-2:00

- WCG was invited to present on "How to Set Up a Basic Home Garden."

- Debbie Gordon's plan is to demonstrate an actual mini garden on a table with cardboard on the surface, a bag of soil and cement blocks for the border. We will get seeds for a seed giveaway, too.

Other New Business

- Gardeners had mixed reviews on the mini tomatoes.
- Kat Elder was concerned with the state of tomatoes, especially the infestation of army worms, and the lack of reliable volunteers.
- Shannon Vitek says all beds are rented with E-10 gardener starting in September
- There were questions about the Precinct I grant-whether to ask about it.
- We will get three new boards for our sponsor sign for the following sponsors:

The Livingston Family (\$1350 for tree trimming)

Linda Korb (Shelly and Roy Johnson's neighbor-\$1,000)

The Isla Carroll Turner Friendship Trust (\$8,000 awarded for 2 elevated beds and the wheelchair bed)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 after board president, Debbie Gordon, was frozen out.

Committee Reports

Steve Ewing-APIary

- With the recent rains the bees are starting to bring in nectar. We are seeing a lot of liquid honey in the hives now. The bees dehydrate the nectar to 18% water content then cap the honey
- We have been busy representing the garden in Honeybee presentations. Theresa Strong and I made two presentations last Saturday. In the morning, we were at the Bees at the Westbury Community Garden and that afternoon at the Red Elementary Pollinator Spring Fundraiser. At both of them we had our observation hive, large photographs and bee jackets. At Red Elementary, we had a steady stream of families checking out the observation hive and they really enjoyed putting on the jackets for photo ops.
- We now have a colony of bees in the yellow swarm box behind the dumpster. We will move them into a hive next week
- Bee removals are starting to pick up. We are quoting on a couple of removals, which would fill our two empty hives, if we get the jobs

Julie Fordes-Education and Herbs

Education

We assisted with Earth Day programming for the Girl Scout group from Parker Elementary.

We helped advertise the Caterpillar movie.

We helped plan the May 16 bee presentation.

Herbs

We harvested and plan to dry lots of herbs this month. We continue to have lots of garden members attending the workdays. The blue pea vine and holy basil are doing well.

Hazel Potvin- Prairie Report

I am sorry to be late with this report. Noreen and I finally got over to walk the prairie and found it full of liatris getting ready to bloom. So as you drive by, take a look and watch the prairie turn purple accented with yellow

Another space that has had a lavender blanket is the field toward the back fence. The Beebalm this year is all one color, very little white, lots of lavender without the scent. I hope Steve's bees are happy.

We also observed the utility poles laying near the fence with the church. We assume these will go onto the ground to carry an electric line to allow PIFF to have power to run a cooler.

Eventually the prairie will get mowed but not until the liatris blooms and goes to seed.

Hazel and Noreen

Orchard Report

Orchard Report, May 2026

Sorry to be late with this report too. We had 3 college graduations .

I walked among the trees a few nights ago and saw that the figs are coming along but not mature yet. I was real glad for the pruning we got done. I have been adding a bucket of coffee grounds to each tree as I get it.

Rick Keogh has recommended a microlife fertilizer for the trees but I am not sure when it should be applied. I will buy at least one bag and talk to Ray and Gary about using it.

The pears look really good, the mulberries are finished.

The grapes are going wild and we need to expand the trellis for them. I do not see any grape development and think we may have pruned too vigorously.

The citrus all has some fruit on it and the persimmons are both thriving.

The pomegranates also have maturing fruit which is interesting to watch develop. They are near the handicapped bed.

Please take a walk in the orchard to observe the development. A big worry is that fruit will get picked by the people that wander through our garden and it will not be mature. Some people think the green citrus is limes which they are not. If you see people in the orchard let them know that the fruit is not ready. Kat has promised she would help identify and label the various types of trees we have. It is good to know which fig is the "Celeste"

Hazel

Site Maintenance-Don Finley

Greetings, contained below is the activity report for April/May 2026.

