

## **Chinquapin Organic Garden Board Meeting -- October 21, 2025**

The October 21, 2025, board meeting was held via Zoom. Present: Richard Dorrier-Chair, Anne Saul-Vice Chair, Lori Hartmann-Secretary/Treasurer and other board members, Stacey Potosnak, and Kathryn Long. Board members absent: Elizabeth Charles, Julie Le and Brad Kukuk. Other gardeners attending: Sally Richards, Deborah Levi, Zion Abebe, Jib Vimuktalob, Dona Lee, Margie Heins, Susan Apgar, Demarie Jackson, Mary Connolly, Tom Kilfoyle, Anne Brophy, Natalie Frank, Jennifer Penoso, Eva Bastianon, Sonia Samee, Naima Kearney and Greg Ettleman. Also attending from the City of Alexandria Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities liaison: Natural Resources Manager Katrina Napora.

The meeting started at 7:00 p.m. Anne moved to approve the September 16, 2025 Board meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Stacey, and the minutes were approved.

**City Report:** RPCA liaison Katrina Napora reported that she attended a two-day invasive plant clinic. She said she would respond shortly to Anne's email regarding when the 2026 plot renewal applications would be sent to the gardeners and Richard's email regarding retaining wall repair.

**Maintenance:** Richard said he will order more leaf mulch for the lower bin if it is still available. He also said that several of the green yard waste cans contained trash that he had to remove, and asked meeting attendees to stop anyone they see putting trash in the cans. Richard also noted that tall plants should be broken down into the cans so that the lids can be closed.

**Monitoring Report:** Anne reported that the monitoring team conducted the fourth review of the season on October 11. Of the 165 rented plots (10 were vacant), 103 had no violations, which is the down from the 117 as found in the third session in August. Six plots showed no sign of activity and were covered in weeds, which is down from the nine in August. Four of the plots also were cited in June and August, and appear not to have been gardened much since early in the season. The monitoring team recommended that the plot holders be told to clean up their plots within two weeks or that they be forfeited. Another 25 plots were cited for weeds, which is up from the 19 cited in August, although half of the citations were for minor infractions. Eighteen were cited for rotting crops, which is not uncommon this time of the year, but an issue because of the increasing rat issue in the gardens. Finally, 23 plots were cited for path maintenance, which is a slight improvement over the 29 in August. The next monitoring session is scheduled for Dec. 7 (Sunday). It will be the final review of the season with the focus being end-of season cleanup.

**Food Bank Report:** Stacey provided a Food Bank end of year recap, with specific thanks to the board for ongoing support and providing compost, to those who donated vegetables, to Dona for purchasing Earthbrew compost, to the small group of volunteers who tend the two Food Bank plots and help harvest and pack the produce, and deliver it to the Mother of Light Center and to Alexandria City High School Garden Club President Lorenzo and fellow members for their help with the Food Bank plots and contributing vegetables from their plots.

She said that weekly donations included tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, peppers, squash, greens, okra, figs, and herbs and that often, more than 20 boxes were delivered – sometimes twice a week. She said that the Mother of Light Center served 46,000 people in 2024, and that Chinquapin gardeners were proud to have played a part. She said that the final harvest and delivery will be Nov. 1. Stacey also said that 2026 could be challenging, and that more volunteers are needed.

**Volunteer Report:** Richard noted there will be a path restoration day in November or December and said that gardeners could email him if they want to volunteer to help.

**Finances:** Lori reported there is \$1,000.48 in the bank account. Richard said he will submit receipts for gas and supplies totalling about \$30.

**Beautification Award:** Anne reported on the Oct. 16 city Beautification Commission awards ceremony, which she attended to accept the Chinquapin Gardens Community award along with Stacey, Julie and Katrina. She said she met the commission member who nominated the gardens, and that in her remarks, the mayor noted she has attended a few Chinquapin Gardens picnics and was very impressed with the camaraderie there. Anne mentioned that many of the individual award winners had native gardens and suggested we look for more opportunities to plant native at Chinquapin in addition to the grove, which is almost 100 percent native planted.

**Fundraising:** Brad was not at the meeting, so Richard said he would regarding the bingo night in January or February for Bingo night. Once that is set, Julie said she will set up a restaurant night fundraiser in March or later in the year.

**New Business:**

- Richard said he and Dona are working on a plan for a new compost bin to replace the area established by a former gardener in the lower end by the mulch bins. He said the plan is to construct three enclosed bins, and that he would meet with Oscar and Katrina to see if the city would build them. Anne explained that the compost from that project is for those who contribute to it. She suggested that once we get the new program going we invite all gardeners to join, and Dona suggested we might need a crew to maintain it.
- December 2 was selected for the next Board meeting, as Richard has a scheduling conflict on Nov. 18, and the following Tuesday is during Thanksgiving week.

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

**Upcoming 2025 events:**

December 2 – Board meeting, election of Board members

December 7 - next monitoring session