



City of Madison

City of Madison
Madison, WI 53703
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Meeting Minutes COMMUNITY GARDENS COMMITTEE

Tuesday, August 5, 2014

5:00 PM

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

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order by Fey at 5:03 PM.

Others Present: Elissa Brown (Dane County Extension), Nancy Dungan (CDBG)

Present: 7 - Justin O. Markofski; Madelyn D. Leopold; Aislynn H.C. Miller; Nan Fey;
Danna J. Olsen; Jill Schneider and Melissa Gavin

Absent: 2 - Steve King and Annette M. Nekola

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Markofski moved approval of the May minutes with corrections. Schneider seconded the motion. Motion passed by a voice vote.

Markofski moved approval of the June minutes. Schneider seconded the motion. Motion passed by a voice vote.

Leopold abstained as she was not at the May 27th meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS

None

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Brown explained a new garden story project which involves interviewing gardeners as a resource to be used by City and County gardeners, and presented the first stages of the project. Brown explained that she hopes to eventually put the garden stories in an interface that will be accessible online. She wanted to share the project with the committee in hopes that committee members will both participate and talk about it to other gardeners. Brown passed around a sign up sheet about the project for those interested.

Schneider suggested finding gardeners to talk to on work days. Fey added that work days get posted on the leadership forum. Schneider suggested adding the project to the agenda for the fall garden leaders meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

None

OLD BUSINESS

32247

Status of Community Gardens Program

Fey suggested everyone look over attachments prior to meetings. She also praised Brown for having created a new website that is very easy to use and looks good. Fey suggested we add the website to the Community Gardens page on the City's website. Miller agreed that the site is inviting. Schneider questioned whether older documents are on the site. Brown clarified that they will be.

Woulf provided a refresher on the need for a facilitator to lead a strategic planning process. He reported that the larger planning committee asked for assistance in more intensive business planning including designing a budget, signing formal memorandums of understanding, allowing other municipalities to view budget. Woulf explained that they needed to introduce the resolution to Council for the Mayor to amend the budget to cover the cost of hiring a facilitator; resolution was received very positively by the Food Policy Council, and passed unanimously by the Common Council. Woulf hopes to have the process inform the budget to get a better idea of what the program costs. He also explained that the issue on the requests for bids closed yesterday. Two formal bids were received, three if late arrivals are accepted. They will review the bids and a selection will be made. Part of the scope of work for the facilitator will be to review work that has been done to date and take a more intensive look at what work is to be done. Woulf explained that making sure we are able to bring the facilitator on in the right way will be helpful in figuring out how the funding group will be helpful going forward. The concern is that five or six processes will be going on at the same time and time and money will be spent digging through. It will be best to start fresh, get up to speed, and get recommendations on where to go.

Olsen expressed confusion as she thought that the committee would work with the facilitator to make the budget. Woulf explained that the facilitator will use the resources of the group at the table but will ultimately produce a product. He is hoping for a balance between the two. Olsen questioned as to what point they will be invited to work on this. Woulf stated that there is a meeting on August 21st where there will be time to work it out. They need to be organized and focused due to the rates for the facilitator.

Gavin asked how the timeline matches up with renewing leases for the gardeners. Woulf stated that the request of bids said we want the majority of work completed by mid November. We would like a business plan with lease renewals, etc. At some point we need to get information to garden leaders clarifying that lease expirations do not mean that the City will just destroy the garden the next day.

Brown shared that this should go out to garden leaders ASAP because gardeners on private lands are nervous. If private garden leaders heard from

someone issues can be resolved.

Dungan questioned whether or not the position in Parks that covers Community Gardens had been filled. Woulf explained that it has not been filled yet but the position will have a relationship with gardens, as it is included in the job description.

Fey asked if the facilitator will come to the gardens meetings or if they will hear about it in a different, timelier way? Woulf stated that details are not worked out yet. The facilitator probably won't attend but needs to look at hours and who is selected and level of familiarity with the process. We need to put the bulk of time into something that will make financial sense. Woulf will provide the committee with further updates.

