



# City of Madison

City of Madison  
Madison, WI 53703  
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## Meeting Minutes - Draft COMMUNITY GARDENS COMMITTEE

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Tuesday, May 22, 2012

5:00 PM

215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Room LL-110 (Madison Municipal Building)

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### CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by Co-chair Schneider.

**Present:** 9 -

Nan Fey; Matthew J. Phair; Madelyn D. Leopold; Annette M. Nekola; Luke Thao; Danna J. Olsen; Jill Schneider; Joe Mathers and Nancy A. Dungan

**Excused:** 3 -

Yimmuj Yang; Joseph E. Muellenberg and Melissa Gavin

**Also present:** Micah Kloppenburg (CAC), Chris Kelley and George Dreckmann, City of Madison Streets Department; Alder Sue Ellingson

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Phair motioned to approve the minutes; Fey seconded the motion; motion carried unanimously and the minutes were approved.

**PUBLIC COMMENT - None**

**DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS - None**

**NEW BUSINESS**

## OLD BUSINESS

### 26426

#### City of Madison Mulch Pricing Policy Change

Chris Kelley and George Dreckmann said that the Mayor had given permission to Streets to provide the community gardens groups free mulch. Community Action Coalition will work directly with Streets and provide a list of all the gardens that would need mulch along with one or two contacts for each of those gardens. For gardens requesting mulch, streets will deliver a load of mulch to each site in a 5 ton double axle dump truck within the next two weeks. Since brush pickup has been lighter this spring, there are more street crews available to deliver the mulch. The mulch supply is lower than normal, but he thought there would be enough to deliver extra to some sites, if necessary. Micah Kloppenburg from CAC will send the list of gardens directly to Dreckmann and they will coordinate the delivery of the mulch. Dreckmann said "yes" since there are only a couple of gardens at the schools. Fey thanks the Mayor's Office and Streets for being so responsive to this request from Gardens. Dreckmann said they had issues last year with private contractors picking up mulch and selling it for \$17.00 a load.

### 26427

#### Coordination of City Activities/Overlapping Interests Related to Food, Gardens and Sustainability

Fey mentioned that the new Madison Local Food Committee was meeting at the same time as the Community Gardens Committee. Janel Heinrich, Director for Madison/Dane County Public Health Association, has been asked by the Mayor to make recommendations to him about food issues. Conversations with other groups outside the city, i.e., CAC and other garden groups might be helpful.

Nekola asked if it would be appropriate for Community Gardens to outreach and call in representatives from other groups to see what they are doing regarding food issues. Fey said invitations should be sent out to other groups to get inventory as to what their efforts are.

Dungan said Dane County is starting a Food Council Coalition being led by Carrie Edgar from the Dane County Extension office. Thao said he was a member of the coalition. Dungan said there is a meeting scheduled on June 12th at 8:00 AM, at the Goodman Center.

Fey asked Dungan for a list of who the players are. She said that when Bill Clingan was with the City, he asked for a list of cities that were similar size as Madison to see how they are dealing with food issues. Dungan will give Heinrich and Gardens Committee members the list and maybe add to it.

Schneider asked if the Gardens Committee goal is to raise awareness of what other groups/cities are doing?

Shively said Chris Brockel (CAC) applied for a grant regarding food asset mapping including focus and overlaps. United Way is working on this issue, as well. Findings will be presented in 2013.

Dungan suggested Community Gardens start an initiative to ask who the various players in the community are and ask a couple of them at a time to speak once a month to the CG committee. She also suggested that the CG co-chairs meet with Janel Heinrich to focus on what requests to send to the Common Council. The Goodman Center would like more direction from the City- there are lots of people who are working on the same issues. Dungan has a list of those people that is a draft that she will send to the Mayor's Office to be distributed to the CG members. CG members should bring suggestions to the next meeting. Thao suggested letting Carrie Edgar know if any CG members would like to attend the meeting on June 12th to help them focus on their goals and reach out to help the Food Council Coalition.

Schneider asked if someone from The Farley Center should be invited to the next meeting. Dungan has names and phone numbers of people there and will send them to the CG co-chairs. Chris Brockel could also give more direction in that regard.

