

Medford Community Garden Commission
Wednesday, April 26, 2022

Present: Rebecca Stevenson, Amanda Bowen, Kerry Masteller, Brian Duran, Fred Laskey, Michelle Jurkovich, Ozge Tekin, Liz White, Lisa Risley, Brenna Robeson, Syrah McGivern, Mel Raelin, Elise Boerges, Retta Smith

Updates: Kerry introduced herself as the new coordinator for Tufts. Liz reported on a successful work day at Winthrop. Fred reported that several fruit trees at Riverbend had been vandalized.

Wait list questions: Several newcomers to the wait list asked for clarification about the procedure for senior gardeners making way for newer arrivals. Brian explained the procedure that is in place and we agreed to address this again at our next meeting. It was noted that our founding ordinance and bylaws should be linked on the web site so that the public can refer to them.

Andrews garden: Syrah described the almost completed Andrews garden where 6 beds will accommodate both student and community gardeners. We have not yet determined exactly which beds will be for students but hope to have them in soon. A ribbon cutting has been postponed until the gardens are fully ready.

Missituk garden: Mel has offered to be a new co-coordinator for this school garden, previously very successful but derelict during COVID. It is infested with rats so Mel has enlisted Board of Health staff as well as maintenance folks both to get rid of the rats and work on nearby dumpsters which are a draw for them. She will communicate with us if funds are needed for this process.

School garden project: We invited Retta to attend to help provide an overview of some of the efforts to promote school gardens to date. She described the grant process undertaken several years ago entitled "Medford Schoolhouse Farms" which would have integrated growing into all grades and schools. The concept was modelled on Backyard Growers, a school project in Gloucester. She mentioned the wonderful hydroponic project that Donna Laskey started at the time.

She noted that Roberts has a grant for the Whole Kids Foundation to build a new garden. The high school has an active Garden Club and is using their garden space. Brooks has not had great support from teachers but has some interest from Girl Scouts and a few parent coordinators. Brian is involved and has toured the Winthrop garden with some Brooks classes. Riverbend has 1 plot used by McGlynn. Tufts has two plots used by the Curtis-Tufts school.

We noted that all school gardens suffer from neglect during summer months. If we can coordinate with community gardeners, as we plan to do at Andrews, perhaps we can increase the care of all school gardens during summer.