

AUGUST 2013 PHCF GARDEN MEETING 10:09 AM - 11:34AM

Meeting Attendance:

Ted DeBarbieri	Caterine Orrok
William Law	Eva Wang
Grace Nam	Jeff Secor
Traci Nottingham	Johanna Bauman
Brian L. Thompson	Martha Elliot
Louise Brooks	Kim Brandon
Rosemary Palms	Marva Wiltshire
Frances Norwood	Jennifer Richman
Pnina Talias	

new members:

Danny Simms
Andy Ajonjoli

Garden Minutes:

* Brief Introduction by Jeff

* Treasury Report by Johanna:

The PHCF currently has \$2993.54 in the bank account and \$249.00 in petty cash. We have not paid the technician yet, which will cost \$750. Post payment to the technician, the PHCF bank account balance will be \$2,243.54.

* Compost report by Johanna:

* There has been an improvement in the compost system by building cyclopean walls. (brief history of cyclopean walls is as follows: the sifter can better move from one side to another). The walls were paid for by the Park Slope Food Coop - they reimbursed us for total costs.

* The compost team would like to improve the storage area for leaves and browns, using stone to build it back. Idea to use some of the stone to build it up. It is currently not finished.

* Will suggested that the we review the current back of the garden plans. Currently there is limited access to space as needed to plant the pear tree in the back. Jeff and Johanna discussed creating a "no walk line" for benefit of the tree roots if it will be planted in the area.

* Will voiced as to where to plant the pear tree.

* Secretary report:

More copies of the PHCF flyers have been made and the front box has been refilled.

Master Garden Report by Traci:

* The garden will be receiving \$100.00 donation from the Carlton Avenue Association. We have been working with Prospect Heights Tree Task Force and through them we have donated plants to the Carlton Avenue Block Association. The \$100.00 donation is in honor of PHCF's contribution to beautifying thier streets.

* Thank you to Martha for posting the weed ID pages in the bulletin board.

* Plastic Bag Dispenser has been placed in the shed for people to use as needed when harvesting their crops. Please refill and replace bags that have been

used.

* Traci proposes a Shrub Sale the first weekend of October. Our plants are over-grown and potting up plants would be helpful for the garden space.

* BANG report:

* BANG was allocated funds, totaling \$7,000, including \$3,500 from Steve. Question arrises how BANG will spend the money. It was reminded to members that BANG covers our liability insurance and provides legal council.

* Ted suggested that Kayla sign the two page agreement. It was brought up by Joanna and other garden members that the garden coordinator (Jeff) be the designated person to sign such documents.

* Ted encouraged members to reach out to BANG. Overall, they are lacking in funds despite the recent allocation.

* Joanna asked what is happening with the survey of the garden. She also voiced that she would like to read the two page BANG document.

Concert/Events report:

The concert committee will set additional dates soon. Jeff encouraged that the committee do so if possible.

General Announcements:

Phil Silva's and Mara's binder creation about Five Borough Farms was passed around between members. The binder consists of 5 sections: food production, compost, participation, skills and knowledge, and health and wellness. Several ideas were discussed, inspired by the book and are written below with corresponding chapter.

0. Food Production: We have a scale, we could weigh our food harvests. Try to encourage gardeners to be more consistent in doing so.

1. Compost: 5 gallon buckets. How many go in, how many go out? Compost team can put a grease marker. This is however tricky because compost levels drop in time. How can we go about doing this effectively? Idea voiced to measure 5 gallons as coming out as 1/2 cubic yard coming out. We can put the grease marker once the compost comes out. We can then take pictures of the grease marks. We have talked about weighing compost in the past. We can have a grease pen tally board, placing the clip board next to the scale. Perhaps we use the scale for when people drop off their compost instead? This would help the compost team record what is coming in.

2. Participation: We record our service hours. Our system is pretty good, this should be easy to implement. Another idea is that we have a map of where volunteers come from - another idea easy to collect data for, being that we already have a list of volunteer's addresses. Other idea is to show a public map. (BANG is supposed to provide us with a laminated map soon).
3. Skills and Knowledge: Using a poster board, garden members can post skills that they have. This will give us a better idea of who knows what in the garden. It was suggested that during one of our meetings, we should tally this up. Joanna suggested that we use a google survey. People can say what skills they have online. If members are not able to do so online, they can do it in writing. Will gave the suggestion that we not post names in public, we should keep it between ourselves. An example is those who participate in the dye workshop. Those who attend can tell people what they are learning. It was suggested by Philip that we take pictures of what we are doing so that we have a record of it.
4. Health and Wellness: Children tasting test (Yum/Yuck) How do children feel about each veggie that they taste? It was suggested that we create a specific day for these events. Perhaps we can recruit PS 9. We can include smells too. Garden members suggested less harsh measurements (such as yuck) can include thumbs up/thumbs down. We can also test for sweet and salty. The tally numbers should be as simple as possible. Perhaps we can collect it in a jar. Another idea is to measure a change in attitude, example: 50% of kids liked 10 more veggies. We can open this survey to tourists, not just members. A suggestion for KIDS DAY was brought up for the children of PS 9. Perhaps Ana Rose or Mark (Henry's dad) would like to get involved. Past members who have been involved with coordinating such events as the butterfly release include Jean, Virginia, Ruth, and Jen R. There is also a nursery school right down the street. Perhaps we can connect with them to encourage garden visits. Traci brought up the question, "Do we really want to have several nursery school children visiting our garden? What is the liability? Will they unknowingly damage any of the plants through their exploratory play? We would need a lot of management. Also mentioned, there is a school on Park Place and Vanderbilt that already has a gardening program. Another idea is to organize a weekly playdate at the garden starting in September. Weekends would likely be better for that.

