

Two Coves Community Garden General Membership Meeting Minutes

Saturday, March 27, 2010

The meeting was held in the Steinway branch of the library, and there were 37 members in attendance. David and Chris led the meeting, which began with introductions.

GARDEN CONSTRUCTION:

The first order of business was an update about the construction in the garden. On the 26th, Edie Stone did a walkthrough in the garden with some of the members. The keys will be handed back over to the garden on Monday, and the last benches will be installed.

There are now five spigots in the garden, all on people's plots. Some are flush with the ground and some protrude. The spigots will make it possible for us to not have to string hoses across the entrance. Today Gary and other volunteers worked on spacing out the plots so that the hoses won't disturb people's plots too much, and so no one has to walk into anyone's plot to turn on the water.

The soil that was put on top of the areas that were disturbed is from the same source as the soil that was originally put into the garden. It is landscaping soil and goes down about 2 ½ to 3 feet. Stacey did find some clay and rock mixed in with the new soil. Edie Stone said that the Parks Department could do soil testing for our garden using the lab at Cornell. This could get started as early as Monday, and people who are particularly concerned about the soil should be involved. We can also do our own testing through Brooklyn College, although Edie Stone said that they had seen some odd results from the Brooklyn College lab. Vanessa volunteered to talk to Edie about arranging soil testing.

Vanessa has also requested a map of where all the pipes run so in the future there will be no problem of people digging down and hitting a pipe. It was agreed that Vanessa has done a great job of dealing with the Parks Department and advocating for the garden.

PLOT REALLOCATION:

David is still trying to get the last few members to say whether they are coming back this season. Five or six people have stated that they are not coming back. Today, volunteers created a few new plots by rearranging some of the layout in the garden. A few plots will be lost if the compost area expands. We may end up at net zero or with a few new plots for the coming season.

There was discussion about how long the waitlist is and the problem of people not being able to get a plot in the garden, and how this situation can cause resentment among people.

Emily stated that the lesson from this situation should be that we should be working to create more space for community gardens in Queens, so that we can avoid fighting over a small space.

Grace stated that Con Ed is paying a settlement to Queens because of a previous power outage and some of this money

could go to community gardens if people get involved and request this.

Rosalyn knows some people who think that their names were lost from the waitlist from when it got transferred from Garrett's notebook to a more formal system. She will get more details from those people and an effort will be made to help those people.

ORIENTATION & MEETING ATTENDANCE:

After a discussion at the last GM meeting, a proposal was put forward to require garden members to attend an orientation session and to attend at least two GM meetings per year.

The orientation would be in the garden and cover such topics as: how to use the compost area correctly, how to turn on the water, proper tool maintenance and the community plot. The idea is to make sure all garden members have access to all of the information that they need and to build community amongst gardeners. Several orientation sessions will be offered to give members different opportunities to attend.

There are usually 12 GM meetings per year, and the proposed requirement would require members to attend at least two. Meetings will be scheduled at different times to give members more opportunity to attend (for example, some weeknights and not just weekends).

Discussion of these proposals followed.

Emily asked that all garden members make a commitment to each other to keep our meetings positive this season.

Doreen stated that it is impossible to avoid having some grievances in the garden.

Lynn stated that she thought an orientation sounded good, although she is going to be out of town. Several people stated that they thought it seemed fair to exempt someone with extenuation circumstances.

Lynn also asked if people would still be required to sign the membership agreement and do volunteer time, and it was stated that this proposal does not get rid of either of those two requirements.

Lynn stated that she thought the tracking of mandatory meetings would be too hard.

Martha said that she appreciated the idea of having different meeting times because she works on the weekends. Chris stated that this had been a problem for him as well.

Rebecca suggested requiring attendance at just one meeting.

Joseph expressed concerns about the practicality of tracking attendance.

The proposal was amended to require members to attend an orientation session and one GM meeting. A vote was taken and the motion was passed. There were four no votes.

BUDGET:

A draft budget was proposed. The budget is based on an estimation of how much money will come from the suggested donation for membership renewal. It does not include grants or big purchases. The budget is purely a draft and the expectation is that it will be refined at the next GM meeting when we have more details about renewal donations.

After some discussion, the budget was passed as below:

Estimated Total Budget (\$1500)

Events:	\$600
Tools/Repairs:	\$300
Administration (printing, postage):	\$250
Education/Outreach:	\$100
Compost:	\$50
Community Plot:	\$50
Art:	\$50
Emergencies:	\$100

Ina is the new treasurer.

COMPOST PROPOSAL:

Stephanos gave a brief overview of the compost proposal that the Compost Committee sent out of the Google group and that was first brought up at the last GM meeting.

Part of the proposal involves reallocating three plots in order to move the compost area as stated below:

To achieve its mission and long-term goals, Two Coves Compost Project requests the use of the eastern area of the garden (22ft X 30.5ft X 8ft X 32ft, approximately 465 sq. ft.; see attached) with design and layout to be implemented by the compost project, coordinated with input from the gardeners and members of the broader community. The compost project is available to all members of the community and will use the space in accordance with the above mission and the rules of Two Coves Community

Garden.

Two of the plots that would be affected by this proposal have members who are not coming back to the garden this season. The other plot holder is willing to move.

Gary suggested beautifying the edges of the triangle, so it does not look bad from the outside.

The proposal passed a vote with one vote against it.

COMMUNITY PLOT MEMBERS & MEMBERSHIP:

A proposal was put forward to allow community plot members to sign a membership agreement and become full members of the garden.

Kathryn stated that she thought this was a good idea because it is the garden's best interest to have everyone who is regularly working there be involved and agree to follow the rules.

Others stated that this would be positive because it allows people to join the garden immediately without having to wait for a plot. It makes the garden a more accessible community organization.

Nitsa had concerns expressed over what the process would be like for community plot members to become members of the garden.

The proposal was passed with a request for the Community Plot Committee to bring back to the garden a more thorough explanation of how the process will work.

EVENTS:

The garden has participated in the past in "It's My Park Day." We can participate again this year but will need people to organize it. "Make Music New York" is also coming up. We can have musicians from the garden or outside musicians can be brought in. Musicians in the garden who are interested in participating should contact David.

BEEKEEPING:

There was a very quick discussion of the possibility of beekeeping in the garden. A few members expressed concern about safety issues, and others stated that they did not think that safety would be a problem. There was also discussion of what kind of space and expertise would be required.

It was decided that the garden should take the time to look into the issue thoroughly.