

Medford Community Garden Commission
Tuesday, January 26, 2016
6:00 PM

Attending: Amanda Bowen, Lisa Risley, Fred Laskey, Mike Lambert, Elise Boejas, Mimi Gordon
Joan Parker; Jeff Hoel

Opened meeting at 6:09
Elected Mike Lambert as the commission appointed member - unanimous
Elected Amanda Bowen as chair
Elected Elise Boerjes as vice chair
Need to elect secretary; Alicia volunteered to take minutes tonight; might take turns with note taking and find someone to do publicity
Brian expressed willingness to be the Membership Coordinator; elected unanimously.

Introductions:
Lisa, Amanda & Mike Lambert are not plotters. Fred is a plotter at Riverbend; Joan Parker is the Master Gardener and plot holder at Winthrop. Mike is also on the Board of the Farmers Market. Elise gardens at McNally. Mimi gardened at McNally last year, she lives next door to McNally & was the coordinator last year.

Mimi commented that having kids playing right next to the garden was wonderful, it was a great learning experience for children who had never seen gardens and growing food before. There is a drawback of children helping themselves to vegetables, but it was very educational.

Jeff asked about the garden at McNally and a long conversation about the pros and cons of a fence ensued. It's a balance between the pilferage, the not understanding the intent of a community garden and the feeling of community.

Ris talked to the benefits of having a demonstration/teaching plot at the gardens. Fred pointed out that Riverbend has a plot that belongs to the McGlynn School but there is trouble maintaining it during the summer. Should some or all of the McNally plots be the education plots? Write a grant and have signs that help teach people about gardening? Alicia mentioned that the Boys & Girls Club would likely be interested in taking on one of the plots as a project for them (they spend time at McNally anyway). Riz mentioned that the Addiction Recovery Director might be interested in a plot as a therapy plot.

Finances - does the Commission need to collect the fees and pass them through the Revolving account to spend them? That was Alicia's

understanding. The Commission feels that the process of obtaining approval from a City office every time that there is an expenditure is too burdensome. Amanda will talk to Anne Baker to determine whether the fees couldn't just be overseen by the Friends and a report given to everyone who needs one annually.

Review of the draft ByLaws:

Section I - everyone is happy with it.

Section II - state clearly that this is the ordinance passed by City Council; include ordinance number.

- Need to confirm everyone's terms; Mike Lambert is appointed for 2 years, since the terms need to be staggered.

Section III - everyone is comfortable with this. Remember that Riverbend is not overseen by the commission.

It was previously decided that because last year was a partial year and everyone worked so hard to get started that all existing plot holders would be invited to return for the 2016 season. At question is how to handle assignment of beds; one proposal is to have lottery only if there are new beds and when there are people that are leaving to free up spots.

Term limits:

Fred mentioned that Riverbend, in its 11th year, only 8 of 36 beds have original plot holders, this turnover does occur. Those who got new plots put their names on the list in 2012, current new members are waiting approximately 4 years to get a bed. There was question about their waiting list and so they started posting it on the fence.

Mike thinks there should be term limits - maybe 3-5 years. He doesn't like the idea of charging more for sustaining members. Remember that "Community" in our name is not just of the plot holders, but of the whole of Medford. The turnover doesn't have to be all at once, it could be staggered.

Ris believes term limits are a good idea and suggests 7 years, agreeing that last year was a bonus year. Hope would be that there is no need to enforce term limits at the end of the 6th year. Hopefully there would be more gardens so that everyone who wants a garden space would be getting one in 6 years. At the beginning of year 6 you would have a warning year.

Joan - Put in a lot of work and commitment to the garden and building the garden - would like to get credit for having put the effort into the garden and gets priority for plots. Winthrop made a rule that you have to do at least 5 hours of "volunteer" service each year.

In the draft bylaws there would be a lottery but that the Commission could assign up to 1/4 of the plots to residents who have demonstrated a commitment of time and effort to the establishment of the new garden or for any other good cause shown.

Amanda and Brian came up with a point system last year to assign beds; still an option. She mentioned that currently there are 60 people on the list, including 2015 ploholders.

Alicia conveyed Dan Driscoll's opinion that gardens that don't have turnover are a problem and that the land along the river should be for everyone.

Should selection of plot holders be made by the Commission or should each garden manage their own waiting list?

The idea of the Commission is to have a neutral body that would oversee the gardens so there wouldn't be a too much insularity within a particular group.

Elise noted that one garden in Cambridge has a 3-year term limit, but one can extend that limit through service. The first year they randomly assigned to staggered terms. Elise proposes that we do 5-year term limits - staggered with new members in a 3, 4 or 5 year limit.

What happens at the end of 5 years? Can you go back on to the waiting list? Could people go on the waiting list during the N-1 year? (4th year in most cases) That would allow people not to lose their spot to someone who had just gone on the waiting list at the end of the season, but they would lose their spot to someone who had been on the list for 18 months or more.

Amanda and Mike will circulate a firm proposal before the next meeting to be voted on then.

Next meeting: 2/23, 6-7:30 in the Library.