

**Hyatt Park Garden membership meeting
11/8/17**

Minutes by Katy June-Friesen (secretary)

Agenda (Cathy)

Garden leadership for 2018

Website – we need a webmaster

Wait list clarification

Work hours – what counts

Proposed Spring work day 2018

Hyattsville Aging in Place (plots) update

Budget

Reminder on boundaries of plots

Discussion:

- Vandalism/theft
- Communication with gardeners
- Spring plant-by date?
- Milkweed

Total attendance: 22 people

Leadership in attendance:

Cathy Anderton (outgoing co-lead)

Davonda Davis (continuing co-lead)

Nathan Santry (treasurer)

Katy June-Friesen (secretary)

Dave Roeder (plot monitor)

Sophie Oriani (plot monitor)

Lisa Walker (plot monitor)

Katie Ablard (team/work lead)

Chris Doyle (team/work lead)

Leadership absent:

Jen Kubit (incoming co-lead)

Judy Kendall (outgoing plot coordinator)

Jenny Lesselbaum (incoming plot coordinator)

Falani Spivey (team/work lead)

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Announcing leadership for 2017-2018

Jen Kubit and Davonda Davis will be co-leads

Jenny Lesselbaum will be plot coordinator

Rest of leadership also announced (see above list)

Webmaster

- We need someone to help maintain the website and fix a few problems
- Ryan Sours was at meeting and agreed to be webmaster again

Event coordinator

- Was pointed out that we also need an event coordinator to plan the fall garden party and possibly a new one in spring
- Diane Bongiorno agreed to be the event coordinator this year

Waitlist clarification (Cathy)

- Judy (plot coordinator, outgoing) had hard time getting people from the waitlist to take plots that opened up after the season started
- Eventually she just gave plots to whomever answered first from the waitlist, with the understanding that the plot use was temporary and they would return to their place in the waitlist after this season
- One problem: trouble adding someone who took a temporary plot back to the waitlist online, after she was accidentally removed
 - Ryan offered to help with this problem

Work hours (Katie)

- Some people still need to do work hours, some people have done more than their share
- What is needed over winter and into fall: people to put out the garden's totes for trash/yard waste
- Seems a variety of people have been helping put out totes even though some people agreed to do as their job
- Asked for volunteers for Nov-Jan: Howard and Anne Marie agreed to roll totes out
- We've had problems with holding work days and people not showing up
- Have been letting people do needed garden tasks on own and report back to leadership on time spent, can continue to do that
- New plan: to also do a big "welcome back" Spring party and cleanup day, help new gardeners weed and clear plots, get to know each other, distribute newly-delivered compost
 - We anticipate at least 4 plots will have new gardeners
- Also, to clarify: volunteering with the HAP plots (watering, weeding, planting, picking/organizing delivery) WILL count toward work hours, but you can't get ALL 4 hours from HAP work
- No one is currently being kicked out for lack of work hours

Hyattsville Aging in Place (HAP) plots update (Lisa)

- Thanks to everyone for donating veggies: HAP delivered total of 162 bags to 18 seniors, some bags were doubled in size in middle of season, greatly appreciated
- There was confusion at beginning of summer regarding which plots belonged to HAP – clarified that HAP will have all 5 of the former compost bin spaces (mini-plots)

- For next year, would like to work more closely with volunteers and have a clear plan of who is helping with what, defined roles
- Want to be more careful with what is planted where next year and who does care-taking when others are traveling, etc.
- Lisa Walker and Janet Griffin will head up program again, but plan to ask gardeners if they would like to to “adopt” a HAP plot and plant, weed, water, etc. – LET LISA OR JANET KNOW if you would like to do this

Budget (Nathan)

- Every year we usually rollover about \$500-600 (in the black) -- current balance is \$715
- Money raised from plot fees goes mostly to compost, but we’re wondering if we’ve been getting too much compost since so much left over last years
- We decided to get $\frac{3}{4}$ of what we got last year
- For reference, Compost is about \$800, \$1050 is about what we get from plot fees
- This year we didn’t spend much – Paypal fees, compost, wheelbarrow wheels. (If anyone needs reimbursement for something they got for garden, let Nathan know.)
- Leadership decided for 2018 budget, if we reduce compost to about \$600, we can spend on:
 - hose-holders (new/repair) - \$100
 - beneficial insects if we want - \$100
 - web-hosting (every other year) - \$100 this year
 - tools - \$200 (this is a new item)
 - big spring work party timed around compost delivery – buy pastries, coffee, etc
- If we do all this, we would have \$575 left over, which is around the usual amount
- Asked those at meeting for suggestions – what items or tools are needed?
 - Ideas from gardeners: spray nozzles for hoses, water wands, shovels, one pitchfork, grub hoe, hand tools/trowels

Question from gardener/s: why don’t people take compost? Are we just overbuying or do people not take it?

