



City of Madison

Meeting Minutes - Draft

COMMUNITY GARDENS COMMITTEE

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

Tuesday, January 31, 2006

5:00 PM

210 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Room 403 (City-County Building)

CALL TO ORDER

Present: Nan Fey, Sophia Angelina Estante, John Bell, Sharon Lezberg, Alice K. Anderson, Lori B. Nitzel, Chue Vang, Janet Parker and Joe Mathers

Absent: William Barker and Linda Hoskins

ROLL CALL

This meeting was chaired by Nan Fey.

PUBLIC COMMENT

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes for the November 29th meeting were approved without amendment. (Related to this item, there was a suggestion to include on every agenda a schedule of this year's meetings).

Schedule of Meetings for 2006

March 28, April 25, May 30, June 27, September 26, October 31 and November 28th.

REGULAR BUSINESS ITEMS

A. Garden/CAC Reports

Janet Parker passed out announcements about the upcoming "Madison Grow Together" Community Gardening Conference put on by CAC, CFGN & Dane County UW-Extension. The conference will be held on Saturday, between February 25, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Aldo Leopold Nature Center in Monona. Workshops, discussion groups, cooking demonstrations, and kids gardening sessions are all planned.

*The Community Garden Handbook is now on the web at
<<http://cacscw.org/gardens/handbook/index.htm>> !*

CAC funding crisis has been managed without drastic effects on Community Gardens. They have however been merged into the new combined Food and Gardens Division under a new overall coordinator, Chris Brockel. Chris B. may be coming to the next meeting to meet with the Committee.

Rachel Armstrong and Alice Anderson presented a 2005 Eagle Heights and University Housing Garden summary. The combined gardens are the largest gardens in the Midwest (and possibly the country) over 260 plots and 1500 family members involved. They were founded in 1962. The gardens also include plots for CALS research and F H King Group student use and other student and University affiliated users. The Gardens

are very diverse culturally (40 countries and nearly as many languages represented) with many extended and multi-generational family groups and have a 4/household average.

There is a Garden Oversight Committee for long-term and broad policy issues and a Garden Committee which handles day to day operations. They hire 2 paid "garden workers" and a Registrar. Other work is carried out by a 5 hour volunteer commitment. A new picnic area was built in 2005 and a rototiller was purchased. Overall, they have been making progress on reclaiming the enormous weed pile.

Still, there are concerns that there needs to be a better way to more quickly reassign plots to prevent weedy and abandoned plots. Garden lost another 30 plots to the prairie restoration.

Questions were asked re: the earlier loss of plots to the restoration and would this be a continuing problem. The reps felt that there had been an earlier period of misunderstanding and that parts of the University had not understood the Garden's importance. Another question was in regards to the Garden's mention in the Lake Shore Nature Preserve Master Plan which is due to be unveiled very soon. The representatives were encouraged to review the Plan and make input if needed. Other questions were about the makeup overall, were there Hmong families involved and how to access space (use their website). The representatives acknowledged the even though there are many University students involved with their families there are still many communication barriers. Using multi-language signs is also helpful.

B. Mayor's Office Update

Mayor's staffer was out of town so there was no report.

C. Parks Update

Although Bill Barker was out of town, Nan Fey reported on his efforts continuing efforts concerning Marlborough Park with only a few issues such as sliding fee scale remaining to be fully resolved (with a compromise gradual phase-in proposed and agreed to in the offing) and a misunderstanding about the voluntary nature of donating to the New Garden Fund.

D. Planning Update

The City's Comprehensive Plan has been approved, including the East Rail Corridor Central Park changes. Nan is participating in a Sustainability Study Circle (organized by Sustain Dane), and will be reporting on Community Gardens and the Dane County Food Council.

E. ADA subcommittee

Reviewed a Power Point presentation and will continue to focus on "practical accessibility".

Currently, there are 8 area community gardens with raised beds (and some accessible surfaces, too) and 5 community locations that have incorporated accessible gardening areas into their grounds. Permeable pavers, accessible surfaces, and adapted use of various planters were suggested to the subcommittee as worthy of including in their recommendations.

F. New Garden Advisory Panel will be evaluating 3 applications for new garden funds in early February. Sites are the Sheboygan Garden expansion, the combined Early Childhood Learning Center/South Madison Police Station site and Midvale Elementary School.

NEW BUSINESS

00938

To move the "anonymous donation" balance to the Madison Community Foundation for the purpose of funding new community garden projects.

A motion was made by Bell, seconded by Anderson, to Return to Lead with the Following Recommendation(s) to the BOARD OF ESTIMATES. The motion passed by acclamation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Since time was getting short, Joe Mathers agreed to pass out a summary of Water Utility rate disparity regarding hydrant rental which charges the same rate for all hydrants even though the hookups come in 2 sizes and the amount of water available is a factor of 7 difference. This works to the extreme disadvantage of small sites as a majority of their budget will be used up by overly large water bills. Efforts to address this with Utility staff have not resulted in anything workable long term and could result in a de facto bias against smaller sites which are sometimes locally appropriate. There will be a follow-up discussion at the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:18 p.m.