

Westbury Community Garden Board Meeting Minutes

August 18, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:30. Members present were Cindy Chapman, Kat Elder, Steve Ewing, Don Finley, Julie Fordes, Steve Goldberg, Debbie Gordon, Nadia Khan, Hazel Potvin, Peggy Sweeney, Shannon Vitek and Betina Wolfowicz.

Old Business

The July minutes were approved by acclamation.

Cindy Chapman had sent out the Treasurer's Profit and Loss Statement.

- Cindy bragged about the Second Act Resale Fundraiser that had netted \$1,650 for the garden. Kat said \$54 was still coming from Guild for the Outdoor Art sold there.
- Cindy wondered about the anonymous donation of \$90 and an earlier smaller donation through Benevity. No one had any knowledge.
- Cindy questioned where to put the \$732.00 expense for the recent Rainwater Collection item. Debbie suggested it be in Fundraising for now.

New Dumpster Co. was approved-Start Process?

Cindy said that due to a miscommunication, she would be starting negotiations again in the next week with our current and future provider.

New Business

Office of Commissioner Rodney Ellis Press Conference August 26, 9:00

- This is the press conference to award grants for the Precinct I Plan Together Partnership Application funded by Harris County Toll Road Authority
- The Press Conference and presentation of “checks” will be at the Willow Waterhole Pavillion at 5200 Dryad.
- A guest list has been requested. Steve Goldberg, Kat Elder, Debbie Gordon, Peggy Sweeney, Cindy Chapman, Betina Wolfowicz and Katharine Jager plan to attend. Debbie planned to invite District K and the BOMD writer.

Tractor Mowing Scheduled For Friday, August 21, 10:00AM

- Hazel says to feel free to collect seed. Bring paper bags for seeds. Liatris and purple bee balm have been collected.
- Cindy asked if the mowing was in the budget. Debbie said yes, it's a regular biannual expense.
- Hazel said she hadn't heard from PIFF about moving their trailer. Debbie thought that might have been lost in the email issue.

Sign Replacement

Large Driveway Sign

- Steve Goldberg got an estimate for a new large driveway sign- \$650 for a 4x4 metal, multi-color sign to be put in the frame by Steve G. and Ross Asher. The sign was made by a Fast Signs franchise. WCG provided the design.
- Cindy asked about possible UV protection. Steve will check.
- Kat asked about a second bid. Steve will get another bid.

Smaller A-Frame Sign in Front Orchard Area

Don Finley put a wood backing on the sign and used the same frame.

Continued Updating WCG Fees and Compliance Policies

We discussed a and f together since they are related. Peggy Sweeney said the Gardener's Rules, Gardeners Agreement and Garden Orientation do not match on policies. The Orientation is more detailed. Peggy will look at them and make suggestions for making them match. We will review these items as old business and vote on them in September.

a. Banish gardeners who fail to meet contract obligations x3

This is already policy-bed relinquishments marked "abandoned bed. Not in good standing" May not rejoin.

f. Bed Abandonment Clarification (We skipped ahead since this is a related topic).

1. Courtesy emails, then 10 day letter, then ultimate letter w/Clear the Bed fee.
2. Final email from Membership with exit instructions; ask for water Key; bill for Clear the Bed fee, if necessary
3. Remove from LGL; make "May Not Rejoin" note

Other WCG Fees and Compliance Items

b. Find "member for hire" for weeding help. Look for WCG member or outside company or individuals like UHD students or Conservation Corps.

Hazel says the Conservation Corps doesn't do gardens. Others pointed out that we'd need to vote and approve and supervise outside workers. It seemed best to advertise in the newsletter for members.

The American Conservation Corps, Texas Master Naturalists and Native Plant Society of Texas are good volunteer sources for planting our swales.

c. E-Row Aisle Maintenance

We are looking for rubber roofing material rolls to put impermeable weed block in aisles. It would need leaves on top to prevent slipping

- Debbie checked ReUse Warehouse without success. They suggested water-proof rubber sub-flooring, outdoor flooring or interlocking rubber mats
- ReUse Warehouse does not answer their phone. We can make an e-mail query about item availability. They do not hold items.
- Betina Wofowicz said she could check Habitat for Humanity, Robert's Flooring on Chimney Rock/N.Braeswood and Floor and Decor in Meyer Park to see if there were cheap or donated items.

d. Handling Long Absences

If a 2 week absence or more is planned, contact membership. Weed bed and aisles, mulch or plant cover crop; recruit a helper if needed.