Reminder given for people to sign up for open hours

Jennifer R. proposed planting a baby rose bush in the front of the garden. Jeff raised point that the garden members have already discussed possible plans for the front of the garden and one possibility is to make a box in the front specifically for roses. We will be discussing this further in coming weeks.

Back of the Garden discussion:

Catherine asks, "Is there going to be a final vote for the back?" and "What is the timeframe?" September/October suggested. There was lots of feedback and drawings provided at last meeting. Traci suggested that the plans be reissued.

Brian T. asked if there will be a committee that will meet to discuss the back of the garden. There used to be a back of the garden committee in the past. Prior plans were Back of the garden is food producing, the middle is for shade, and the front is ornamental. The pear tree was discussed. It was suggested that it be planted in two's for cross pollination. Rosemary asked when we are going to plant the pear tree.

In terms of back of the garden, There was a meeting about it 6 weeks ago and 10 people met. There were three plans presented. Two had similar features and were consolidated into one, resulting in two plans. One plan is more ambitious than the other.

The less ambitious plan is the compost stays where it is then extends to the second telegraph pole. We would remove the brush pile from its current location. The pear tree would go behind the compost. Berry trees may be planted near the fence. We would also reconfigure the communal beds then use them as cold-frames.

The more ambitious plan involves making a greenhouse and it will be a communal area. The shed would move to the back right corner. Idea brought up that we can use the less ambitious plan and if we want the greenhouse, one day we can put posts into the ground. It was brought up that cost may be an issue. It is several thousand dollars just for the glass. If we do have the greenhouse, perhaps tiles and/or panels can be removed in the summer. Learning how to build a greenhouse is a great skill. Question raised: "Can we use a grant to cover greenhouse funds?" A simple idea is to continue to keep cold frames during the winter months. In terms of compost layout, an idea is to have the following line up: Leaf storage, sifter, finished compost, and brush pile.

Traci is concerned about moving the shed. It is made of dense materials and would need to be demolished then rebuilt if moved. Brian brought up that perhaps we could use the slab that is already in the shed for the greenhouse. This would make it sturdier. Jeff mentioned that polycarbonate glass needs support to withstand wind.

Catherine proposes two plans: Some information should be given to general members and there should be a vote. Included with these distributed plans should be how much the cost it, the labor entailed, and a pros and cons list. If people have more information, they will be better able to make a vote.

Ruth does not want to move the shed. It is a big question.

Catherine asked if we have a lot of interest in building a greenhouse.

Rosemary said that whatever we do, we must get a sense of what the general want is.

Do we have an estimate about how much it would cost? A round-about figure is \$5,000 to \$7,000 to make the greenhouse. No one is sure an estimated number of volunteer hours needed.

Estimated measurements for the greenhouse are 16 feet long 10/12 feet wide.

Brian thinks that the shed would be better off having rows instead of beds.

Traci asked if we can use the polycarbonate panels from a new store?

Overall, a clear proposal needed. Rosemary asked "are we sure this is what the garden wants?" There could be a meeting survey distributed to members in order to take tally. Traci also voiced that a greenhouse has been on our wish list in the past. Is this what we should propose as a group? Perhaps we can have a rough design and a 2 week meeting for discuss/formalize. Prina

brought up that a greenhouse with rows would be excellent for seed starting. Perhaps there could be a combination of raised beds and shelves, 1/3 of the greenhouse should not have any beds.

Ruth suggested that we build the greenhouse by the wall where the water harvesting unit is. She also asked, "how much do we want to put into this?" Do we start with a cold frame idea? Should it be a small commitment or a big commitment? We could perhaps chose the first plan then resort to the second one at a later date.

Is the greenhouse better off along the right wall with shelving, heat from the wall? Traci asks, "How are we going to build it?" We would have to get rid of the rubble under the ground. Question raised how to make the greenhouse relevant for all garden members? For the general public? We could use it to help start plants for plant sale.

Regardless of what the greenhouse decision is, it is absolute that the following areas must be addressed:

Compost is near the telephone polls. The pear tree needs to be able to pollinate with Ruth's tree. We cannot move the pear tree until the compost is done. The pear tree needs good sun.

Next meeting plan: Lets meet in 2 weeks as a design meeting to come up with plans for back of the garden. Design meeting is scheduled for 9/7/13 at 11AM. Next general meeting plan is 9/21/13 at 1PM.

Notes recorded and typed by Jennifer Richman, PHCF Co-secretary.