



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
www.cityofmadison.com

Meeting Minutes - Draft COMMUNITY GARDENS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 26, 2010

5:00 PM

210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Room 108 (City-County Building)

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m.

Present: 10 -

Nan Fey; Monya A. Choudhury; Betty Chewning; John B. Bell; Annette M. Nekola; Andre Scaife; Alice K. Anderson; Joe Mathers; Nicole M. Craig and Kevin Schiesser

Others present: Nancy Dungan and Rachel Martin.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from October 27, 2009 were unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None.

17218

Special Presentation: Food & Gardens in Madison Schools - Rachel Martin

Rachel Martin reported that within Madison Metro School District, the School Food Committee with its School Food Initiative has been involved in locally grown foods for meals served by MMSD and about local foods. The committee has adopted an outdoor classroom approach based on the model of Berkeley (Calif) schools. Consultants to MMSD have noted multiple levels to address, including a physical component utilizing school grounds or possibly nearby community gardens. Locally, there are several schools utilizing on-site or adjacent spaces for programming (partial list: Falk, Lindbergh, Midvale, Lapham and potentially Glendale. Community Garden/school garden partnerships can supplement present weaknesses such as the need for summer maintenance when schools are not in session and possibly using fees for community gardeners to supplement teaching resources. There could also be coordination of access to supplies, compost, mulch, etc. Mathers: The new Badger Center for Resilience charter school has been embraced by the MMSD school board to pilot a more developed model of this approach that could open up new avenues for cooperation with a proposed community gardens at the school as a test case. Bell commented that MMSD will need to provide direction to what is at present very dependent upon local initiatives and personalities.

Dungan asked: "Where is the community garden - school food connection to be made? Martin responded that the business of food in the schools itself, as part of the place-based teaching and within the Sustainability Initiative with Sustain Dane. Overall, the MMSD system is quite centralized in food preparation, and it will likely be a slow process to change that. Bell stated that parent-based pressure will probably drive the speed of any transformation away from the more minimal "meets government standards" approach now followed. Mathers stated that community gardens on school property have been most successful when physically located and separated at edge of property in order to not conflict with limited access to schools in session child protection rules. Several members asked that Ms. Martin return from time to time to update Committee as appropriate.

NEW BUSINESS

[16009](#) Theft Issues at Community Gardens

Using the Madison Police Department organizational chart, Mathers stated that CAC will approach contacts within the MPD to inform them of garden locations and their importance as community ventures as well as seek assistance re: theft issues at the gardens during the growing season. CAC will also put together a simple guide on how garden leaders can best access MPD assistance. After some questioning, it was agreed that this approach would not require Gardens Committee assistance and that there should be a short report back to the Committee after the next garden season.

REGULAR BUSINESS - REPORTS

[08281](#) Parks Update

Chewing followed up about a first conversation with Parks staff whether they wanted to establish criteria regarding establishment of gardens in parks. Staff's initial reaction was that this was probably not needed and that they would rely on community approval as the main criteria. Groups interested should: approach their alder, ask staff to review the Parks Master Plan (to see if garden footprint could be accommodated), conduct a neighborhood canvass, and then approach the Parks commission for approval. Fey asked for more documents relating to community gardens within the Parks and Open Space Plan; (the City Comprehensive Plan refers to same, but she was unable to find any of the relevant passages there). Chewing will follow up on this with staff.

[14868](#) Planning Update

Nan Fey related that the Zoning Code Rewrite language regarding community gardens and urban agriculture seems to be inserted in many if not all of the appropriate places but that others may need to comb through it in detail.

[08283](#) New Garden Fund

There was no report.

[09055](#) Garden Plot Fees

The subcommittee recommends a continuation of the existing fee schedule for 2010. Leaders reported that revenues are adequate for present expenses. They requested some language and formatting changes to text below chart to improve clarity. A revised schedule and a cover letter to leaders will be presented at the February meeting.

15100

Garden/CAC Reports

Mathers reported CAC staff have been focusing on New Garden Grant outreach and assistance and meeting with existing garden leaderships at multiple sites. The Madison Fruits and Nuts meeting had a very good turnout (95 people) with lots of enthusiasm from around the City about planting fruit and nut producing plants in/near community gardens as well as at other public locations such as parks. CAC will soon announce a new round of county-wide garden grants called "Share Your Harvest" aimed at starting/expanding:

a) food pantry gardens and/or b) community gardens with food pantry plots, collections or Plant A Row projects to substantially increase donations to a food pantry or meal site. Amounts up to \$3,000 will be considered. The Center for Resilient Cities has closed on the former Badger School and hopes to include a community garden there as part of its community agriculture effort. The St. Paul garden will likely need to be relocated to allow for a planned Milwaukee-MADison high-speed rail initiative. There is as yet no identified relocation spot but Worthington Park could possibly accommodate a portion of the garden as some St. Paul gardeners are residents there. The Downtown Garden Group continues to press for land and has turned up additional locations to explore.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

COMMUNICATIONS - None.

Member Shrewnaoxai Yee Ythao has sent in her resignation.

ADJOURNMENT

John Bell motioned to adjourn the meeting and the motion was seconded by Annette Nikola. The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.