

# Prospect Heights Community Farm, General Membership Meeting

August 8th, 2015 DRAFT OF MINUTES

## Attendance

Brian L. Thompson, Martha Elliot, Daniel Fried, Michelle Fried, Valentine Douglas, Erica Blitz, Catherine Orrok, Traci Nottingham, Anne Lai, Frances Norwood, Lisa Watkins, Jennie Spector, Johanna Bauman, Jennifer Richman

## Non Members/New Members

Pablo Munoz, Meret Stocker

Traci, Johanna, and Brian chaired the meeting which started at 11:06AM and ended at 12:18PM

Introductions - garden members announced their names and positions on the board

## Treasury Update by Johanna

We currently have \$3742,99 in our BANG account. (The paperwork has been finalized and our funds have now successfully been transferred to an account with BANG.)

Petty Cash is about \$300.00, this is including a payment made to Joey DeLeo. Overall we are in good financial standing.

Service Hours Update - No new report

Box Coordinator Update - No new report - all is status quo.

## Compost Update by Val

The quality of the compost is excellent. The summer heat has been helpful. As of 8/2/15, the latest amount of organic waste diverted from landfill is 14,257 lbs. We have produced 3,104 lbs of compost. About one year of measurements have been totaled - it amounts to about 1/4 of compost produced from organic waste measured. Much of the weight from fruit and vegetable waste is water.

## BANG Land Trust Update by Johanna -

Our bank account is now officially with BANG (Brooklyn Association of Neighborhood Gardens). The BEARS garden on Flatbush and Pacific is having their 30th Anniversary event on Aug. 15th at 4PM. All are invited. No further report at this time.

## Master Gardener Updates by Catherine and Traci

There are issues with the Japanese Maple tree as seen in the bark of the tree. Research is currently being done to address the matter. It can be result of winter damage and it is only now manifesting. If so, the tree can likely recover from it. We will wait and see to assess if it is viral or from Winter damage. There are some fissures however the branches look healthy.

Thanks to all the people who helped with the brush pile. It has gone down in size significantly. We also need to clear around the boxes (weeding, general cleaning up, etc.)

#### Secretary Report by Jennifer and Traci

Ratification of July minutes- 7 yes, 0 no, 4 abstentions. July general meeting minutes are ratified.

#### Member Announcements

School visit - There was a school visit this month (Elijah Stroud School between Park and Sterling). A middle school age class came to learn about how plants/food grows. Joey was present to host them. He gave the class a tour, discussed all that we do, gave samples. The 15-20 children who were present were respectful of garden rules.

Neighbor pest control - Phil Charles, our neighbor, has another infestation of ants. He asked if he can have an exterminator come into the garden to address the issue from outside the building. (we have already established that the insecticide is organic and safe for the garden.) It has been requested that he puts down Borax, which has been approved. He would like to put it down from the fence, along the edge of the building wall. It would not effect our plants. We had already set a date but the exterminator cancelled. Brian put out an email on list serve to see if any garden members can be present to let the exterminator in to the garden on tentative rescheduled dates (Aug. 10 4-6PM or 15th 11AM-1PM). Catherine agrees to be able to let him in on Monday Aug 10th. Brian will get in touch with Phil.

Dan- Question about use of pesticides in the garden. How do we usually handle infestation problems in general? They must meet organic standards. We avoid synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. People rarely use it in their beds. The main issue with infestation that we have dealt with is rats - they love to frolic in the compost and when there is construction nearby, there is an increase of rats. We have set traps in the past and sealed off the compost, having recently created new bins to do so.

Tree Count 2015 - John forwarded to the list serve, if anyone is interested in participating, please talk to Brian after the meeting. There are some trainings coming up - 2 to 3 events every day through September. There is an online training then in person training. A prize is involved when signing up for training. In this training, you will learn to ID trees. There are several events in Prospect Heights starting Aug 12th - i.e. there will be a training at BBG on Aug 15th 5PM. Please refer to John's email for more info.

Brush Pile - The tree mulch did not let us chip large stick material. The more woody pieces would not make it through the chipper. What is a policy that we can successfully use to lessen the size of the brush pile in the future? What do other gardens do to deal with it? Perhaps all 5 BANG gardens can split the cost of renting a wood chipper? It is a common problem that all gardens share. (Johanna was recently at a BANG meeting and other gardens complained of the same problem.) Jennie likes the idea of having a separate pile for brush. Catherine voices that we need to be more discriminative of what goes into it. Johanna voices that the BEARS garden has a set up where they lay brush

on top of mesh and raise it slightly so that rates will not rest in it, there is more air circulation, and it breaks down quicker. If we put it into the regular compost, it would be a very big job and it is better to have it contained in a separate pile. Catherine suggests we need to increase ways to better compost our own waste. Dan suggests we increase education as to what goes into the brush pile, compost, etc. It may help to make a sign. Should there be a committee to deal with the brush pile? Is it a compost shift responsibility? (i.e. 2x monthly task) We can also have it as a general workday task. Val - What does the city pick up from the sidewalk? Mostly what clogs the chipper is when people break things down into 2 inch pieces. Lisa agrees. This should be dealt with right away. Dan motions that we enforce that herbaceous waste does not go into the brush pile. It is established that NO HERBACEOUS MATERIAL IN THE BRUSH PILE PLEASE. It is reiterated that DISEASED MATTER GOES INTO THE GARBAGE. Traci - Will has literature online about this, what belongs in brush pile and what does not. Last year we had people cutting things up during work days. Large output was produced in a short period of time. If there is too much material for the compost and one time, it will overwhelm the system. Jennie suggests weighing it and then we put it into the compost bin ourselves. The main issue is timing of putting the herbaceous waste into the compost. It is suggested that a brush pile committee be formed. The team could separate brush into large woody matter, herbaceous, etc. to help it break down quicker. Brian suggests that a few members volunteer to tackle this. It can either be part of the compost team or a new team just for the brush pile. Volunteers should put together a proposal for the next meeting. Jennie, Catherine, Michelle, Martha volunteer to address the brush pile issue. They will contact Will and see if he would like to be involved as well. Dan proposes more listing of how to's in website. It is reminded that this info is already in the website. Johanna reminds that this is a long term process, it takes time. For example, it took 3 years to create the compost system. Dan suggests a reminder email. We are still working with Dan to get out some of the large dead wood from the garden. Brian suggests we rent a small dumpster or possibly hire a hauling company. Brian and Dan will connect to explore hauling co. idea. If the cost is under \$300.00 they can go ahead with it.

Summer BBQ/pot luck- Frances suggests a summer BBQ. Agreed to have it on August 22nd (just happens to be Jennifer's R. Birthday!) 2-6PM. Food will start about 4PM. No alcohol allowed - it is stated by NYS law that NYS community gardens are not supposed to allow liquor in the garden. It is also a Greenthumb rule.

Dan and Michelle will bring a slow cooker. Charcoal will be non-synthetic. (likely wood lump charcoal)

Varied members will volunteer to bring necessities and food.

Next General Meeting will be held on September 12th 11AM.

Minutes recorded and typed by Jennifer Richman, garden secretary