

Garden Leader Gathering
Saturday, May 10th 2014
Catholic Multi-Cultural Center, Madison, WI

8:30-9:00 am: Registration, networking and seed give away

9:00-9:45 am: Welcome and introductions

9:45-10:30 am: Transitioning to a New Model for Community Gardens, Part 1

10:30-10:45 am: Break

10:45- 11:30 am: Transitioning to a New Model for Community Gardens, Part 2

11:30-12:00 noon: Wrap up and next steps

(notes from meeting start on next page)

Notes – Community Garden Leaders Meeting, May 10, 2014

Garden Leaders' Challenges (most frequent noted in bold)

1. **Engage volunteers (ride herd, find appropriate niches for volunteers)**
2. **Build “community” beyond just having garden plots**
3. Deal with city and other entities (railroad, state, county)
4. Management of wait list
5. Assignment of gardens (problematic among some cultures)
6. **Communications, especially with non-English speakers (translation services needed)**
7. Keeping everybody happy (gardeners, neighborhood)
8. School gardens (lots of different people coming through, waning of interest/effort during summer months)
9. Garden leadership development
10. No documentation of processes/practices when leadership changes
11. Finding new gardeners (Moorland); Engaging African-American gardeners (Marlborough)
12. Too much work, not enough time

What CAC did for gardens

1. Held garden lease
2. Maintained liability insurance
3. Water system maintenance (turn on and off, liaison with city utility)
4. Compost – arranged for delivery (some gardens were getting it for free, now have to pay)
5. Wood chips – arranged for delivery
6. Supported development of new gardens
7. Facilitated gardeners finding open plots
8. Tools – provided or had them available for loan
9. Seeds – obtained seed donations (conduit for suppliers) and organized distribution to gardens
10. Plants – obtained donations (conduit for suppliers), organized distribution
11. Resource for grant writing, finding grants
12. Fiscal agent for garden grants (is CAC currently managing grants that will need to transition?)
13. Paid bills (water, etc.) for gardens short on funds – how will this be handled in future?
14. Assisted with registration process and materials
15. Plowing – new gardens; annual tilling for some gardens
16. New Garden Fund – staffed this process and volunteer panel
17. Liaison/intermediary with government bodies (city parks, water utility, etc.) for communications, problem-solving
18. Plotted out and staked gardens
19. Had institutional knowledge
20. Translation services
21. Community Gardens website – documents, garden contacts, etc.
22. Maintained Madison Area Community Gardeners list serve (Google Group). Micah is currently the administrator for the group.

23. "Craigslist" for gardens – source of materials, supplies for gardens
24. Sponsored annual Garden Leadership Conference, Garden Days, Bike Tour
25. Connection with neighborhood and community groups
26. Collected food pantry donations
27. Installed new gardens – siting, soil testing, tilling, staking
28. Supported/source of info for City's Committee on Community Gardens
29. Advocacy for community gardens
30. Mentored garden leaders
31. Provide consistency between gardens (e.g. plot fees)
32. Continuing education opportunities
33. Connected gardens to programs/events e.g. "Fit to Go"
34. Served as complaint center
35. Set up water barrels
36. Technical assistance (plumbing, etc.)
37. Big systems visioning
38. Finding new locations for gardens
39. Had trucks to transport garden materials, items

The Ideal Community Gardens Program

1. Central entity for legal/infrastructure issues (leases, insurance)
2. Directory of resources and entity to maintain and update
3. Listserv/Online dialogue/communication platform for garden leaders
4. One-stop shop
5. Single point of contact with government agencies
6. Strong group of garden leaders and ways for them to connect (annual conference, meetings)
7. Community gardens point of contact/entity that is visible to the greater community
8. Identify new garden locations
9. Liaison/support between gardens and edible landscapes
10. Program should be a resource and not a "ruler" that emphasizes homogeneity
11. Provide documents online for gardens' use
12. "Craigslist" for tools and materials
13. Program shouldn't create more work on leaders
14. Advocate for low-income and underserved populations
15. Represents everyone's interests
16. Respects the individuality of gardens
17. Education on safe garden practices – use of tools, manure, food borne illness, canning, soil amendments (testing for lead etc.)

What Garden Leaders Need to Feel Supported

1. Regular meetings/events for leaders (some leaders volunteered to assist with a next meeting)
2. Increase collaboration between leaders
3. Updates/communications from the Planning Groups (Transition 2014 and Structure/Funding)
4. Copy of lease to garden leader
5. Knowledge of city's attitude/support for community gardens

6. Website to replace CAC's website
7. Translators to communicate to garden population on behalf of gardeners
8. Start-up support to liaison with city/county
9. Professional development opportunities (managing volunteers, etc.)
10. Knowing there's an entity that will be fiscal agent for assistance with bills, grants

