

PHCF September 21st Meeting 2013
1:04PM – 2:30PM

Attendance:

Joey DeLeo	Jeff Secor	Bree Mobley
Alex Hayes	Johanna Brauman	Ted Barbieri
Frances Norwood	Catherine Orrok	Kayla Schwartz
Traci Nottingham	Jean Kahler	Alexis Casano Antonellis
Akosa Albicetton	Lee Schere	Jennie Spector
Jennifer Richman	James Goldstein	Neil Richardson

New Members:

Justin Lee Miller

Meeting Minutes:

Brief Introduction facilitated by Jeff

Current News:

BANG

Jeff: We recently signed our membership agreement with BANG – our land trust. We are now finalized with the documents. (BANG is our land-trust which we transferred to last year.) They provide insurance for the garden.

Kayla: There will be a big BANG celebration party at BEARS Garden on September 28th at 3:30PM to celebrate the fact that it is now official. The process of making BANG what it is has been 10 years in the making from when we were with Trust for Public Land and deciding which land trust to go with. This is a big deal for us all. There will be food and drink with some elected officials in attendance, music, and everyone is invited. BANG is Brooklyn Association of Neighborhood Gardens and it is essentially made up of 5 gardens. It is small but that is part of the point, to be small and local and we are all represented on the board. Kayla is BANG representative for PHCF. Email invitations for the event were sent out. The elected officials will be taken on a tour of all five gardens, and Joanna will be accompanying them in the van.

Joanna will post info about the event on Facebook.

Jennifer R volunteered to perform for the event.

Treasury Report:

Johanna: We have \$244 in petty Cash, \$2,243 in our bank account with the Open Space Institute Bank Account.

I went to the BANG board meeting this month, mostly it was about the party. They are looking for someone to be a representative on their operations committee. BANG has a committee who is involved in watering, working on fences, sidewalks – all infrastructure which BANG is responsible for. They are looking for someone from each garden to play that role, separate from the board representative. They are also going to be doing a survey of the 3 gardens which have not yet been surveyed. Our garden is one of them. I asked BANG to send an email asking how long the garden needs to be open so that we can coordinate for them to do the survey. BANG got a grant for this project from the Land Trust Alliance. The cost for the survey of PHCF is \$800. We are waiting to

hear from them about when it is going to be. The cost will be covered by the grant. Now it is just a matter of coordinating for someone to come do the survey.

Kayla: It is expensive because the guys who do the survey are certified. They take exact measurements of the land, etc. It is important for the Land Trust to have this information.

Johanna: BANG is looking for volunteers. Other garden members are more proactive and put a lot more effort into BANG. Johanna agrees with Kayla in the hopes that we can improve our efforts and be more proactive in our involvement with BANG. Without them we would not exist.

Service Hours:

Jeff: New members please sign up for service hours on calendar. There is also an email from our service hours coordinator which lists what needs to be done during service hours time. It will be located on the announcement board. Also the listing of current hours that people have accumulated has been updated and is also in the announcement box. Service hours go through October.

Master Gardener Report:

Traci: October 5th will be the Great Autumn Shrub Sale. There are a couple more things to prep. Some plants have been potted and we would appreciate if people could help with watering them. Also some shrubs need to be dug to help tend to our overgrown garden. Jessica also wants to get rid of some plants. We also need volunteers for event day. It will be from 12PM -4PM.

BBG Tree workshop request– it is in progress. (Also involved is Green Thumb). Workshop will be about how to take care of fruit trees. Will possibly be next Spring.

Catherine: Does anyone know what is happening with the Greenbridge Project? They provide outreach to neighborhood gardens. Kayla responds that she got a petition from Change.org and that BBG let go of all of the PhDs and the Greenbridge program. Neil says that Greenbridge is no more.

Kayla suggests forwarding the Change.org protest letter to PHCF Garden members. Catherine suggests that we draft a letter and send it to the president.

Traci: We got a \$100 donation from the Carlton Avenue Association. We have been working with the Prospect Heights Tree Force and helped to make Carlton Ave. trees beautiful by donating plants for their tree pits.

Johanna: OSI would prefer that we make checks out to the Open Space Institute.

Catherine: We should schedule a fall work day for pruning, maybe after the next meeting. Pruning – pear tree needs to be planted. We also really need to tidy.

Jennifer R – concert coming up. Maybe we can organize a concert after the meeting.

Francis – My bed is a mess. (Joey agrees to fix it today.)

Traci – Question – does anyone know where the plant sale plug tray is? She can't find it anywhere.

Joey: Also, someone's bike was stolen from the front of the garden last weekend.

Compost Report:

Lee: We started reconfiguring the compost area and today will be a compost work day. We will try to make a final revision. This also involves the back of the garden committee so there is a lot of confusion right now. There is no final plan as of yet and the back of the garden committee and the compost team need to be on the same page. We need to agree on a final shape. We are hoping to reconsolidate and revise what is there while staying within the 2nd telephone pole area. Also, we have compost ready if anyone needs it.

