Medford Community Garden Commission
Minutes of 23 August 2016 meeting

Present: Commission members Amanda Bowen, Mimi Gordon, Fred Laskey, Brian Duran, Elise Boerges, Lisa Risley

Visitors: Alicia Hunt, Sarah Lorenz, Susan Schmidt, Norman Shacat, Adrianne, Linda Julien, Julie Hambrook Berkman

The minutes of the July meeting were approved. Amanda acknowledged that agenda and minutes were posted later than usual. Brian noted that the Winthrop bulletin board is complete and has a place for meeting announcements.

Garden updates:
-McNally will hopefully get a new more useful spigot soon.
-Winthrop has ½ of the paths now covered with wood chips. Tufts students will help build the remaining 4 beds this weekend. Norman is painting the shed. Plans are developing for an open house during the Riverfest September 24.
-Willis gardens are growing well. The afterschool coordinator Riz was working with has left and a new staff person is not yet available, making Riz's work with local kids difficult. Tufts students will be on hand August 26 to help with the garden. Riz notes for next year that garden beds should be built higher to discourage critters. It was noted that Tufts volunteers may be available throughout the year; we should tap into this resource!
-Riverbend is doing well.

Friends: Riz noted that tabling at Circle the Square takes a great deal of energy from a few volunteers. In future we will try to share a table with the Energy group and have scheduled times for demos/projects.

CPA: It was observed that the ordinance for CPA is not yet on the City Council agenda. We should encourage councilors to move forward with this important initiative. Alicia's best guess is that funds will be available in the 2017-18 fiscal year.

Parks and DPW: Alicia reminded us that Mike Nestor of the Parks Department can be an advocate for us and would like to attend our meetings. He has been added to our email list and will receive all future mailings.

Brian has been in touch with Peter Kerger to determine the best way to bring water to the Tufts garden site. An irrigation hookup in the park seems to be the most cost-effective method. Brian noted that a vendor provided the Winthrop water at no cost last year at the request of the city. He is also monitoring a Water Dept. project at Barry Park that might provide water there even before a garden is built. It was agreed that coordinators for each garden would benefit from contact with the Water Dept. staff, at least until we are big enough to have a designated water coordinator.
The need for a document describing steps for starting new gardens was acknowledged. Riz mentioned a new book she found useful by Lamanda Joy, “Starting a Community Food Garden”. She is working on a master calendar for the year. It is clearly helpful to have target dates for each phase of a new build.

Bylaws: Next month we will discuss proposed guidelines for assigning plots for new gardens and also possible modifications to the way waiting lists are handled. The proposal must go out to Commission members well ahead of the meeting.

CPA planning: Although funds may not be available until late next year, we plan to work on several proposals in anticipation. We will plan to have at least two plans complete with budgets by next summer.

Education/outreach: Although we do not currently have time to work on this topic, it was acknowledged to be part of our mission in the future. We may need to partner with the Garden Club or the Farmers’ Market. To get the word out about our activities, Alicia invites us to put together some informational for the local access TV station. In addition, Allison Goldsberry, who maintains the city calendar, is willing to help update our web presence. Linda Julien offered to help with web pages as well.

Application: We decided to update the application currently available to add “Tufts Park (in development)”. We propose to advertise this addition to our large mailing list this fall so we may begin building a waiting list for Tufts.