

Clinton Community Garden Steering Committee minutes

Venue: Fountain House and Zoom

Date: 8 October 2024, 7pm.

Present: Homar Barcena, Andrew Begg, Cindi Clark, Naomi Haber, Clarence Klugh, John MacKay, Mauricio Marron, Tatiana Pena, Nicole Siani.

Absent: Lisa Cicchetti, Richard O'Brien.

Introduction to the Chair of the Fountain House Home and Garden Committee:

The Steering Committee invited Cheryl Thomas from Fountain House to join the meeting to give a briefing on the work of the Home and Garden Committee. Fountain House has three outdoor patios, a greenhouse, an indoor hydroponics facility, and a farm in Montague, NJ. Those facilities grow a lot of the herbs and vegetables that are used in Fountain House's culinary section.

Following the briefing, the Committee had an initial discussion on areas where the Community Garden and Fountain House could collaborate. One immediate suggestion was on composting, which Fountain House intended to begin shortly. The Community Garden's composting committee has a great deal of experience that could be relevant.

The Committee agreed that the Chair of the Composting Committee would visit Fountain House during its operating hours to take a tour of the garden facilities, and meet the participants of the Home and Garden Committee.

Other initial ideas for collaboration included communicating dates where the Garden calls on volunteers (such as clean up days or planting days) to include Fountain House participants. Fountain House also noted that it was struggling with its hydroponic unit. The Community Garden Committee could send out a message to its members to see if there are any gardeners with expertise in hydroponic systems who may be able to give advice.

2): Date for next meeting:

The Committee noted that the November meeting is scheduled for Election Day, and agreed to reschedule it to November 12.

3) Reminder for attendance requirement:

The Committee noted that there had been a number of absences in the previous meetings and agreed to remind members attendance requirement in the by-laws.

4) Financial report

The Treasurer presented the September financial report. Income for the month from key sales, donations and honey sales was \$350. In addition the grant from the NY Community Trust was approved for \$7780 (which was above our request for \$7500). We would normally apply for the

grant in the spring. Lisa has contacted Hicks already to secure a place holder order for the Greenacre Grant.

Expenses for September were \$914, which included the brick laying ceremony, as well as bulbs and allotments for the front beds.

John reported that he had updated our admin details with Morgan Stanley. The bank will be emailing us a check to transfer that amount into the Garden's main account in the next 4-6 days, and the Morgan Stanley account is now in liquidated status.

A motion was made to adopt the treasurer's report. It was approved.

5): Additional key sales day and final honey sales:

Naomi proposed an additional key sales day because of demand. John reported that the Garden email account had received requests for more key sales.

The Committee agreed to add an additional final key sales day - Tuesday 22nd October. John agreed to reply to the people who had emailed the Garden to inform them of the date. Cindi, Naomi and Nicole agreed to staff the key sales on the 22nd, and to add a notice to the Garden notice board.

John agreed to send an email to the entire Garden membership to alert them to the discounting of the honey to clear the remaining stock. Homar provided a pdf advertising flyer for this purpose prior to the meeting that should be included in the email.

6) Email lists:

The Committee noted that an outstanding admin task was to clean up the various email lists, and simplify the system of communicating with Garden members. Currently, the large list of all garden members needs to be split into two halves in order to stop Google treating the email blast as spam.

There are also email lists in different formats, including Gmail, MailChimp as well as a sequel database format. The data entry into that database from new keyholder agreements had a backlog of at least a year.

The Committee agreed that the cleanup should result in a system where the Co-Chairs had the ability to easily email different sets of members – volunteers, plot holders, voting members, and all members. Homar agreed to take an initial look at the Mailchimp list to begin the rationalization process.

The Committee also agreed that certification of volunteer hours for voting rights of keyholders needed to be better automated. All noted that this was a good time of year to start with housekeeping tasks, and outstanding is a reconciliation of the membership list, certification of

volunteer hours for the sake of voting rights, etc. Michelle? Proposal made to ask members to confirm that they wish to remain on the list (of volunteers), etc.

The Committee agreed to request the Volunteer Coordinator to call for assistance for Marjie on the clerical committee to clear the backlog in data entry.

The Committee agreed to explore for next year's key sales an automated system for data entry, such as a QR code that takes people to a google form, so people buying keys enter their own data on their phones, eliminating the need for subsequent data entry.

The Committee agreed to remind for volunteer committee leads to ensure that their volunteers log their hours for the voting list.

7) Extension of city composting rules city wide:

City composting rules now apply to the entire city. This means that organic waste can no longer go into the trash.

For the Community Garden, while the majority of garden waste goes into its own composting program, some organic waste cannot be accepted and goes into the regular trash (such as invasive weeds, meat and dairy waste). That waste will now need to go into a brown bin to be collected by the City. (The City's composting programme is much larger, and can accept this type of organic material.)

The Committee agreed to request two brown composting bins (one for the front and one for the back) and to set out some educational guidelines for gardeners.

The Compost Team will coordinate with both the Garbage and the Sidewalk team on internal education about how to make this work, and there will also need to be education for the entire garden as we move forward with this, so that we remain in compliance and avoid fines.

The Committee noted that we should be able to receive at least two brown bins from the City at no charge because we have more than one address (each address gets one free, additional can be purchased.) As a contingency, however, the Committee agreed to approve spending of \$46 on an additional bin if one is required above and beyond what is provided by the City at no charge.

The meeting was adjourned at 9pm.