[25721](#)

Siting Gardens in Parks

Fey stated the leases for Elvehjem and Leopold have been approved by the Plan Commission, but now must go through the rest of the City approval process which could take up to six more weeks. Shively asked if groups should apply for written lease approval earlier than they are now. Nekola asked why there were so many more problems with lease approvals this year. Mathers said many small issues cropped up asking for more specifics and that requests should really be in place by the end of December to get approval in time for spring planting. Fey said there are so many steps involved in City approval, that the process gets cumbersome. Shively said Elvehjem may have to wait until fall for approval. Fey said the city needs a process in place by the end of the year that would not hold requests up for next season.

Dungan said that grant requests for less than \$25,000 don't need Common Council approval. She thought city lease requests on city land should have a shortened process like the smaller grant requests. These types of leases should be discussed with Real Estate and the Parks Department.

Fey asked Leopold if community garden sites could be addressed in master plans for parks, so that if garden requests came in after that, the process would be shorter? Leopold said the Parks Commission approval is pro forma once the Parks Superintendent has signed off - especially in new parks that are already in a master plan. The Plan Commission can't get to this earlier in the process. Dungan said the process for city contracts doesn't have to be so cumbersome.

Phair asked how could the committee find more places for gardens outside of city parks. Schneider asked "can we pick sites for a garden in each park and have them approved prior to a formal request for a garden?" Nekola asked if the CG committee should focus on other City-owned land besides parks.

Fey suggested approaching Engineering and the Water Utility about possible garden sites that have water access.

Alder Ellingson shared her view that the main objections neighbors have to a community garden in Brittingham Park, is in a sense, that they are visually unattractive. Ald. Ellingson felt that perspective is important given the importance of West Washington Avenue as entryway to downtown. She feels that the view is spectacular, and perhaps shouldn't be changed.

Leopold commented that perhaps the extreme views on this issue may need to be eliminated in order to find an acceptable compromise for Brittingham.

Fey commented that to date the City's approach has been to leave local gardens to manage themselves, including standards related to visual design. Suggested that the Gardens Committee may want to look at the idea of establishing visual guidelines for new community gardens, particularly for those located downtown or in highly visible areas of the City.

Shively shared that other cities have established standard and guidelines for operation and designs of community gardens. She agreed to send some relevant materials for distribution to the committee.

Kloppenburg shared that any standards would need local garden buy-in, as they would be the enforcers of any standards. He also thought it would be helpful for enforcement if there were City-wide standards that local garden leaders could reference.

Schneider agreed that having City-wide standards could be helpful to local garden leaders. She shared a conversation with a Monona Bay resident who thought a number of residents who had originally opposed a garden in the park, had shifted their thinking after hearing from the Hmong gardeners at the neighborhood meeting. Conversation and sharing of concerns can help with creating agreement.

Phair sees this as a continual conversation among the neighbors and it may take some time. He wondered to what extent cultural differences may be playing out.

Fey said the Plan Commission frequently has to make decisions over neighbor's objections, and having standards allows the Committee to make fair decisions. Also felt that Brittingham decision's success or failure will have a lot do with people's opportunity to have their say and to hear concerns of others. An important role of Alders in these situations is to bring people together, though sometimes difficult.

Committee will continue to monitor neighborhood discussions and Park process. General agreement that the process is important for this decision.

#### REGULAR BUSINESS REPORTS

[18897](#)

CDBG Update

No Updates.

[14868](#)

Planning Update

Fey reported that Plan Commission approved leases for gardens in Leopold and Elvehjem Parks at their last meeting.

[08283](#)

New Garden Fund - Working Group Update

Nekola reported the group is meeting again this week.

[15100](#)

Garden/CAC Reports

Shively reported that CAC will be holding the first gardener gathering of the season in June. Topics will include garden security and theft deterrence

[08281](#)

Parks Update

See discussion in Siting Gardens in Parks.

#### COMMUNICATIONS

Reminder that summer committee meetings are scheduled for June 26th and August 7th. There is no meeting in July.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### ADJOURNMENT

Leopold made a motion to adjourn which was seconded by Fey. The motion passed unanimously and adjourned at 7:15 p.m.