- There was much discussion about whether it should say 2 or 3 weeks. We settled on 2.
- We decided this should be in the Gardener's Agreement and Garden Rules. Peggy will add.
- This is in the Garden Orientation, which Shannon Vitek or Nadia Khan reviews with each new gardener.
- These documents are on the WCG website-Documents.

Gardeners should be reminded at contract time.

e. Increase Volunteer Hours requirement and fee to pre-pay hours

After some confusion with our July vote on this item, a motion was made for a new vote to increase the annual volunteer hours from 12 to 18 but to keep the fee for delinquent hours at \$10 per hour. The yes vote was unanimous.

Honey Harvest

Steve Ewing harvested the WCG honey providing WCG with 17 16oz jars of honey. Kat Elder made a motion to vote to sell the exceptional WCG honey at \$18 per jar and to offer it to gardeners first. The vote passed unanimously. Debbie will announce honey sales in the newsletter and reserve jars.

Plant It Forward Sound Bath Experience

PIFF wants to plan a Sound Bath experience in which everyone lays on yoga mats and relaxes to the tune of Sound Bath practitioners producing sound through rotating crystal wands around crystal bowls and using gongs. The practitioners are affiliated with Fit Houston and provide the artistry free.

PIFF would like to host this in November, perhaps with light bites. They are thinking of somewhere in the garden that could accommodate 80 people.

Fall Veggie Plants Fundraiser at Bayou City Community Market

- A date in September
- We usually spend \$100 to \$200 on seedlings and make \$500-\$600.
- We'll need volunteers to cover the 6 hours.

National Night Out-Tuesday, October 6

We need to plan in September. Debbie will apply for HEB grant.

President Debbie Gordon will be traveling September 15.

Debbie will make the agenda for the 9/15 meeting and Vice President Katharine Jager will conduct the meeting.

Other New Business

Kat asked about slate officers.

- Debbie will not run for President though will stay active in Fundraising and with Master Plan
- Debbie says Katharine Jager (VP) and Peggy Sweeney(Secretary) need to decide if they'll run again for current positions or want a more challenging position.
- Debbie would like to bring some younger garden members into leadership positions.

Hazel asked about compost shade structure.

Debbie has not heard back from the Parker shade structure builder

PIFF concerns

In light of planned PIFF changes, Kat commented that Alimassi is still farming his plot; his new land got flooded. Sarment is also still farming at WCG. Debbie anticipates upcoming 2027 construction will push change.

Review of Master Plan projects funded by Mobility Grant.

The grant covers driving surfaces and walking surfaces and related water detention.

- The circular driveway is funded; parking is not. We can use our money for parking.
- PIFF will access their farms on a new gravel road south of their farms
- Water detention zone, consisting of meandering swales, is north of farms

The Board is thinking of Hazel's husband, who is undergoing a heart bypass 8/19 and will be discharged on 8/26.

Committee Reports

Committee Reports follow.

Fundraising and Outreach-Debbie Gordon

FUNDRAISING REPORT

August 19, 2026

FUNDRAISING

GRANT APPLICATIONS

Submitted

Ozarka / Greater Houston Community Foundation

Rain tank replacement

Pump

Battery power station w/ solar charging

Irrigation to main orchard & butterfly beds

Harris County Precinct 1

Awarded!!

All except parking area costs – Seeking other funding for approx.
\$16,000

WCG to pay \$44,500 (5%)

Commissioner Rodney Ellis Press Conference, Aug 26, 9:00 AM, Willow
Waterhole Greenway

Potential Applications

BOMD

Supplemental funds for parking areas (\$7500)

Cullen Foundation

Mural and Making-of video

COMMUNITY OUTREACH REPORT

Plant It Forward Sound Bath Experience

At WCG

Up to 80 participants

Possible chef-prepared meal

WCG Site Maintenance Report-Don Finley

Greetings, contained below is the activity report for August 2026.