Schneider updated the group on the Garden Leaders Fall Meeting. She reported that people were feeling as if they weren't hearing about leases and insurance, and need to be reassured that something is happening. They discussed the future of the organization and collaboration. Leaders are looking for a good explanation of what's being talked about and where we are in the process. People were feeling out of the loop. Fey stated that the partnership is not a done deal so there is not much to say that is definitive right now. Schneider said that they are not actually searching for information but that they would like an update. Markofski stated that it's a good idea to host meeting because it keeps everyone together and creates a sense of cohesion.

Schneider reported that compost also came up at the meeting and it is still a big issue. Brown indicated that people were added to a Google group and a letter was sent out to the full list, although she was not sure if people read it. The website is also a good resource for information on this. Miller stated that people need to take responsibility and the time to investigate. Fey suggested that any information that needs to be read before the Fall Gathering should be included in the invite.

Schneider reported that Chris Brockel will join the Planning Group as a "link" to the Garden Leader group. The number one thing for the agenda for the fall meeting is an update on the planning process. Dungan stated that if the facilitator meets with the gardeners in the first week of October they won't do a good job of inclusion because the project will be almost done or they will be slowed down. To include the gardeners it would need to be early September. Woulf reported that people said they could not get to a meeting in early September. Schneider stated that garden leaders did a comprehensive job of conveying wants and needs at the May 10th meeting. Dungan suggested that when the business plan is put together, you go to realities. There may need to be new role garden leaders will play in where we go. They need to be a huge part. We will be sorry if we work with the facilitator and garden leaders just to get an update because their involvement is the strength of the new design. Miller said that we need to think about sitting in long meetings and paying the facilitator for this. Woulf stated that they can't tell garden leaders that this will definitely happen. Garden leaders have been central to the design of the program. We have to go with the hand we're dealt with this short timeline.

Gavin suggested the creation of a focus group of garden leaders. We could pool 4 or 5 to sit with the facilitator for an hour and give well framed, quality feedback. Schneider reported that leaders didn't know whether they would be

part of the whole planning process. Gavin stated that they can be given the opportunity to participate but not all are interested. Woulf shared that it is important to talk to gardeners as they will be part of the process. We don't know how to pass it along to all garden leaders because there is so much unknown and challenges on Community GroundWorks. We need input but we must be careful and deliberate about when information is shared. Brown said that leaders are just now realizing that they need a democratic process among themselves. Leopold reported that leadership succession is a big garden issue. We need to figure out what the facilitator hasn't heard yet.

Schneider shared that the next planning meeting is August 21st at 6:30 PM.

[31912](#)

New Garden Fund Issues

The Madison Community Foundatin is willing to continue holding the funds until the new program is in place. Meanwhile, the committee decided to continue its moratorium on new applications to the fund.

Because we currently lack the capacity to coordinate the process, the committee agreed there will be no applications for 2015.

Regarding the annual donations of plot fees to the New Garden Fund, Dungan questioned whether this committee has the capacity to receive funds. The West Side Garden Club used to make its donations to CAC, and wishes to continue, but it's unclear where to make donations this season. The committee could send out a letter to all garden leaders with the recommendation that donations be made to the New Garden Fund as usual. It was decided that, after confirming that MCF would be willing to accept donations to the New Garden Fund, a letter would be sent to all garden leaders explaining the process for 2014.

Fey will draft a document about this to go to garden leaders via email and list serve and make an announcement at the September 30th meeting.

Leopold stated that the West Side Garden Club's interest is interesting. Maybe other garden clubs would support community gardens. This could be a marketing opportunity. We could reach out to interested person. Woulf explained that the facilitator will be asked to meet with other funders and can rope this in with the West Side Garden Club. Markofski said that Leopold following up on taking funds now is a good idea. Leopold should clarify with Woulf about how to reach out properly within this new process. Leopold stated that she could talk to the Brittingham group about supporting community gardens financially. Gavin stated that this email will be a good opportunity to plug the garden leaders meeting since the time might sync up.

