

Medford Community Garden Commission
Meeting 23 February 2016

Introductions

People in attendance: Amanda Bowen, Mike Lambert, Lisa Risley, Fred Laskey, Syrah McGivern, Mimi Gordon, Norman Shacat, Julie Berkman, Kim Etingoff, Jeff Hoel, Elise Boerjes, Shay Vyranada

Syrah passed around copies of the minutes; we will share on a revamped web site when it is ready.

Next month's meeting will be the 5th Tuesday March 29th instead of the 4th to avoid conflicting with the Gardener's Gathering March 22. Location TBD.

March 6th - Seed starting workshop at Adrienne's

Fred Laskey - discussed open meeting law requirements and information. Can't meet with more than 2 members outside an open meeting. Also discuss or vote serially.

Fred asked to amend minutes for a point of clarity. Minutes were approved with his amendment.

Bylaws

Struck Secretary and added some responsibilities to the Vice Chair

Suggested to add a Social Media Coordinator.

Talk about Section 4, part C.

Mike: want to make reasonable efforts to make turnover without just saying "you're time's up" to people.

Elise: clarifying the language added for how gardens would determine who would lose plots

How will we decide which plots turn over? Ask for volunteers (some people might be on the fence about continuing).

Amanda and Elise: will revisit the language of the proposed language

Should have a grievance process for appealing garden discipline

As long as we keep a formal record of who does what, we'll be able to consider gardeners who are more active overall in the garden.

Fred: don't have to have everything figured out for two years

Mike: we do need to be detailed as possible so people understand what is going on

Mike and Riz: We must put the rules section back in to ensure uniformity

Individual gardens' rules should be approved by the commission.

Riz: These are the basic rules and what we expect. Can adapt to specific circumstances

Elise: Want to keep people invested in continued growth of further gardens

Amanda: Will redraft and post on MCG site for public comment

Brian Duran is our membership coordinator. Deadline is March 1st for new applications. Lottery will be held after that and people notified.

Kim: how did we publicize this deadline? Medford yahoo list, our email mailing lists, Facebook; too late for paper but will advertise in the paper next year.

We should add information about garden turnover to the agreement signed by each plot holder.

Have materials to build four more beds but still need volunteers to help with that; those that do may be given consideration for plots.

Norman: when will work start?

Amanda: anytime after the gardeners meeting

Norman would be interested in helping build beds

New Gardens

Amanda and Brian met with the Housing Authority. Willis St. had gardens previously built but it was determined that the soil was contaminated. The soil have been removed and the space is being remediated; the beds will be replaced; there will be at least 16 plots. HA interested in us programming it for the residents there this summer. Need to get the application translated into Creole. Can possibly use high school ESL folks to do it.

We're also looking into building beds in Walklin Court but have to work with a different agency.

Fred: Columbus school have garden? Yes, it is maintained by a teacher there.

Amanda: A future outreach project will definitely be the school gardens.

Elise: Medford resident is interested in starting a 4H group with a gardening focus and is interested in programming an educational bed at Winthrop.

Amanda and Brian are working on getting other gardens going in parks this year; Barry Park and Tufts park in South Medford are the two possibilities for building this year. Want to figure out two new garden spaces so we can build in the fall.

Had also discussed Morrison Park and West Medford Community Center previously. WMCC land is DCR land which means getting their approval.

Brooks park was discussed, but parking was a concern as well as proximity those needing garden space.

Playstead? previously discussed. Tall trees might prohibit space near the play lot; triangle not used; may not be as high a priority.

Discussion followed about the appearance of Winthrop Street; do we always have to build with cinder blocks? We discussed plantings: Shrubs, wildflowers, rugosa roses, seed bombs?

Revolving fund

Amanda: had on success trying to reach Anne Baker; Alicia, Syrah, and Amanda will meet with Louise Miller this week and get the full parameters of how it can/must be spent. Explanation for people who are new; trying to find out how we can spend easily. May use open purchase order with Home Depot.

Riz: talked about difficulties of using blanket purchase orders.

We also explained that the Friends account may be the way we make simple purchases for reimbursement.

Other business

Kim Etingoff: Kim is an expert in food and policy planning with a background in health equity and food justice. She works for DPH: the Mass in Motion grant program works in communities around the state to tackle obesity. Focus on physical activity, food access strategies; policy systems and environmental change work. Most people focus on programming.

Brainstorming about how we can use Kim's help:

One of the approaches is lessening the food bill; preserve the harvest.

Working within the overstretched schedule.

Make pizza gardens?

Technical assistance on the community beds?

Friends: access to seeds and plants?

Help with an activity for Circle the Square?

Reaching out to food insecure; what kinds of gardens might help them

We should investigate the land behind the two towers next to the Senior Center

Need to gather evidence about what food insecure and senior populations need.

Determine whether Housing Authority can provide seeds, plants and supplies for those gardeners.

Future outreach must include seniors and schools.

Elise: Grace Church has a garden that supplies the local food pantry and there are never enough to meet demand. We should publicize this to all Medford gardeners.

Julie: The Mystic River Watershed Association is hiring someone to focus on greenways. This person may be able to advocate with DCR for gardens along the river.