

## **Chinquapin Organic Gardens Board Meeting March 16, 2021**

The March 16 Board meeting was held via Zoom. Participants included: Richard Dorrier-Chair, Anne Saul-Vice Chair, Lori Hartmann-Secretary/Treasurer, other Board Members: Julie Le, Ed Mensch, Elizabeth Charles, Kathryn Long, Tammy Preston Boyd. Absent Board members: Brad Kukuk. Other gardeners attending: Tsion Bezu, Stacy Potosnak, Ulyses Guerrero, Salma Ahamed. Also present: Oscar Mendoza-City Parks and Recreation Liaison.

The meeting began at 7:01 p.m.

Anne and Richard made a few changes to the February 16 Board meeting minutes. There was a motion by Tammy to approve the minutes. It was seconded by Elizabeth, and the minutes were approved as amended.

City Liaison Report: Oscar reported that the City crews were getting ready for Spring – mulching, mowing, working with the contractors on planting. They anticipate a huge Spring fever this year because Covid infection rates are down and Covid shots are being given so people will want to go outdoors and do things. The City provided lumber for the paths, the fallen signs were put back up, mulch has been delivered. The crews will clean up the Dale May Memorial Grove on Monday. Water will be turned on the first week in April, weather permitting. The City is holding community engagement on the budget and it should be adopted in May. Richard noted that trash pick-up has been good. We will wait until later in the year to see what the VA state government opens up as to whether we will have the August picnic. Richard mentioned that the concrete steps next to the basketball court have been roped off for a while, and he hopes the City will fix them as they are necessary to get down the steep hill safely. Oscar will check, that work is done by a different group, Transportation & Environmental Services (T&ES). Richard also asked about the potholes on the service road. Oscar will follow up with T&ES, they know about the problem, it is part of the Capital Improvement Program.

### Volunteer Reports:

Paths - Ed reported that they used all of the wood provided by the City and there are more paths to be done. He had more than 20 volunteers. Oscar said he will see if there is more wood. At some point the path project will need to be halted as more gardeners return to gardening and the path work could damage their plantings.

The Grove - Tammy reported that a small team, led by Kirsten Conrad, pruned the fruit trees. Developing a weeding and watering schedule for the Grove will be next. Richard is working with city's landscape contractor to put down mulch as part of the Spring clean-up. Anne suggested we might need to wrap the fruit trees so that the deer don't rub the bark and eat them. There are two dead fruit trees, but they should not be replaced until the fall, after the cicadas are gone. Richard asked if the strawberries need new straw, Anne replied yes, and they need to be weeded.

Mowing – Anne thinks we have the mowing teams in place, half are retuning volunteers from last year. Richard will follow up with Brad on this and is having the mowers tuned up in early April.

Plot markers – Kathryn reported that there are lots of painted markers. She will do an inspection but if anyone notices any that need to be replaced, let her know. They just need to be numbered and installed.

General – Anne sent out the volunteer opportunity list of jobs by email to all gardeners who agreed to participate. As new jobs arise, they will be posted on the shed.

Finances: We have \$907.87 in the bank. Anne will submit a bill for pruning tools, and Richard will submit a bill for Spring tune up for the lawn mowers and weed whacker.

Fundraising: Julie reminded the board and others about the fundraiser at Lena’s Pizza which will be an all day event on March 25. They also have a dog and a children’s menu. She recommends sending out a reminder next week and reminding everyone to please share it with friends and family. Elizabeth offered to include her Venmo account for people to donate directly to the gardens. Richard reminded everyone that the Café Press site is still active and that we should let new gardeners know about it.

New Business: Virtual Spring Social: Elizabeth will be the MC, can use her Zoom if we want to. Anne recommended as many board members as possible attend so that new gardeners can “meet” them. Presentations will be short. There are 37 new gardeners. Elizabeth suggested recording it. Anne agreed, we can decide later whether to post it on the website.

Fencing: Richard provided new fencing guidelines for the board to review. The City writes the regulations, we don’t have any enforcement capabilities, fences do not need prior approval. A number are higher than 6 feet, there is no standard color (orange or other bright colors are not preferred). There should be no permanent structures, and structures should be removed when a gardener leaves. Ed suggested restricting the use of bird netting, especially on plastic poles, which fall into the paths. He noted it is hard to find good fencing material in this area. Kathryn noted that flimsy netting is an item that caused people to be cited during past inspections. Anne said we cannot tell people to take something down if it is not in the regulations. Oscar recommended that the board draft fencing regulations, he will take to the City and update the regulations if they agree. Richard pointed out the changes are in red, and for the Board members to get back to him with comments. He will finalize and send to Oscar.

Other: Oscar mentioned that the Holmes Run gardens had a lot of vandalism of produce and tools. Anne replied that we haven’t had too much of a problem, at least with tools, in recent years. Salma complained about a dog in garden and asked what are the rules. Anne pointed out it is a City rule that dogs are not allowed in the gardens and that there are signs posted.

The meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m..

Upcoming agenda:

March 23 – virtual Spring Social via Zoom 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

March 25 – fundraiser at Lena’s Pizza – all day (lunch and dinner)

April 20 – Board meeting via Zoom 7:00 p.m.