Jenny: If anyone is going to make changes in the garden, please let us know. We need to communicate better.

Jennifer R: Agrees that if there are any changes, please let people know. Two of my squashes which were growing on the wall of the brush pile are missing. Jeff: It was assumed that they were growing wild on the Brush Pile.

Box Coordinator Update:

Joey: No new updates right now. There are 26 people on the list – not much movement at this time of year. He would like to add more boxes if possible. We will reconfigure in the spring. Also, a new grill was donated by Joey's landlord. It needs a new cover. Can we use funds to pay for a cover? It is a charcoal grill. Can we keep it indoors during the winter? Joey will research to find out the cost of the cover.

Kayla: If someone wants to grill, they can. We used to do it years ago.

General News:

Neil: He bought a 1 lb. bag of Hairy Vetch seeds and it is available to anyone who wants it. It survives the winter and adds nitrogen to the soil. It is a legume.

Kayla: Keeping soil covered is good for global warming. It is a good idea to take Neil up on his offer. Soil that is not covered releases carbon into the atmosphere and covering it up absorbs carbon.

Back of the Garden:

Jeff: Apologizes for any miscommunication. Brush pile is big, needs to go somewhere. Catherine: There is no reason why the brush pile should be so big. Jeff: People should make an effort to break up the pile, he spent at least an hour with other garden members recently to chop the brush pile and it made a big difference. Cutting it up helps it to decompose faster. Jenny: If there is anything that can be cut up into small pieces, it can go into the compost pile. (If it is a diseased tomato, which needs to go into the garbage.)

Neil: If you are lazy, you can also just leave it on top of your bed and let it break down there.

Jenny: Brush pile should not be positioned close to one of the fences because rats love to live in there and should it be close to one of the fences, it would intensify the problem. Rats do not like open spaces. We should create a space for a woody brush pile.

Catherine: We can have a woody pile and a small brush pile. She will work on a list of things to do. There will always be a need for a pile someplace.

Jean: Suggests we make a sign so that it is clear where things should go. (Jeff agrees that this is a good idea).

James suggests that the brush pile not go near the fence because of the rat issue. Jeff suggests that we use fine mesh underneath. Catherine voices that a good air supply is important to help it break down. Traci suggests that we build a compost kind of assembly to put mesh underneath the bins. This way the mesh can be on the ground. Jenny: it should be easily accessible.

Jeff passed around drawings for the back of the garden.

Different options for back of the garden including where the compost bins system should be. One older drawing by Will – everything stays put, tree planted next to the compost bins where they are now, and lots of open space for cold frames, berry bushes, some reconfiguring of boxes. Jeff proposes that we move the shed about 6 to 8 feet towards the corner. If the two new bins were along the fence, then you would not need to be staring at the back of a concrete brick wall. (rotate the compost bins and build them along the back wall) There would be more open space. (Jenny says that it is easier to keep them across the bins because the compost team is shoveling things from the bins into the pile. That is why it is configured the way it is.)

Joey: another plan is to put full sized boxes and half boxes if the bins could move closer to the wall.

Catherine: Access to the bins if very important and must be taken into account

Jean: Compromise could be having full sized boxes divided in half for two box holders

Johanna: There has also been talk about better attending to beds in the front of the garden. How do members feel about adding three additional official beds to the front, which would be ornamental only, for flowers etc?

question was raised as to why there are no produce plants in the front of the garden. It is because of people stealing as well as a history of poor soil quality.

Joey: Non box holders are usually not active in the garden. If they don't get a box in the back, a box in the front is a possibility.

Traci: It has been an issue that we always tell people that the front of the garden is everyone's responsibility. People do not initiate.

Acousa: If there is ornamental planning in the front, how do we manage it? What about indigenous plants?

Jeff: I like the idea of people having ornamental boxes in the front. People take responsibility if it is their own bed.

Joey: DO we want to add beds to the back?

Lee: It is an illusion to say that the compost workspace is currently confined to an ally way as well as storage in the back. There is not enough room for half boxes.

Francis: We need a better walking path. People can easily trip in the areas between and around the beds.

Johanna: What is the goal? Do we want open space or beds?

Traci: likes the idea of open space. We have more flexibility that way. If we add beds the front of the garden, that will already solve some of the lack of boxes issue.

WE TRAVEL TO THE BACK OF THE GARDEN TO LOOK AND AND MAKE CONCRETE PLANS...

Was voted between either three 6 foot boxes in the back, 4 foot by 8 foot beds, build another 4 foot by 4 foot box right next the the ones that are there (sharing a wall) split the 8 foot by 4 foot beds in half.

Was voted to make the three 4 foot by 4 foot beds in the back into 8 foot by 4 foot beds.

Neil asks what the etiquette between shared boxes is.. Was answered that box holders are to respect each-other's space in the shared box. No one is to plant in the other's area, etc.

Next Meeting November 9th 1PM

Minutes taken by Jennifer Richman, Garden Co-Secretary