

MEDFORD COMMUNITY GARDEN COMMISSION – Minutes from January 22, 2019

Present:

Amanda Bowen, Fred Laskey, Brian Duran, Elise Boerjes, Joan Parker, Rebecca Stevenson, Kevin Bailey, Julie Hambrooke Berkman, Jessika Brenin (Tufts Municipal Composting)

Possible Shift of Community Gardens from Dept of Energy & Environment to Recreation

There was discussion about moving the Community Garden Commission under the Department of Recreation instead of keeping it under the Department of Energy and Environment. The function of Recreation is to work with all outdoor community activities, in addition to sports. This transfer would not change the process for our financial protocols (purchases in particular) but would probably make more sense from an organizational standpoint. Kevin would help us with the process. This is how it is structured in Arlington, where a garden applicant applies to the recreation department, but the department does not control the waiting list.

It is not clear if our charter specifies that we remain under DEE. If so, we would need to go through the steps to change the charter. Kevin will speak with Alicia Hunt about the financial aspect and how much time it would take if he were to take it over. He would have to determine if he can fit this extra responsibility into his schedule. He will also speak with the financial director and then come back to speak with us again.

Note: In the Recreation Department world, for park permits the fees go to the City's general account. For programs the fees go to a revolving account, which then pays for the programs' expenses.

Kevin is interested in working with us on future activities, such as a farm-to-table program and cooking classes for kids.

Harris Park

There will be a public meeting next week (1/30 6 pm) to discuss the rehab of the park to include a community garden. The CG Commission was not involved in the planning for this garden; it was planned in conjunction with the CPA grant to plan the total project. Clodagh Stoker-Long received a separate grant of \$31,000 for the community garden part of the rehab. We've been asked to give input to the architect for the installation of the garden. They are planning 20 3'x5' beds.

Guidelines for Rodents

There have been complaints about rodents from Harris Park neighborhood residents. The Board of Health contacted the Commission about this issue and wrote something up to give to the architect so the issue could be considered in the design process. We have not seen it, but

we can reference it to make amendments to our bylaws. Brian drafted guidelines for rodent control and gave it to the BOH for their review. The residents seem mostly concerned about compost. The bylaws need to reflect an escalation plan to be instituted at all the gardens. At Harris Park there has been a problem but it's mostly human food consumption and failure to clean up. There have not been any complaints at any other of the gardens.

We will notify the other gardens that they will need to add a "rodent clause" to their individual rules, but can send out the rules and renewal forms now and amend later.

Wait List

Brian went through his notes about everyone on the wait list. He reported that a few people dropped out, but we still have 46 on the list. He has not written up a protocol yet, but he did describe an approximate outline for his process. It was suggested that he notify people on the wait list if they were close to the top and ask if they were still interested. This could streamline the process by eliminating much of the long wait for responses.

Miscellaneous

Susan Altman has notified the Commission that the Arts Center would like to do another tour this year of the gardens at Winthrop and Tufts. Julie has responded for Winthrop but Sarah Florenz hasn't yet weighed in for Tufts.

Kevin has offered to provide space to do seed swaps this year.

Clodagh met with Medford Family Network folks who said that they wished there was more access for kids to the gardens.

Fred went to the CPA meeting to talk about getting a higher fence for Riverbend. The mayor encouraged Fred to put in an application to cover the cost and the CPA was receptive. RB will go for one of the smaller grants (\$5,000 or less).

Rebecca Stevenson is now an alternate on the Commission.

The next meeting will take place on February 26th at the community center (since changed to the DPW).