

Medford Community Garden Commission

September 26, 2023

Present: Rebecca Stevenson, Brian Duran, Amanda Bowen, Lisa Risley, Kerry Masteller, Elise Boerges

Tufts update: Kerry reported that there will be at least two beds available at Tufts next year due to turnover. Numerous beds need rebuilding and a project will be planned for the off-season once they can determine how much money is available in their account. Due to turnover in the Planning Office, this information has been difficult to obtain, as the Winthrop board has noted as well.

Winthrop update: 1 new gardener was added when a gardener had to withdraw mid-season.

McNally update: 1 gardener dropped out but asked to garden next season. We have to debate this more carefully because of our extensive waiting list.

Riverbend reported several dead rabbits appearing in the garden. Speculation is that they had access to rat poison placed around the schools.

Roberts: Elise noted that gardens for kindergarten classes have now been installed and are being used.

Missituk: Parents have installed a pollinator garden for school use.

Andrews: Due to a gap in communication in the spring, three gardeners were assigned to Andrews and had begun to plant seeds when the 7th grade class finally emerged and filled many of the beds with seedlings they had prepared. Not an ideal way to start the collaboration for the year! We should have better communication with the school next spring as several Commission members have family members enrolled there. We were able to get permission for a hose reel to be stored on the loading dock (of course there was ample rain this year most weeks.)

Housing Authority projects: 10 final beds were built this year at La Prise Village bringing the total available to 20. The fence should go in this fall. Demonstrating continued interest in garden access, Housing Authority staff requested four beds for Tempone Apartments, another property on Allston St. We are pleased to continue our partnership with Community Development staff to build these gardens.

Commission web site: Brian agreed to update the map of the gardens with new locations and pictures.

Membership: Brian has expressed his willingness to pass the baton on assigning beds from the membership list next spring. We will deliberate about who on the Commission should handle

this. We also discussed ways to ensure that we reach prospective gardeners successfully and try at least two ways to reach each person.

Food Justice Council: Amanda met with two representatives of this group which is related to the Mystic Valley YMCA. They are keen to ensure that gardeners have access to tools, seeds, seedlings, training and compost as needed.

Commission members are eager to provide some of this training working out of the library. We plan to hold a seed swap again in the spring and Riz is keen to offer a workshop on seed starting. Amanda will reach out to MHA staff to get suggestions of preferred seeds and plants as well as training needs. We discussed access to see libraries; the Medford library hopes to have one in future. Melrose Library has one in place and there is at least one at a private residence.