REGULAR BUSINESS REPORTS

[28455](#)

Food Policy Council Update

Fey stated that there have been two meetings since the group last met. They discussed the goals and objectives at both meetings. On July 2nd the Food Policy Council recommended to Council that money be appropriated for the facilitator and made a budget request. Woulf shared that the committee will be making recommendations to the Mayor on the budget.

Woulf stated that a resolution would be introduced to the Council tonight directing the Food Policy Council to convene a taskforce on pollinator health and habits following the White House memo request on the national level. It still needs to get approved so it is probably a month or so out as it goes through Council.

[08281](#)

Parks Update

No report

[18897](#)

CDBG Update

Markofski reported that CDBG is granting some funding this summer but not in place of gardens. They are making decisions on housing supply, economic development, etc. On August 14th there is a public hearing on preliminary recommendations at 5PM (not garden specific) at the Senior Center. They will have a public hearing and make a final recommendation on funding decisions.

Dungan reported that the Leopold Park Garden Office donated money for fencing and water lines before Joe Mathers left. Garden leaders stepped up to the plate in working with parks. New fencing designs keep being proposed. They are now on their 3rd option. They hope to close out the contract come September. Maybe we should run this by Katie as a PR piece.

[14868](#)

Planning Update

Fey reported that she had a conversation with Katherine Cornwell about putting flags in the Planning Department's project software to ask whether there's a place for community gardens in new projects.

[08283](#)

New Garden Fund

See # 31912 above.

[15100](#)

Garden Report

The group passed around a newspaper article on the new Crowley Station garden.

Fey reported that Brittingham now has a farmer's market on Tuesdays. Woulf added that the market does have EBT and will hopefully have Double Dollars.

Woulf shared that the Hammersley garden has requested to no longer continue. Olsen reported that she knows someone in the garden. They have real concerns about safety and have had vandalism issues. Our position is that it would be a missed opportunity to convert it to grass but if gardeners don't feel safe we can't make them stay. Olsen stated that one gardener felt so threatened and unsafe in the area that he purchased a gun. Woulf stated that he did speak with MPD and that it would be a missed opportunity not to try and address the issue. Miller stated that someone needs to talk to local safety officers, as they patrol gardens along with the Parks Department on the South side. There is a lot of violence in the area and it may be coming to open park areas. Perhaps they could take time off for crime in the neighborhood to slow down. Woulf shared that the NRT is active in that neighborhood. It's a resource. The garden could be used as a tool to try and improve the safety in the neighborhood.

Markofski shared that someone on the Northside was interested in starting a new garden. Shelly Strom at Community GroundWorks is working with the lady. We are looking for feedback on actions and suggestions to assist her in creating a new garden.

Gavin suggested that she be invited to a meeting so she can get advice from seasoned gardeners. Fey stated that we should think about what role we play to steer her in the right directions. Dungan questioned whether the garden is in a neighborhood or by a school. There are more recent gardens in Vera Court and Brentwood. Depending on her interests, there are options.

Schneider mentioned that we do not currently have an organization in place for this and questioned what the response should be.

Gavin stated that since there is currently no process in place, she could come to the leaders meeting in the interim.

COMMUNICATIONS

Fey circulated a thank you letter from Foundation for Madison Schools for donation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fey shared that the West Madison Agriculture Research Station is holding a display garden open house on August 9th.

Miller questioned whether there will be any "Garden Days" festivals now that there is no CAC. Schneider stated that her garden is having a "Garden Day". Gavin also shared that her garden is having a potluck.

Olsen stated that she would send out an email about the Crowley Station grand opening.

ADJOURNMENT

Markofski made a motion to adjourn at 6:54 PM. Gavin seconded the motion.
Motion passed by a voice vote.