

Clinton Community Garden Steering Committee minutes

July 16, 2024 7pm

Zoom

Present: Homar Barcena, Andrew Begg, Cindi Clark, Naomi Haber, Clarence Klugh, Mauricio Maron, Tatiana Pena.

4th of July debrief:

The Committee held a special additional monthly meeting in July to undertake a detailed debrief of the circumstances leading up to its decision not to proceed with the 4th of July BBQ.

Traditionally a 4th of July coordinator took the lead for the planning, but the person who had done it in the past was not available this year. The Committee made a good faith effort to identify a replacement coordinator, recruit volunteers, and had also contacted potential donors.

While the Committee did succeed in recruiting a good number of volunteers this year, it did not find anyone prepared to step up to be the central event coordinator, and there were also a couple of key volunteer slots unfilled, such as one of the grill-master positions. One volunteer had come forward, but a minimum of two were needed, because we could not expect to rely on only one person for the entire event.)

Committee members themselves stepped in to a certain extent, and had organised food donations from local businesses. But without a full slate of volunteers to man the grill, and some other critical positions (such as disposal of the left overs), it was not possible to go ahead.

The volunteers that had stepped forward were thanked and expressed willingness to volunteer next time.

During the debrief, the Committee identified a communication breakdown that had not helped the decision making process. The news that we had secured food donations did not reach the Committee before it took the decision to cancel the event. This might not have changed the outcome - it would still have been difficult to proceed without adequate hands on deck - but it was a crucial piece of missing information.

The Committee agreed to explore the possibility of using a more interactive platform, such as WhatsApp or Slack, for big events. This would allow for more immediate communication, taking into account the fact that it is difficult to keep up with email traffic and not everyone checks emails frequently.

Naomi and Cindi volunteered to look at committee structure in the by-laws to ensure that we have a more robust set of procedures in place and clearer assignments of tasks and roles, to ensure that the work can be divided more evenly. This would also help to encourage more people to volunteer to serve on the Committee and sub-committees.

We have three big events every year - the soil delivery, the 9th Avenue Fair, and the 4th of July BBQ. The Committee Co-Chairs led the first two this year, but ideal we should have a sub-committee for each.

There was a question about whether the Garden email is getting through to all members, or whether the Google spam filters are preventing delivery to some members. The Committee agreed to double check the mailing process to make sure that information is properly getting through.

A longer lead time is also needed to get organised for events, and a working annual events calendar would help with this. It was decided to add an "owner" column to assign responsibility for each event, as well as a "comments" or "status" column to reflect organisational updates.