

CHINQUAPIN ORGANIC GARDENS ADVISORY BOARD

CHINQUAPIN ORGANIC GARDENS BOARD MEETING, HELD AT THE MOUNT VERNON COMMUNITY CENTER, 2701 COMMONWEALTH AVENUE on Tuesday, February 18, 2020.

Attendees: Kathryn Long, Oscar Mendoza, Richard Dorrier, (Convener), Ed Mensh, Julie Le, Anne Saul, Gretchen Schreiber, Lori Hartmann

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00. New attendees were introduced.
2. Lori was appointed the note-taker for the meeting. She was also nominated and approved to be a new Board member.
3. Minutes: There was a motion by Kathryn to approve the January 21, 2020, meeting minutes. It was seconded by Ed and the minutes were unanimously approved
4. Interim City Liaison Oscar Mendoza provided the following information: Registration is almost complete, should be finished this week. Then, they will move on to the waiting list and assigning new garden plots, maybe starting next week. They need to check the renewals first, and then new plots will be given first to city residents, then non-city residents. Assignment will start with the good spots. There are approximately 40 vacant plots and he expects that all will be filled. The Board will then send out a welcome email (see below for more details) and a separate email to returning gardeners. Oscar will invite city council members to the socials (later, once we have a firm date). Anne noted that it is important to invite council members so that they will support the gardens. Ed asked about the hiring of a new horticulturalist. Oscar explained that there was a six month review and discussion of the position description, it is now with HR for advertisement. It may be out by the end of the month. There will be 20 days to apply, then applications will be reviewed and interviews conducted. Hopefully a selection will be made by the end of March, beginning of April. The job will be advertised on professional sites, VA Tech site, and city website.
5. Board officer nominations: Lori was nominated for the position of Secretary/Treasurer. The vote was unanimous to appoint her as Secretary/Treasurer. The vote to approve two other Board officers who were nominated at the January meeting, Richard Dorrier as Chairman and Anne Saul as Vice-Chairman, was unanimous.
6. New Garden Season Business (season starts March 1, 2020):
 - Plot Registration – see Oscars comments above. Once the registration has been completed, Anne will receive a spreadsheet from the city with names, plot numbers, and email addresses. The list is closely held by the Board due to privacy concerns.
 - Welcome Notification – an email will be sent from the Board (via Anne). She will send out a welcome/informational email to new gardeners and a separate email to returning gardeners. She will send an advance copy for Board members to review and edit. She will include the tentative social activity dates: April 18 for the spring social and August 15 for the picnic. It was suggested that a monthly email with different topics about gardening and garden policies in general might be a good idea, especially for the new gardeners.
7. Volunteer Task Update: volunteer opportunities will be posted on the website and kiosk by the shed so that everyone will know what needs to be done.

8. Finances: we need to transfer the bank account and get the checkbook from Marlin and Katherine. Lori and Richard will be on the account. Hope to do the transfer in the next few weeks. Approximate balance in the account: \$400 + \$170 deposit = @\$570 (we will try to get to a \$1000 balance). Oscar will check on city surplus for used lawn mowers for us to purchase.

9. Ad Hoc Roles:

Fund Raising – Julie Le spoke with the Special Events Coordinator at Greenstreet Gardens and they may be able to donate a gift basket to raffle off at the spring social. It was discussed having Chinquapin gardeners donate new garden items and create our own basket, or in addition to the Greenstreet basket. Also, we discussed the donation jar at the socials, does it take away from money for the raffle? It was decided no, the donation jar serves a function as some people leave donations if they have to leave early before the raffle.

Social Events – Elizabeth Charles has volunteered to be in charge of the two social activities. She has been given the previous sign up lists and Anne will show her what is in the shed. The tentative dates for the spring social is April 18 and the summer picnic is August 15. We cannot apply for the pavilion until March 1 so the dates will be confirmed after March 1. Ed suggested doing something for Marlin and Katherine at the spring social. Maybe a plant from Greenstreets? Gift card? Write up in the local paper?

Additional roles – coordinators needed for the following:

- Volunteer Coordinator – overall coordinator
- Monitoring Coordinator – Anne and John will continue on this team.
- Mowing/Grounds Maintenance Coordinator – Richard and Anne will discuss, maybe someone who helped last year will take over.
- Dale May Grove Maintenance Coordinator(s) – same as above.

10. New Business:

Tax status: Julie Le suggested it would be easier to get outside donations if we were a charitable organization with a tax exemption. It was tabled for later discussion.

Anne notified Oscar of a dead bush near the shed, and noted that some of the plants (including the strawberries) in the Dale May Grove have died. Oscar will see about getting replacements in spring once the perennials break dormancy and we can see what didn't survive. Also, the retaining wall is failing because no drainage was put in. Oscar will look at it. Oscar will also check on leaf mulch and wood chips.

Ed presented an idea for a "Little Library" with garden books. Anne suggested using the shed as it would be free. They will work together on the placement of the library.

11. Adjourned at 8:35. The next Board meeting will be March 17.