

Medford Community Garden Commission 3/28/17

South Medford Fire Station

In attendance: Syrah McGivern, Elise Boerges, Mimi Gordon, Fred Laskey, Brian Duran, Lisa Risley, Amanda Bowen

Plot assignment: Brian reported that he is finalizing plot assignments for all gardens. The process has been labor-intensive, especially as some potential gardeners take some time to respond. All gardeners will be meeting as groups in the next month.

Future locations: We reviewed the sites previously considered for gardens and acknowledged that a variety of factors will influence how we proceed next. The City is applying for a grant to renovate Harris Park in East Medford and, if successful, will include a garden there. The West Medford Community Center is applying to DCR to add a garden behind their building; this is likely to be a cooperative garden geared to elderly residents with work and produce shared by the group. The Commission has discussed Barry and Morrison Parks and identified good locations in each. Several members spoke to the desire for a garden in Carr Park in North Medford. Further discussion will be informed by what plans the City might have in the works and also a new tour and evaluation of all Medford parks. Syrah will obtain a list of parks and we'll discuss with Mike Nestor after the Tufts building project.

The group also discussed the desire to investigate building gardens near the Senior Center in Medford Square. Syrah has some ideas about grants that could fund such a project. Again a cooperative garden might be a more appropriate model.

Tufts Garden: The building project will happen April 29 and May 6. Food and beverages will be provided for volunteers. Help may be provided by workers from Anheuser-Busch as well as students from Tufts and the high school. The grand opening will be held June 10 (rain date June 11). Food trucks are being solicited and there will be other entertainment as well.

Reports from the Gardeners' Gathering: Riz reported on several interesting sessions at the Gathering including presentations on Hugelkultur, a form of permaculture gardening on raised beds formed from wood refuse. Other presentations included school gardens, water conservation, grant funding from the New England Grassroots Environment Fund and the cooperative efforts of the Boston Food Forest Coalition. Riz is interested in pursuing their model of cooperative gardening at the Willis Gardens and will be discussing this idea with Housing Authority staff in the near future. A garden organizer for the Trustees of Reservations lives in Medford and would be a great speaker for us in the future.

IORA: Syrah and Mimi met with staff from IORA Health about building garden beds in the parking lot behind their building near Wellington. They will be contacting their landlords about options for this project.

McNally shed: Amanda will work on arranging for a replacement to the shattered McNally shed.

New brochure: The group agreed on the need for a flyer in multiple languages alerting residents to the Commission's projects and gardening opportunities. Amanda will formulate text and Syrah will help find translation assistance.

Eversource project: Brian reported frustration with communication about the Eversource power line project, scheduled to run through the Winthrop garden in November. Eversource has met with the City but we don't know exactly what the City is requesting as recompense. Brian and others are trying to ensure that the garden is reinstalled properly and hope that the City will argue for the playground specified in meetings with Eversource last year.

Riverbend Garden: Fred reported that the annual meeting for Riverbend went well. They are still looking for a new coordinator but now have a web site for information:

<http://mysticriverbendgarden.weebly.com/>.