

## **Chinquapin Organic Gardens Board Meeting October 19, 2021**

The October 19 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 Mensh and Kathryn Long. Absent: Board members: Elizabeth Charles and Brad Kukuk. Other gardeners attending: Gretchen Schreiber, Zion Bezu, Sook Park, Ulyses Guerrero, Dona Lee, Stacey Potosnak, Deborah Levi, Sondra Brittain, Neal Fine, Susan Mackay and Beth Madden. Also attending: Oscar Mendoza - City Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities liaison and Maureen Sturgill, Recreation Manager/Park Operations.

The meeting began at 7:02 p.m.

There was a motion by Ed to approve the September 21 minutes. It was seconded by Kathryn, and the minutes were approved.

City Liaison Report: Oscar reported that he met with Jim Spengler regarding the agreement with the city (MOU). Oscar and Maureen presented the food bank proposal. Jim was impressed, an amendment will be incorporated into the agreement. Jim will present the plan to the City Manager. Dona said she would be willing to do a presentation to city officials. Oscar didn't think that was necessary. He also asked Jim if the city's legal department needs to be notified. Jim didn't respond, but it may need legal review. Regardless, the plan appears to be a go. Richard asked if two plots would be used and Oscar said yes, he will work to make it a permanent agreement.

Oscar introduced Maureen Sturgill, a Recreation Manager with 34 years experience at a high level capacity. She is now with Park Operations. Maureen responded that she has observed the gardens over the years and was at Chinquapin Recreation Center for 3 years. Oscar said they will both be at the next 2-3 meetings and then he will turn it over to her. Richard welcomed her and noted that she is handling the renewals, which were sent out this past week, and she has already toured the gardens.

Garden Update: Richard said there are three areas of concern: the very dangerous steps by the basketball court, the erosion by the basketball court, and the potholes along the service road. He met with Park Planning and Oscar to discuss. They are looking for funding to fix the potholes. Neil commented that the high school cross country team runs down that road, and it is very unsafe. Richard also reported that the bee hives were turned over twice, 2 days in a row. The police were notified and he encourages everyone to report vandalism using the non-emergency number, which is 703-746-4444. We want the police to patrol the area. Oscar noted that they respond based on the volume of complaints, and he offered to bring an officer to the meeting to discuss issues if we want to do that in the future.

Monitoring Report: The monitoring team conducted the fourth review of the season on Oct. 16. Of the 167 rented plots (9 are vacant), 112 had no violations. This is down from 130 in July but about the same as October of last year. Ten plots showed no sign of activity and were very weedy, which is up from the three in July, but about the same as last October. Another 30 plots

were cited for weeds and 31 for path maintenance. The final monitoring session is scheduled for Dec. 4.

Volunteering: Anne reported that 25 gardeners have completed no volunteer time. Two of them have given up their plots and one is not returning. Another 34 gardeners have completed more than one, but less than the required four hours. Two of those have said they will pay the opt-out fee to renew, two gave up their plots and one is not renewing. Gardeners have until Nov. 30 to complete their four-hour volunteer requirement or they will have to pay the opt-out fee if they want to renew for the 2022 season.

Paths: Ed said there are only 9 boards remaining, we need more wood in order to fix more paths in the off season. He will survey the area and see what needs to be done. Anne reminded everyone that volunteer work done in December counts towards next years' hours.

The Grove: Tammy has decided not to renew her plot and is resigning from the Board. Richard will see if any of her helpers want to take over here role in organizing the Dale May Memorial Grove tasks. Anne noted everything is set up fairly well and the leader does not need to be a Board member.

Plot Markers: Kathryn reported they are pretty much done for the season, and they are all set up for next year. They do need a new mallet.

Food Bank: The volunteers hope to continue collecting produce through the end of November. Richard suggested that someone from the food bank volunteer group should be on the Board. Dona is turning over leadership of the project to Stacey and Margie Heins. so she will leave it up to them to discuss.

Finances: We have \$846.80 in the bank.

Board elections and documents: Richard stated that according to the garden advisory board by-laws, we need to have Board elections in January 2022, and new officers would start in February. Board members are required to attend meetings, and volunteer for projects. The garden agreement with the city (MOU) which defines the roles of the city and the board with regard to who does what at the gardens, expires in November 2022. If the rates are going to change, we need to update the agreement before the next city fiscal year starts in July. Oscar does not expect that the rates will change, but he will check with Jim. Any change to the MOU or garden regulations should incorporate the new food bank plot designations. Richard will work with Maureen and Oscar to make these changes following legal review by the city.

Fundraising: Julie noted that the last fundraiser at Lena's was in March 2021. She thinks a mid-January time frame might be better, like the one we had at Vola's in January 2020. Richard noted that because of the pandemic still going strong, we should look for a place that also has take out options. Julie also noted that mid-week is usually the best time for the restaurants, but she feels it is too early to lock into anything.

New Business: Neil asked if Eric Steiner from Earthbrew would donate compost to the new permanent food bank plots. Anne replied that Eric has donated in the past, but the last time we got some for the food bank plots we paid for it so that we did not take advantage of his goodwill. Ed offered to help pay Earthbrew for the food bank plots. Richard asked Oscar to keep the water turned on a little longer. He also met with the city arborist about removing the dead pine tree near the shed. Dona noted that soil sample tests had a one week turn around if anyone want one, Anne said we have some kits in the shed.

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Upcoming agenda:

November 16 – next Board meeting

Mid-January 2022 – fundraiser (tbd)