

Medford Community Garden Commission
Wednesday, August 23, 7-8:30PM

Attendance: Curtis Tuden, Mimi Gordon, Amanda Bowen, Brian Duran, Elise Boerjes, Lisa "Riz" Risley, Fred Laskey, Charlotte Leis, Joan Cyr

Approval of minutes was postponed until next month.

Joan presented a summary of the Community Preservation Act and discussed the rollout of the grant process for the coming year. There will be two open forums in October to provide additional information. The process will involve preliminary review and then a full application. Each year the Committee will recommend awardees to the City Council, the body having final approval. Individuals or groups are welcome to apply. The staff member to be hired soon will manage the process and budget.

Commission members had questions and suggestions regarding the requirement for matching funds, the transparency of the project, weighting of various parts of the application, help in preparing applications and what sort of deadline would be required for completion of funded work. Members had suggestions for contacting the local WIC Office, Medford Housing Authority and the Diversity Office to get the word out. Joan reminded the group that more information including slides from a City Council presentation was available on the CPA web site. The likely timeframe for this first cycle will have preliminary applications due late in 2017, review in the spring, and results announced in May.

Charlotte Leis, an intern in the Environment Office, attended to request input for updates to the Community Garden and Commission web sites. Suggestions included a revamped landing page, the addition of pictures, pages to promote each garden, an online application and garden calendar, requests for volunteers and an online poll for suggesting future garden locations. If possible a feed from the Facebook page will make the page more lively.

Garden updates:

Tufts: Curtis Tuden attended and reported that the paths at Tufts are complete and the teaching beds will soon be in use. An ice cream social was held for garden members.

Winthrop: Work days are scheduled for finishing paths.

Willis: Riz reported that the intern hired to work with children this summer left with no notice. Unfortunately the program to teach gardening skills had to be curtailed for the summer.

Riz reported on the American Community Garden Association conference she attended

in Hartford. Much good and useful information was shared. The most inspiring event was a tour of the New London school food program which has been revamped completely to include cutting-edge growing technologies spearheaded by an energetic chef.

Riz also reported that she and Syrah have met to start a Food Security Task Force for Medford to highlight “food deserts” within the City. Working with a nutritionist at the high school they hope to develop better options for acquiring healthy and affordable food.

The group briefly discussed ideas for CPA applications; this will be an important topic for our next meeting.