

Chinquapin Organic Gardens Board Meeting May 19, 2020

The May 19 Board meeting was again held remotely, via Zoom, an online and dial in conference service. Participants included: Richard Dorrier-Chair, Anne Saul-Vice Chair, Lori Hartmann-Secretary/Treasurer, Kathryn Long, Julie Le, Gretchen Schreiber, Elizabeth Charles, Michele Late, Tammy Boyd and Ela Macander. Not present: 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 Elizabeth to approve the April 21 Board meeting minutes, as corrected. It was seconded by Anne, and approved unanimously.

City Liaison Report: Oscar was not present but provided written comments concerning city operations. Nothing has changed, the COVID-19 restrictions will be in place until at least May 29. The city will deliver leaf mulch to the upper bins next week. The city continues to deploy two teams working different shifts to continue park operations. The two schedules run M-Tu-W and Th-F-Sa.

Anne stated there was someone on the wait list who wanted to know if registration would re-open this year. Anne was not sure if the part time employee who was working with Oscar would be able to handle it because there is a lot of work involved with registrations. Anne will contact Oscar to discuss the issue.

Richard explained that May 29 was the date for phase 1 of the reopening for Northern Virginia and depending on state & city guidance, we may be able to open the tool shed at that time. Kathryn said the tools are a benefit, not a necessity and people should use their own for now and Elizabeth noted all gardeners seem to have their own by now.

Anne discussed the progress made on the two food bank plots. Both have been cleared and 35 tomato plants put in, 12 pepper plants (with more coming). Zucchini and squash seed will be planted, and sweet potato slips. Dona Lee is spearheading the team of 29 persons and has been in contact with the food banks. Dona would like to be reimbursed for \$84.15 for supplies.

Volunteering: the volunteering opportunities list was sent out. Clearing plots for the food bank plots is considered volunteering, growing the vegetables is not. Kathryn was concerned that people at the garden were not social distancing and it might be hard for the three volunteers to paint the plot markers. Anne stated the volunteers have all helped out before, they should be able to social distance while painting and Richard will discuss a plan with Kathryn. She will be reimbursed for painting supplies for the plot markers.

Maintenance: Richard noted that the yard waste was picked up by the city and that gardeners should not use the green bins, but rather wheelbarrows to take yard waste to the designated areas. Anne suggested wrapping the bins with CAUTION tape to prevent people from using them. Richard thinks the city will not be picking up yard waste all summer; however, the city may be able to pick it up once a month. He also explained recent expenses and purchases: a new lawn mower was purchased and a weed whacker was repaired. If we wait too long before mowing it is hard on the equipment. We should have the equipment tuned up every year in the fall.

Finances: We have \$1,348.79 in the bank. Elizabeth reported she collected \$85 additional donations. Richard suggested we evaluate what we need each Spring and determine if we need to do the donation

request again. Kathryn noted the pandemic may have made people more generous this year. Anne agreed, it helped with volunteers for the food bank gardens.

Fundraising: Julie suggested that this is not the best time to ask restaurants for donations and we should revisit the issue later in the summer or fall. Richard agrees, and said we don't really need the money right now. Michele discussed selling t-shirts and other items with the Chinquapin logo on them, and presented a plan using Café Press to set up a storefront to sell items for a profit. People order from the storefront and we receive a check. Or, we can order items to sell at an event like the picnic. Michele volunteered to take the lead on this project (along with the website and the facebook page). She will come up with designs and information about using Café Press and present it to a future Board meeting. Richard thanked her and said there was no hurry since it was not our main fundraiser. Julie suggested a variety of products like water bottles and totes, not just t-shirts. Julie also suggested doing community outreach with this project, maybe having kids enter a drawing contest and the winner gets their design on a hat. Michelle thought the city parks and recreation department may be able to help reach out with a call for art work. Richard will discuss with Oscar.

New Business: It was noted the dead cedar tree by the shed was cut down by a gardener and used for a raised bed. Anne noted the first monitoring session will be June 6, it will be scaled back with less people participating. It was noted that the weekends have brought large crowds to the park and perhaps it might be useful to remind gardeners to spread out when they visit the gardens, avoiding weekends if possible. Richard will ask Oscar for signs like the ones at the playground which give updates on the covid-19 situation and shutdowns/reopening as things progress.

The meeting adjourned at 8:19.

Upcoming agenda

June 6	Monitoring team
June 16	Board meeting, most likely via Zoom.
August 15	picnic