- People expressed concern that if compost isn’t used, the soil will be bad
- Some people also may have trouble physically getting the compost to their plot – was suggested that we could help people do this at the Spring work party, because it’s important to get that compost into the soil

Plot boundaries (Dave)

- Last season Dave and Ricardo measured plot boundaries and put in pvc markers at corners
- This season gave people a break, but this next season you must have your plot within the marked boundaries, plot inspection will check for this
- Question was raised by gardener about whether there is supposed to be space between plots
 - Clarification: there is no space (like a path) between plots, but you are not supposed to plant right up to the edge of your plot

- The bylaws say there should be a buffer of 6-12 inches between your plants and the edge of your plot so as not to crowd your neighbors
- So, gardeners need to manage how they plant and/or decide with plot neighbors how to handle – plot crowding does seem to be a common issue across garden
- With the new half plots, some half plots are very hemmed in with wood-chip path on only one side, may need to revisit this in spring and add some space for walkability in plot

Clarification on bylaws: the current NEW rules and bylaws are located under “meeting notes” on the website – those listed under the “rules” and “bylaws” section on the left menu are actually the OLD ones

- This needs to be fixed, Ryan will move them

Milkweed

- We agreed last year we probably shouldn’t have non-native milkweed in the garden, but it is still in a lot of plots (re-seeded)
- The Asian milkweed is invasive and monarchs don’t lay eggs on it
- Technically only 10% of plot can be for flowers, and according to new bylaws, milkweed is considered part of this 10%, not separate
- Some gardeners expressed concern about over-regulating what people plant
- Some said there is debate about how bad the tropical milkweed really is
- Some suggested we ask people to at least get rid of seed pods or pull plants so they don’t reseed
- Another suggestion: to put up milkweed photos in shed so gardeners know what we’re talking about

Vandalism/stealing

- This has been a problem this year, but gardeners said it is a problem to varying degrees every year
- What can we really do?
- Some things get stolen more, like watermelon and squash
- Some people advocated more security such as locks on gates or higher fencing so harder to quickly get out if stealing, putting something along fence line to discourage people AND deer
- Others said they think this is just part of the community garden experience, a “cost of doing business” that we can’t really control
- We had talked in the past about restricting access to the garden but decided that was not something we wanted to do, both for practical and community-relations reasons
- Anyone is allowed to walk into the garden (which is on park and planning land with city MOU) – we can’t really keep people out
- Someone expressed it would be good to consult with surrounding community if we’re going to make any visual changes in the garden, given past experience
- In past, we discussed higher fencing because of deer, but Lesley Riddle of the city discouraged this, and fence would have to be very high to keep out deer

- On related note, deer have been in garden this fall, particularly liked sweet potato vine but not widespread destruction

Communication with gardeners

- A gardener asked who/what email to use to contact the garden leadership, said she had trouble getting in touch with anyone in leadership
- The email to use is coleads@hyattparkgarden.org
- Every email that is sent out by garden can be replied to and it will reach someone
- There may have been a few-week problem because the website was down and emails may not have been going to right places/people temporarily
- Please check with Cathy to see if your email and contact info are correct! (see list)
- We need to make sure that all new gardeners are receiving garden correspondence, Ryan can help make sure all new emails are loaded in website/listserv
- There is also a Google group for gardeners to communicate amongst themselves, but it hasn't been used much and some people don't know it exists
 - Address is Hyattparkgardeners@googlegroups.com if you want to sign up, Ryan will also put this on the website

Should we have a spring plant-by date?

- Question was raised because some people didn't plant until late, didn't get plot cleared, and some plots were abandoned, then it was hard to find new gardeners
- In the past, if someone hasn't planted by June, the plot inspectors cite the gardener
- Did we have a plant-by date in the past? Some said yes
- Was suggested that we have a May 15 plant-by date, with a week to plant after warning
- There was not total agreement on this, and it would also possibly require a vote because it amends bylaws, so it was decided we would table this issue for now and put it on the agenda for the Spring 2018 meeting

Question from gardener (Diane): She has been watering people's plots for them when she thinks they are gone but knows some people don't like this, should she do this?

- Lisa/HAP plots welcome help with watering, other gardeners didn't care
- Other gardeners expressed they did not think someone should do anything with another gardener's plot unless they have spoken with them first, some people may not want their plot watered

Plot inspection next week!

There will be another announcement, but the last plot inspection of the season is Wednesday, Nov. 15 (also on website)