

## **Chinquapin Organic Gardens Board Meeting January 18, 2022**

The January 18 Board meeting was held via Zoom. Participants included: Richard Dorrier-Chair, Anne Saul-Vice Chair, Lori Hartmann-Secretary/Treasurer, other board members Julie Le, Elizabeth Charles, Ed Mensh, Stacey Potosnak and Kathryn Long. Absent: Board member Brad Kukuk. Other gardeners attending: Jennifer Penoso, Dona Lee, Zion Bezu, Sookja Park, Deborah Levi, Ulyses Guerrero, Sharon Vannucci, Scott Nelson. Absent: Oscar Mendoza, City Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities liaison, Also attending: Maureen Sturgill, Recreation Manager/Park Operations.

The meeting began at 7:01 p.m.

Dona made a correction to the Nov. 16 minutes about the donation of the raised beds to the food bank plots. There was a motion by Elizabeth to approve the November 16 minutes. It was seconded by Ed, and the minutes were approved as corrected.

Richard gave an update of activities since the last Board meeting in November. He advised that the Garden Maintenance MOU was updated to include the two plots being dedicated for the food bank project and both the Board and City have signed the new MOU. The strawberry beds will be overseen by Chantal Follett (H5) who worked on them last year and has agreed to be in charge of it this year.

**City Liaison Report:** Maureen reported that all invoices have been sent out to returning gardeners and a few still need to be paid. Once the renewals have been completed, she will start notifying those on the waiting list that plots are available. She has been going over the waiting list to see if those on it are still interested in a plot and cleaning up the list. Anne noted that the list is long -- 72 city residents and 26 non-city residents and that there are only 29 vacant plots. Richard asked if there was any more materials for the path repairs. Maureen will check. She also noted that with regard to the asphalt work along the service road, there has been a Scope of Work submitted and she will check to see if there is a Purchase Order yet.

**Vote on advisory board for 2022:** Richard noted that no new nominations for Board officers were received, so the motion will be to re-elect the incumbent slate: Richard Dorrier, Chairman, Anne Saul, Vice Chairman and Lori Hartmann, Secretary/Treasurer. Ed moved to approve, Elizabeth seconded it, and the vote was unanimous to re-elect last years' officers.

Richard noted that the calendar for next year's Board meetings was provided with the meeting package. This is to better organize the meetings. The food bank will report every other month beginning in March, and the restaurant fundraiser will be moved to February next year. We will not have meetings in the months of February, April, August and December due to other garden activities.

**Monitoring Report:** Anne reported that the final monitoring of the 2021 season was conducted on December 4, with the focus being on end-of season cleanup. Of the currently rented plots, 130 had no violations, which is up slightly from the 125 in December 2020. Sixteen were cited

for inadequate cleanup, compared with nine a year ago. Some plots showed no activity or were covered with weeds, but those gardeners are not renewing in 2022 so were not sent citations.

Monitoring in 2022 will be conducted the end of April, mid June, early August, early October and early December (end of year clean up).

**Finances:** We have \$656.37 in the bank. It was noted that the Spring social usually brings in some donations and we have lots of merchandise to raffle this year because we did not have a raffle last year. Brad has a lot of items and some things are in the shed.

**Fundraising:** Julie reminder everyone that the fundraiser at Lena's is on Tuesday, January 25. You can dine in or get take-out. You do not have to be a gardener to participate so invite your neighbors and families. Just mention Chinquapin Gardens before you order. Next week is Alexandria Restaurant Week so the specials are also included but only if you dine in. Anne asked if delivery items were included. Julie will check. (Note: delivery not offered by Lena's.) Anne will send out a notice to all gardeners about the fundraiser.

**Spring Social:** Elizabeth will work with Jean Johnson with RCPA on reserving the pavilion and will include Maureen in her emails. She is looking at April 23<sup>rd</sup> as a tentative date. Elizabeth also recommended we reserve the pavilion for the picnic in August as those dates fill up fast, perhaps August 13 or 20. She will see what is available and let Richard and Anne know.

**New Business:** Sharon asked if we have ever considered becoming a non-profit group? She would consider making a donation. Anne explained the problems with that, mainly it would involve removing the City and doing all the administrative work ourselves. Elizabeth offered to use her paypal and venmo accounts for us to collect donations like we have done in the past. Richard explained we like to keep about \$1,000 in the bank for equipment, lawnmowers and gas, tools, wheelbarrows. Anne will send out the donation email after new gardeners are signed up and also information about the Café Press site. Kathryn reminded the group that Café Press takes a large cut of the money so direct donations are the most beneficial.

Dona said that Eric Steiner of Earthbrew told her he is thinking about raising his prices due to costs. Elizabeth said his prices are too low, she would support a price hike, as would Dona. Richard and Anne had intended to call him and will discuss this matter when they make the call.

Lori mentioned that the Alexandria enews blast last week had an interesting historical item about the Chinquapin community in the 1940's. She suggested putting it on the website.

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

**Upcoming events:**

January 25, 2022 – fundraiser at Lena's

No February Board meeting

March 15 – Board meeting, agenda: Spring social planning, volunteer program, food bank