

Medford Community Garden Commission

Meeting held January 26, 2021, via Zoom

Present: Brian Duran, Rebecca Stevenson, Lisa Risley, Liz White, Syrah McGivern, Andreeanne Carbonneau

The group expressed their sorrow at the loss of Joan Parker, who passed away on January 21. The Commission expressed its support for the Winthrop Garden's consideration to rename all or part of that garden for Joan.

Membership: Amanda noted that she planned to ask the mayor to appoint Riz as a full member of the Commission, to get our number back up to five. Rebecca will continue for now as our sole alternate.

Eversource funds: We were able to briefly tap Tim McGivern who let us know that his office would be handling the reimbursement of Eversource funds awarded to the Winthrop Garden for improvements such as a pergola. In answer to a question from Liz, funds from this effort must immediately benefit that garden or surrounding area.

Web site: Some tweeking is needed to make sure all links aren't dead. Amanda will create a landing page for the group's review so that an applicant for garden space knows there is a waiting list and how to ask questions. Riz suggested we post rough numbers of how many are on the waiting list but this varies so much through the season that it seems impractical.

Syrah asked if a mission statement was in place for the Commission. Amanda will search the Dropbox folder to see what exists.

Wait List: Brian let us know that the wait list currently has 80 names but there is still clean-up to be done. Even before the coordinators reach out, there are five spots at Tufts and three at Winthrop available. Most of names to be tapped on the first part of the list are those who applied in 2019. In February, gardeners will be contacted so that they can inform us of their plans.

Food Policy Council: Andreeanne mentioned that the City's Food Security Task Force was considering establishing a Food Policy Council and would welcome the participation of the Garden Commission with the goal of promoting more equitable access to food. The group discussed the possibility of creating a cooperative garden somewhere in the City which would incorporate collective efforts and shared harvest. Such use of City property would benefit from support from City officials. Andreeanne noted the City-Wide Hunger Free Pledge, enacted last year. Brian noted support in the Open Space plan for expanding community gardens. It's possible that our intended proposal for 97 Spring Street could incorporate such a structure. Alicia Hunt is involved in developing a comprehensive city master plan; Amanda will contact her to see where this project might fit. Riz offered to solicit seed companies for seeds. It was suggested that we might involve the Voke School students but there may not be enough lead

time for this growing season. We might try to involve folks on the waiting list if there is a need for volunteer efforts. While a larger project engaging with this Council is a more long-term project we would like to try to get something small off the ground this growing season. Another long-term goal would be a community greenhouse for seed starting and education efforts.

Source for garden soil: In recent years gardens have often used Lalicata in Arlington as a trusted source for garden soil. The business has closed; Liz says she has some leads on other sources that she will share with the group.