

PHCF General Meeting, June 4, 2017 -- Minutes

Members Present: Rosemary P, Stav B, Melissa & Josh R, Johanna B, Sara F, Allison B, Virginia W, Jessica S, Isabel dR, Anne L, Val D, Jeff S, Joanne D, Traci N, Rosemarie M, Anna H, William L, Eva W, Jennie S, Perry N, Martha E, Ruth M, Frances N.

Potential Members Present: Penelope W, Michelle B, Madeline R, Erin K, Kyle G, Zach D, Josh P, Tom W, Din C, Romaine M, Heather R.

Johanna opened the meeting (presiding at the request of Virginia, co-coordinator) at 11:06 a.m., welcoming everyone and asking us to briefly introduce ourselves.

The May 2017 general meeting minutes were approved, with three abstentions.

Board Members' Reports:

Treasurer (Martha): [*Details provided after the meeting are here added in brackets.*]

- The process of joining the garden was explained for the benefit of the potential new members present.
- For old members, today is the very last day that dues are accepted. [A final-call-for-dues-or-return-your-key email missive was sent last week to 20 people.]
- We are in the process of switching bank accounts, to Astoria Bank. but are still working out the details, such as deciding on who will be signatories – perhaps one of the garden coordinators as a backup. Thus our bank balance is not yet available, but petty cash on hand is \$414.66.
- We now have an EIN number from the IRS. [The IRS's usual fee of \$75 was not charged!].
- Net profit from our plant sale came to about \$603. [Plant Sale wrap up as of May 26: \$903 gross sales less \$345 expenses = \$558 net.] (\$45 income has been added from later sales.)
- The compost grant from the Citizens Committee of New York City totaled \$520.

Compost (Johanna reported for the committee): The leaf bin is being rebuilt. Please help out after the meeting. The committee needs more members. [You can volunteer by emailing compost@phcfarm.com.]

Boxes – No changes since our last meeting.

Service Hours (Anna) –All time slots but one were covered for the month of May.

Communications (Will) – Our main means of communication is through email with a listserv. See also the website (phcfarm.com), Twitter, and Facebook.

Master Gardeners (Traci and Virginia) –

- Two common areas of the garden are still unstewarded: please email contact@phcfarm.com to submit a Steward application for Buddleia Bowl & Burning

Bush beds. Also, to work with a current Steward, email stewards@phcfarm.com . See website for more info.

- Thank you to all who helped make the plant sale a success – both volunteers and donors.

BANG (Virginia reported):

- A BANG event on June 10th, 10 a.m. -12 noon, aims to help a local nursing home revitalize its garden area. Contact jiwonny@gmail.com to volunteer.
- We need volunteers to attend the June 11 members' meeting, because neither of our BANG representatives is able to attend.
- BANG is sponsoring a music and dance event on June 23, 6 p.m., at the greenspace at 4th Avenue.
- At the BANG bike ride event yesterday, about 8 visitors stopped at our garden.
- One garden, The Bears, has boxes to lend. Our members who are on the wait list for boxes are encouraged to consider using one of their boxes this year. Contact jiwonny@gmail.com.
- There was a theft of tools at the Phoenix garden on Fulton Street. The consensus was to help them out, with duplicate tools from our supply, and/or with some cash if they still need to buy tools.

Other Business:

Year-round Gardening Program grant (Jeff) –The Citizens Committee of New York City has awarded us \$2300. We have guidelines as to how we can use the money. Decisions must be made in the next couple of months. Jeff called for volunteers to help with the planning. He will call weekly or biweekly meetings and will send out Doodle polls on the listserv to find suitable dates to meet. All are welcome, and all ideas are welcome. He will report to the listserv, keeping committee discussions transparent. (There was a request to keep listserv postings brief and as infrequent as possible. Another request asked that discussion happen at the committee meetings, not on the listserv.)

Brush pile committee: Catherine has volunteered to help, but cannot head the committee, so we need a volunteer to become the point-person. With the rat problem growing, there is some urgency to eliminate attractive nests for rats. Anna volunteered to touch base with Catherine about creating a “best practices” one-sheet for how to work on the brush pile.

Discussion about how to handle branches varied. Some ideas:

- Bundle all branches of a half-inch diameter or larger, and have the city haul them away.
- Whatever we agree on, post instructions on the bulletin board and on the website.
- Rent a chipper to chip the small branches.
- Keep the sticks longer in order to safely feed them into the chippers and avoid creating multiple piles of small material.
- Separate the brush pile situation from the compost operation. We need a separate committee.
- If we schedule the brush pile tasks during open hours, then the volunteers can get open hours credit for their work, as the compost crew already does. (Anna offered to be the point person to set this up.)

Discussion about the proliferation of rats:

- When we have followed the procedure of turning over the smaller branches in the brush pile and chopping up the larger branches, no rats have been found.
- The rats come from the neighborhood, especially where there is construction. The neighborhood has to work together to eliminate rats. Compost bins are not the problem.
- Consider organic approaches. Let's not contaminate our garden.
- Reach out to neighbors to find solutions. Please funnel any information gathered to board@phcfarm.com

**Ruth will get a quote from a man who re-baits traps.

**Jon Pope re-baited for us.

**James Goldstein has been a trap expert for us.

**Joanne will gather information from BANG.

- At the July meeting we will decide on a course of action.

Mosquito challenge: Eva suggested a “garlic barrier” method of combatting mosquitos. She offered to purchase (to be reimbursed) one gallon of garlic spray, completely organic, for \$95, plus get the equipment and spray the garden as often as necessary. **A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at about 12:10 p.m.

[The next general meeting will be Wednesday, July 12, at 7 p.m.]

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Palms, Secretary