

PHCF General Meeting, July 12, 2017 -- Minutes

Members Present: Anna H., Aaron D., Anne L., Brian Thompson, Casey F., Catherine O., Eva W., Greg M., Joanne D., Jeff S., Jennie S., Kyle G., Kayla S., Louise B., Luke R., Michelle B., Melissa & Josh Rubin, Martha E., Michelle F., Marva S., Nathalie D., Otilia S., Rachel I., Selina R, Traci N., William L. Zach D..

Prospective Members Present: Adam P., Alex K., Amanda W., Debra P., Heather C. Kari H., James B., Jeremy P., Josh Rattner., Mandira G.,

Michelle opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m., welcoming everyone and asking us to briefly introduce ourselves. She counted the number of members present to verify that there was a quorum present to vote on any motions. She advised that persons who were not yet members should refrain from voting on motions.

The June 2017 general meeting minutes were approved.

Board Members' Reports:

Treasurer (Brian and Martha) – Brian reported that our checking account balance is \$4226 and our petty cash balance is \$321.68. The joint bank account with BANG has been closed and a new checking account has been opened at Astoria Bank. A checkbook and debit cards have been issued. Brian and Martha (Co-Treasurers) are the current signers on the account. We can add another signer at anytime should one of the Co-Coordinator want to become a signer as was previously suggested. An additional cable guard was purchased to further protect the hose.

Compost (Jennie) – The leaf bin has been rebuilt and the bins are in the process of being fixed. Jennie explained about compost team and welcomed new volunteers to sign up to help by emailing compost@phcfarm.com.

Boxes (Michelle on behalf of Joey) – All boxes are assigned and being tended. Kudos to the 6 members tending the community/shared boxes in the back. Michelle remarked that they look the best she has seen them. She also described how the box waiting list works.

Service Hours (Aaron and Anna) – They explained our system of requiring members to keep open hours and signing up for time slots on the calendar on the bulletin board inside the garden. They reported that the members' tallies haven't been updated on the website due to recent issues with the spreadsheet that should be soon resolved.

Communications (Will) – Our main means of communication is through email with a listserv. New members can ask to be added to that listserv when they join. See also the website (phcfarm.com), Twitter, and Facebook.

Master Gardeners (Traci, and Catherine) –

- A weed guide and plant database are available on the website.
- The Master Gardeners met with the Compost Team regarding the brush pile/compost heap. We need a team of people to regularly manage, chop up and turn the pile so that it will break down more quickly. There is a workday scheduled for 7/16 at 2pm. Members are invited to earn service hours working on the brush pile/compost heap and other projects at that time. Ideally, someone would lead a team so that the brush pile/compost heap could be maintained on a regular rather than ad hoc basis.
- The stewarded areas were explained. There is further information on the website.
- It was noted by Melissa that a communal pot of alpine strawberries has been added to the entry area. Everyone should enjoy them.

BANG: (Louise and Joanne) Louise explained that The Brooklyn Alliance of Neighborhood Gardens (BANG) Land Trust is a group of 5 like minded gardens working together to maintain their gardens as open spaces in perpetuity. Gardens include: 6/15 Green, Bears at Pacific Street, Greenspace at President Street, Pacific Heights Community Farm and Warren St Marks Community Garden.

BANG now has an Instagram account which members are invited to follow:
Banglandtrust

BANG has had success working in the community helping landscaping at a local senior center.

New Business:

Locking the gate: Michelle reviewed the rules regarding locking the gate. Members may not share their keys with non-garden members. When leaving the garden please check that no one else is in the garden and then lock the gate. If others are present in the garden and it is not known whether or not they are members, please check with them before leaving. If they are not members, they must leave the garden so that the gate can be locked. We must all protect the garden.

Facebook group: Kyle suggested that the garden establish a private Facebook group as another way of sharing information. Some members find the listserv format hard to follow. Facebook could make online conversations among members easier. The listserv could still be the official means of communication. Will and Kyle agreed to discuss the idea further to see if there would be a way to proceed with a Facebook group and a listserv without the two communication platforms causing confusion.

Year-round Gardening Committee Update (Jeff) – Jeff reported that the Committee met and discussed possible ways to use the grant money awarded to us by the Citizens Committee of New York City to build a greenhouse. Although they

were suggested at a previous meeting as an alternative to a permanent structure, the committee does not see cold frames as an option. They would not be accessible to all members and would require storage space when not in use.

A motion was made and seconded to move the compost operation to build a greenhouse.

A lengthy discussion of the pros and cons of the motion followed. Some members raised questions.

- A greenhouse would provide a communal area where anyone could take part, year round.
- The suggested placement of the greenhouse makes the most sense as far as the layout of the garden and winter sunlight
- The compost area has taken a lot of effort, money and time to build and maintain, and moving it is no small feat. The bins are built on top of a layer of gravel which would also need to be moved.
- Citizens committee will help get us a team of volunteers to help the garden membership do the work.
- What would be the size of the greenhouse? The exact size is to be determined, but it would be up to about 12'X15' in area and less than 10' tall.
- How will the greenhouse engage the community? We will be able take charge of our food destiny by being able to ensure all of our plants, especially plant sale plants, are non GMO. It will help us and everyone that buys the plants.

In addition, several comments were made regarding communication issues around the proposed greenhouse.

- Jeff apologized for the rancor in the greenhouse discussion, which he in part has perhaps contributed to, and for the last minute nature of the proposal he submitted to the membership. He also noted that not many of the garden members have been involved in the committee and discussion and perhaps that is a sign of low interest in a greenhouse.
- It was noted that the committee was asked to present three options and only presented one.
- Jennie indicated that compost would have liked to have been consulted about the proposal previously since the it involves such an upheaval of the compost area.

The motion was voted on and did not pass: 13 were in favor, 10 against and 3 abstained. (According to our bylaws, a majority of members present must vote in favor in order for a motion to pass. In this case only 50% voted in favor.)

A motion was made and seconded to build a greenhouse in the sunny herb bed.

Since the meeting had already run well past the scheduled end time, the meeting was adjourned at about 8:48 p.m.

[The next general meeting will be Saturday, August 12, 11 a.m.]

Respectfully submitted,
Martha Elliot , Co-Secretary