- * Continued inspection of site hoses, faucet and backflow devices.
- * Installed certified wildlife sign near pavilion area
- * Performed repair/ installation of garden sign near Fig orchards
- * Assisted with removal of Pears from orchard tree
- * Purchased backflow devices to utilize on D and E rows
- * Performed organization of tools in outside storage area

Education Committee, August 2026-Julie Fordes Westbury Community Garden Education Classes 2026-2027

The Education Committee will provide an in-person gardening forum for both gardeners and the public on the Second Saturday of each month. Throughout the year, Education committee members and other experienced WCG gardeners will discuss best practices for the garden: what to plant, when to harvest, pests and weeds, as well as answer specific questions from gardeners.

Sessions will be held in the WCG pavilion at 10 am rain or shine.

Here are the dates and topics for the rest of 2026:

August 8 Soil Preparation/ Fall Planting

September 12 Fall Planting

October 10 TBD

November 14 Culinary Herbs for the Holidays

December 12 Winter Garden Planting

Dates and topics for 2027 include:

January 9 TBD

February 13 Tomatoes

March 13 Herbs

April 10 TBD

May 8 World Bee Day and Pollinators

June 12 TBD

July 10 TBD

August 14 Soil Preparation

September 11 Fall Planting

October 9 TBD

November 13 TBD

December 11 TBD

Bee Committee Report, August 26-Steve Ewing

We gained three colonies since our July report:

o Theresa Strong and I did a water meter removal in Bellaire. “Belle” is a small colony but seems to be doing alright

o Theresa and Cathy Findley, both friends of WCG, did a removal from a storage box. “Crate” was also hived in our apiary

o Theresa and I did a wall removal last week, which was our first “structural” removal. It was a wild set of bees, but hopefully they will calm down soon. Otherwise we will need to replace the queen.

o Theresa and I were called out on another removal, from a cable box, but the bees had absconded about a week before we got there. Based on the dark color of the comb, the bees had been there for over a year.

- We harvested the honey from “Cubby” and ended up with just over 2 gallons of honey!

The honey is bottled and ready for sale – Yea!!

Specialty Gardens/Purple Martins-Kat Elder

Specialty Gardens:

Betina Wolfowicz assignment of outside volunteers on the July Workday enabled me to complete more of the maintenance of the front butterfly beds. No SG members nor garden members attended. Therefore, no work was possible on either B1 or the neglected, overgrown Apiary Pollinator bed. I noticed a man passing along the fence line picking Matt’s Wild Cherries (which we did NOT plant). Our bees/pollinators have plenty of additional flowering Basils, salvias, flowers Pink Coral Vine flowers, east field & Pocket Prairie pollen sources.

I recommend more gardeners maintain small stone-filled water bowls for the bees & garden wildlife.

Purple Martins:

Thus far, enough of the landlord team hasn’t been able to meet to make house repairs, get a mortality count, mmmclean out houses & close them

up from Sparrow access until February, 2027. Don pointed out apparent damage to the top of the new NE house; he suspects something falling from the sky. Will assess. The Houston Metro Martins did not mob at the Fountains this year; Willowbrook mall area per reports- none of us attended the Audubon "0.

Site Maintenance:

Precinct 5 Constable Call to Help Sat. Eve 8/15/26:

At another confrontation with the argumentative /disrespectful young man, from the Heights Apts., again bringing his 2 dogs off leash & with no poop bags , I called the Constables to confront him. Deputy Otto & 2 other Constable cars arrived to reiterate Houston leash laws & WCG rules for the garden grounds to him. Hopefully he learned the lesson, was warned about a ticket & they have his ID information. If not, gardeners should again call the Constable.

Texas Outhouse Co. still has no maintenance log on the porta potty door.

Membership 08/18/26-Shannon Vitek

1. Unoccupied beds B3, E2, E10

a. B3 has been cleared and is being solarized. Waiting to see how it responds to treatment before looking for a new gardener.

b. E10 has been cleared, and a new gardener will start in the fall.

2. Existing, new, and potential gardeners

a. Xiong Thao (D4) has joined A6 gardening with Virginia Livingston and Ethan Smith

b. The 6 month check-ins for new gardeners will be sent by the end of August

Volunteers, August,2026-Betina Wolfowicz

On July 25 we had 8 volunteers with a leader from Breakthrough Houston, an educational nonprofit. They all worked with Kat Elder to weed the

pollination gardens and reseed coreopsis and black eye susan among others.

August 6 we had the third visit from the McGovern medical School. Nine people worked for 3 hours weeding the E aisles. They did a tremendous job, adding cardboard and covering it with leaves. They also mixed the compost pile