

Medford Community Garden Commission Meeting April 23, 2019

Present: Lisa Risley, Mimi Gordon, Amanda Bowen, Fred Laskey, Rebecca Stevenson

Attending: Julie Hambrook Berkman, Nic Stuhr, Syrah McGivern, Carina Myteveli, Devis Myteveli, Masoud Arshadi, Ryan Mathie, Martha Andriolatos, Evan Moreira, Christine Moreira, Sarah Deasy, Catherine Deasy, Erin Deasy, Lucy Grenan, Aksel Myteveli, Jane McElhiney, Chet McElhiney, Carl Cincotti, Vincent Cincotti, Barry Batorski

Item 1: Morrison Park (20 min allocated for visitors to make suggestions on how the Commission ought to proceed). Visitor comments are identified by name where they gave one; I'm not including statements by Commission members here.

Devis: Feels "blindsided," wants to know who makes the decision, feels Commission will be biased in its recommendation.

Carl: Yeomans Ave is very busy, the suggested location (triangle by tennis court) is not workable; concerned about traffic. Suggested alternate location (not Morrison, somewhere near Rt 16??).

Jane: Suggested Playstead Park.

Christine: Morrison Park is in constant use and there is no room anywhere in it for a garden. Also concerned about parking and vandalism.

Devis: Community gardens are privatization of public land.

Masoud: Emphasized community nature of garden; more responsible users in the space will quell irresponsible ones.

?: Suggested the high school as alternate location.

?: Gardens look neglected outside the growing season.

Christine: Concerned about how will future conversations on this take place, especially for those who cannot attend all meetings.

Ryan: Do we have data about previous garden building efforts, in which people's minds changed? Reduced crime stats? Home prices?

Commission members stressed that no action would take place without further consultation. We will work to present an alternative proposal that may be more palatable to those residents who are currently opposed.

Item 2: Procedures for handling future open meetings

General agreement that the Morrison meeting was not adequately planned and handled. Commissioners were prepared with materials in order to answer anticipated questions, but the meeting lacked a moderator and structure that might have helped maintain order.

Suggestions for future meetings included: hold the meeting at City Hall as a more appropriately designed space; use of talking stick/object; clearly designated moderator.

Item 3: Grant Money Plan

We plan to build 10 beds at Walking Court.

5/7/19 will be an open meeting for residents

More beds and renewed soil will be placed at Willis Ave.

Item 4: Updates

Winthrop Update (Julie)

Julie was able to get Lalicata, their preferred soil vendor, listed with the city as an approved vendor to facilitate payment.

Garden Art Tour July 28 – artists will display their work at Winthrop and hopefully other gardens. It will be suggested to Riverbend coordinators that they might want to participate.

Eversource is holding a public Q&A session Thursday, April 25, at City Hall; their trenching project will start this summer.

People on the garden mailing list want to volunteer even if they don't have a bed themselves, so make sure to post events where they can help.

Suggestion to come up with a boilerplate letter people can use to register support for gardens.

Plant Sale Update (Riz)

Seedlings doing well. May 18th will be the sale date. Volunteers are needed to set up and take down. Riz will publicize to the list/Facebook.

New Items

Syrah would like to document the Commission's policies and procedures, especially as concerns the establishment of new gardens, as a basis for future conversations. She and Rebecca will work on this for the next meeting.

Masoud asked about the reality of people experiencing vandalism in gardens. Consensus that there is a little bit, mainly in the form of "pilferage", and that the height of the garden fence is a factor in prevention.