- * Continued inspection of site hoses, faucet and backflow devices.
- * Completed camera project, installed near bed C 8
(several multi directional cameras on single pole)
- * Installed post for information box near bench area of front driveway.
- * Installed information sign regarding native plants
in plant bed near pavilion
- * Installed information box on kiosk near pavilion
- * Replaced spray nozzle bed C 2

Kat Elder-Specialty Gardens

Helped plant the Company Onstage entry gardens with HNPSOT & other WCG members. Added two Coneflowers groupings & ?. The gardens recd heavy rain the day after & the swales had held up beautifully when I attended the Amazing Caterpillar showing . That showing was beyond Excellent!!!

We have far too many Coneflowers of 2 varieties in the front BF beds. They're all blooming so I did not pot up more for the tomato tasting raffle. I did pot up three red salvia Coccinea to raffle off - but TT cancelled

Need to send garden notice via Debbie to see if members want to transplant Coneflowers or Salvia seeds to their home gardens.

Steve Ewing and I are still trying to figure out when we can transplant native plants, potted or from my home gardens around the Apiary. Those previously planted 2+ yrs are doing well.

Pipevine Swallowtail BFs : no one had noticed last month that the swallowtail caterpillars had eaten ALL of our pipe vine in the south butterfly bed. At the 5-16-26 workday, we happily noticed the caterpillars moving into the pavilion to attach their

pupae to furniture (keep a table & benches near the BF beds to aid them & watch for/protect their attached crystallis).

Had 1 fantastic walk-up volunteer named Seth working with me in front beds. (Wants to return & apply for membership).

Where are our Members at workdays???

Purple Martins: a few pairs began nesting in the new NE house ! Likely subadults or those who hadn't paired up. They're all busy raising their young in all houses.

Check out our Gorgeous Purple Vitex at the entry!!! We did have to prune back branches growing low into the sidewalk (which was added by COH well after we planted the Vitex).

Many Kudos to Don Finley!!! He helps with everything I & the garden ask of him & is creative with tool organization & placement of the Security signs & the Fake cameras. A thief (woman who hangs around & acts like she's talking or dictating on her phone) stole a ratchet set at his bed when he left the garden for a quick run to Home Depot. He will try to get S. Gessner HPD to cite the white 18 wheeler driver, repeatedly parking on Dunlap near the entry.

Earlier this month at dusk I talked to a Hispanic man in his silver sedan who'd parked suspiciously near the dumpster & portapotty 2 eves in a row. Told him the garden property was closed to Everyone dusk to dawn (haven't seen him since).

PIFF "Machete Man" in the white pickup at the dumpster & Melissa Palmer were my 'security monitors'.

Will see if the handout pamphlets stop the garden thieves...

Kat Elder
SG Chairman

Betina Wolfowicz-Volunteers

We had a generous donation from Accenture, a consulting company through Riya Satra, leader of the ecology resource group. They donated three kennel panels to expand the outdoor storage area, and all the hardware to install them. Riya went to League City in person with a rented U-Haul to deliver them to us on Saturday April 18.

Volunteers from this company group came **Saturday April 25** to install them. Franco led this activity, Roy with some volunteers removed a tree from its roots that had grown

inside the storage space. Volunteers removed other weeds. Now we have two extra compartments for storage that Peggy organized wisely: one is for construction materials, the other for seasonal garden items. It looks good.

Accenture also donated pitch forks and shovels that Debbie labeled immediately. We had teen age volunteers from Saint Thomas who removed weeds from the aisles between elevated beds. Accenture people and a Bible group of volunteers also worked on this task.

Kat received a little help but not as much as she needed. Her specialty gardens will be the focus of the next big group of volunteers day.

On April 22 we celebrated Earth Day with a group of girl scouts who did at least 3 educational activities led by Julie , Debbie, Peggy, and me. They learned about the origins of Earth Day, what can or cannot be recycled, planted seeds and tasted herbs, among other things. Pretty good for two hours!

I was not present on May 16th to report.