

Chinquapin Organic Gardens Board Meeting April 21, 2020

The April 21 Board meeting was held via Webex, an online and dial in conference service. Participants included: Richard Dorrier-Chair, Anne Saul-Vice Chair, Lori Hartmann-Secretary/Treasurer, Kathryn Long, Julie Le, Ed Mensh, Gretchen Schreiber, Elizabeth Charles and Oscar Mendoza-City Parks and Recreation Liaison.

The meeting began at 7:03 p.m. Some participants were on the telephone, some on video.

There was a motion by Anne to approve the March 20 Board meeting minutes. It was seconded by Kathryn, and approved unanimously.

Oscar gave an update on city operations. The city Continuity of Operations plan (COOP) is in effect to keep the city running as best it can. There are two teams working different times to keep within social distancing. One man per vehicle, wearing PPE. They have a daily briefing on what's going on. The only program that is still active is the gardens so we should continue to keep a low profile, and stay within the social distancing plan. Anne opined that everyone seems to be following the rules and that we are lucky as the Fairfax County community garden program has been shut down, at a time when fresh produce is greatly needed. Oscar continued that the city is undergoing a massive budget review, which includes freezing all job hiring, including the city horticulturist. He is still trying to pursue this and hopes they will be on track to hire someone later this year.

Anne stated that the plot assignments have been finished. There are 15 vacant plots, maybe one more depending on whether it is paid for or not. Volunteers will be needed to cover them with black plastic.

Trash has not been picked up in about two weeks, Richard will follow up on it. It was noted that the city re-built the retaining wall, mulched and weeded all the beds in the Dale May Memorial Grove, and the work is very much appreciated. One dead cedar tree by the shed still needs to be cut down.

Volunteering update: Richard was concerned that some activities may need to be put on hold due to social distancing but Anne stated most can continue. Putting down the black plastic on the 15 vacant plots, someone wants to donate a plant to the Grove, and even the plot markers can be done by 2-3 people spread apart. She will post a task list on the kiosk. Richard said not to encourage group activities, make it clear the activities should be done within the social distancing guidelines. Anne said she will post individual activities. The monitoring volunteers are in place and the April inspection was cancelled, the next one is early June and it will be scaled back on the number of people participating. It was noted, the total number of volunteer hours may drop due to no group volunteering events.

Richard set up two yard waste areas, and the one at the top is filling up fast. He will look for additional space for another one. Oscar will check when yard waste pick-ups will resume. Anne said volunteers could empty the yard waste bins also.

Spring Social: Richard recommended it be cancelled instead of postponed. Elizabeth agreed, and said we could add in any programs into the August 15 picnic program.

Finances: we have \$203.34 in the bank. We had a few unexpected expenses this month, the lawn mower needed repairs twice, and a new lock box was purchased for the shed. Also, fencing for the waste areas. It was suggested we could ask the gardeners for donations, and Elizabeth offered the use of her Paypal or Venmo accounts. Because the Spring Social was a fundraising event, and it was

cancelled, it was decided to let the gardeners know that we are short on funds and what they are needed for, including a back-up lawn mower. Elizabeth will draft an email. It was decided not to use GoFundMe because they take out a large percentage for fees.

Fundraising: due to the shutdown of restaurants, another fundraiser like the one at Volas may have to be on hold until restaurants re-open. Julie will check around to see if any restaurants would be willing to have a fundraiser with carry-out participation, but they may not be willing as their businesses are likely suffering.

New Business: Kathryn asked if the garden plot marker program is on hold. Richard will check with the City if they'll provide the stakes as they did last year. Anne suggested people can spread out and paint the stakes. Once we have the stakes, then Kathryn can proceed with this volunteer project.

Adjourned at 8:00

Next Meeting: May 19 at 7:00 (most likely with Webex)