

Clinton Community Garden Annual General Meeting 2024

Venue: Fountain House

Date: 5 March 2024, 7pm.

1) Welcome:

At the beginning of the meeting a motion was made to record the annual meeting. The motion was objected to and was not adopted.

The Steering Committee Chair gave the Annual Meeting an overview of the activities in the Garden in the previous year, and gave an oral report to the meeting on the activities of the Steering Committee. (For details of the Steering Committee activities, please see the Steering Committee meeting minutes, which are available on the Garden website.)

2) Financial report:

The Treasurer gave a report to the Annual Meeting on the state of the Garden finances. The report was emailed to all Garden members in advance of the meeting.

John M & Mark D walked through the spreadsheet for the attending members. Notable Comments include:

- The Current balance is roughly 17k
- Incomes exceeded expenditures by a small amount.
- Contributions include a combination of Grants, donations, sales account for the revenue of the garden.
- Current costs of Bee keeping raises concerns as the rates seem to be a bit costly this year. Members agreed to assist the committee in researching a new beekeeper to tend to the hives. Motion to revisit topic during next committee meeting.
- Second motion to revisit this at the next committee meeting.
- The Committee reported to the membership changes that the Garden's savings account (currently held with Morgan Stanley) is in strong consideration of being moved to a different banking institution to generate more interest than what the current arrangements are providing.

3) Review of events:

1. July 4th and 9th Ave fair.
2. Soil Amendments, Plant Sale and Honey Harvest.
 - Mark shared with everyone the sales went well over the course of 6 months for honey and plants. Plants are sourced from GrowNYC.
 - Soil amendments are ordered once a year due to cost increases, roughly \$500 for deliveries. The Green acre grant currently pays for the soil. Members called for research into a soil vendor and agreed to assist in finding the vendor info to share with committee to look into for the future.
3. Volunteer coordinators:

Volunteer coordinators introduced themselves and noted there have been a number of inquiries during the off season and they are excited for the year ahead. The committee will be reaching out to each volunteer group to organize dates for volunteer initiatives for the upcoming season.

4) Plot renewals:

Currently 75% have completed renewals and this is still in process. After the coming weekend the committee will begin to reach out to people who haven't responded.

5) John Carney award presentation:

The John Carney Award was presented to George Holmes. The members at the Annual Meeting offered their congratulations to the award recipient.

6) Committee member online election results:

The Chair reported to the Meeting the results of the election to the Steering Committee for the term beginning March 2024. The following members were elected to the Committee with the required greater than 50% of the vote:

- Andrew Begg
- Mauricio Marron
- Richard O'Brian

Members at the Annual Meeting noted that the Committee was at the smaller end of the number of members permitted in the by-laws (9 to 13), and some members questioned the rationale for the 50% requirement to be elected to the Committee. Views were expressed calling for a larger Committee that would allow for greater burden sharing of the workload and more input from Garden members.

The Committee took note of these concerns and undertook to address them in possible future revisions to the voting procedure.

7) Any other business:

CCG's PO Box is changing to a new address at the 52nd St post office as they have better hours and better staffing. New address is shared with forwarding from the old address. The new address is:

Clinton Community Garden
PO Box 232
Radio City Station
New York, NY 10101

A motion was made to address an additional item under "Any Other Business" to discuss the composition and working methods of the Committee, and the motion was adopted.

Under that item, members of the Garden expressed concerns about the current working methods of the Steering Committee, which has been meeting online since the pandemic. While members expressed appreciation for the hours of volunteer service provided by Committee members, among the concerns expressed included that decisions were not transparent, that the Committee had changed the by-laws and the voting procedures without communicating these to the Garden membership, and that not enough consultation was taking place with long-standing members with institutional memories.

The Committee noted that all of its online meetings were in fact open to any Garden member, but the Committee members agreed that it was now time to re-evaluate the practice of online meetings, and look for ways to increase ways for Garden members to take part in its work.

The Committee also noted that it has the powers in the by-laws to make amendments to the Rules and voting procedures, and that all decisions to do so have been taken properly and by consensus, and documented. However, the Committee members stated that they take the concerns of the members seriously, and the Committee undertook to investigate how these concerns could be addressed along with finding ways for more communication and community within the bylaws.

A motion was proposed to remove the Committee Chair. Committee members noted that the motion was not, however, in accordance with the by-laws. A second motion was proposed to establish a Special Meeting under Article 2, Section 5 of the by-laws. Committee members noted that Section 5 however, requires 10 days advance written notice to be provided to all Garden members. The meeting concluded with these issues unresolved.

8) Unfinished business

The meeting ran out of time before it completed discussion of two additional items:

- 9th Avenue Food Fair
- 4th of July picnic.

The meeting was adjourned.