

January 30, 2010

17 garden members attended the meeting.

Ina is the garden's new treasurer, and reported that a new bank account has been opened for the garden. Ina, David and Vanessa are the three people whose names are on the account. Currently, there is \$2,526.30 in the account. Last season, garden member donations were about \$1,200.

Ina recommended that the garden join The New York City Gardens Coalition. People can join this group as individuals also. Their e-mail list is a good source of up to date news re: laws affecting gardens in New York City.

David suggested that the Steering Committee create a draft budget at their next meeting and submit it for approval at the next GM meeting. Chris suggested a budget committee, and David and Emily volunteered to be a part of this.

Construction has begun in the garden. The water box has been installed. It is west of where the hydrant is, and is on someone's plot.

Vanessa reported that Edie Stone sent her an email saying that she expects construction to be complete by mid-March. The delay in starting came from a problem with the plumbing contractor. No one should go into the garden now, especially as we don't want to hold up construction in any way.

The compost committee met last week and came up with some questions about their role in the garden as well as some overall goals including: be educational, keep waste out of landfills and create compost for the garden.

The committee also identified some specific aspects of the compost system that they would like to improve/create including:

Better signage for the compost area

A more fair distribution process for giving compost to gardeners

A section in the membership packet on how the compost in the garden works

A mandatory training session for gardeners

Expansion of the compost area into the back corner (this would involve moving some people's plots)

They are also considering installing compost tumblers (they have asked Build it Green to build these for the garden) and getting a bike chopper (Bernie offered to look into what it would take to build one) to help with the chopping. Last season, there was a problem with gardeners dumping large piles of weeds and unchopped sticks in the compost area.

Chris suggested that the Community Plot have its own compost area in the CP to take some of the pressure off of the compost area.

There was some discussion of the idea of moving the compost area into the back into the corner behind where it currently is. Bernie raised the issue of how it would like from the street, and someone suggested planting evergreens on the fence line to make it look nicer.

There is also the issue of whether the people who have plots in that corner would be willing to move and if there is enough space for them to move somewhere else.

David suggested that the compost committee prepare a proposal with the specifics of what they would like to do and present it to the garden.

The compost committee also reported that they need more food scraps. They have been thinking of trying to partner with some local CSA's to get scraps and build connections in the community. Liza suggested having a bin where neighborhood people could drop off their food scraps. Kathryn suggested letting gardeners know that more food scraps are needed.

They also suggested that one person be designated to call for compost deliveries to cut down on confusion.

Stephanos is looking into a grant for a workman's bicycle to help transport large containers of food scraps or other heavy items. The grant would be 70% for the workman's bike and 20% for printing and other smaller item.

Chris asked what the obligations of the garden would be, and Stephanos said it would be a basic report that he could handle. Nitsa was concerned about the possible theft of the bike.

Bernie reported that we have materials for a shed (currently stored under the Queensboro Bridge) if we want to build one. There was some discussion of design, having a door vs. not having a door, etc. Emily suggested tabling discussion of a shed until construction is completed.

David reported that the waiting list has been updated. There are about 100 names, although they all may not be legitimate requests because the voice mail system collected phone numbers but no names when the message box became full. Eric and David are checking the VM regularly now to avoid this

problem. Everyone is encouraged to talk up the Community Plot because the waiting list is so long.

The Voice Mail System and the PO box are both being renewed. Stacey offered to draft a new message for the voice mail system with more specific information.

Bernie would like to start an art program in the garden that would include classes (maybe painting or drawing plants) and also an open call for a sculpture installation in the garden. He proposes that the sculpture would go where the bridge sculpture was. There would either be an art committee or the whole membership could be involved in the selection process, and he suggests steering the competition towards green entries. Local youth could be hired to help with the installation. Bernie is willing to navigate the rules of the Parks Department for this project and has applied for a \$1,500 grant.

Bernie's ideas were well received. Stacey suggested that we could partner with local schools for the art classes. Vanessa suggested that the youth center at the Astoria Houses would be a good group to partner with.

David brought up the issue of making it mandatory for garden members to attend a minimum number of meetings, and everyone agreed that the garden needs more participation. Emily suggested that if members are required to attend a number of meetings, it should be a low number. She also raised the issues of who is going to keep track of this and what happens if members don't comply. Chris suggested that meeting be held at rotating times so more people can attend.

Discussion followed and the idea was floated of created a mandatory orientation at the beginning of each season. There would be several times offered so everyone could attend. This idea was well received.

David agreed to work on a specific proposal for the next meeting, and the meeting adjourned.