

PHCF General Meeting, August 12, 2017 -- Minutes

Members Present: Akosua A, Alex K, Alexandra H, Allison B, Anne L, Brian T, Dan F, Heather C, Jessica S, Joanne D, Johanna B, Kayla S, Kyle G, Lee S, Louise B, Michelle F, Penelope W, Rosemarie M, Rosemary P, Traci N, Val D, William L, Zach D.

Potential Members Present: Averill M, Chigozie A, Emily S, Evan A.

Michelle opened the meeting at 11:07 a.m., welcoming everyone and asking us to briefly introduce ourselves. Then she established that a quorum of voting members was present, and asked those not yet members not to vote on any motions today.

The July 2017 general meeting minutes were approved as posted on the listserv, with minor corrections as follows: a distinction was added to clarify the two Josh Rs listed as present; a note was added cautioning members to assure that no one is left in the garden when the gate is locked; and an explanation of the quorum requirement (established using a percentage of the number of verified members as of the spring annual meeting, as per our bylaws). In addition, **the June 2017 minutes were amended by consensus**, adding the name of Heather R to the attendance list. As a footnote, attendees are reminded to always sign the attendance list at each meeting they attend.

Board Members' Reports:

Treasurer (Brian):

- The process of joining the garden was explained for the benefit of the potential new members present. (Fill out contact information on envelope provided; pay dues; take orientation tour of the garden with Traci; indicate whether you would like to be put on waiting list for a planting box; receive key to garden.)
- Bank and Petty Cash balances are essentially unchanged since the July meeting report. [Figures provided after the meeting -- Our balances, as of 8/12/17: Astoria Bank, checking: \$4,211.00; Petty cash: \$329.95.]

Compost (Lee):

- All is going rather well. Remember to chop up contributions to the compost bins (putting contributions in the silver cans so we can keep track of raw compost weight, among other reasons) and the leaf bin.
- The building of the leaf bin is finished. We have plenty of sawdust, although we need more browns.
- Please help out during the workday after today's meeting. The committee needs more members. Remember that working on the compost team counts toward open hours requirements. [You can volunteer by emailing compost@phcfarm.com.]
- Over the past 3 years we have processed 44,000 pounds of raw materials into 11,000 pounds of ready-to-use compost.

Boxes:

- No changes since our last meeting. Michelle summarized the process of signing up for a box. The wait is about 3 years, typically.
- A question about whether volunteers should weed pathways between boxes was answered by Traci: Boxholders (and only boxholders) are responsible for cleaning around their boxes. Ideally, pathways should be kept clear, but our mixed flora in this garden encourages a desirable variety of insects and other creatures in our "wildlife habitat."

Service Hours (Traci and others reported for Aaron and Anna) –

- All time slots but three were covered for the month of July.
- All members must perform service hours, at least 3/5 of which must be devoted to keeping the garden open. The website spreadsheet for recordkeeping is up to date through July. Members should check for accuracy.
- Open hours requirements must be finished by October 31.
- [An emailed report from Aaron adds an email address if members have questions: servicehours@phcfarm.com; and special thanks to new members for helping so much with open hours.]

Communications (Will) –

- Our main means of communication is through email with a listserv. See also the website (phcfarm.com), Twitter, and Facebook.
- Will is investigating options in addition to Yahoo for a better listserv.

Master Gardeners (Traci) –

- The brush pile is next to the leaf bin. It needs a team leader, and volunteers to turn it over every six weeks. (Will later volunteered to be the team leader.) This pile eventually produces compost, but should not be used in the vegetable boxes since the pile's lead content is unknown.
- Thanks to those who fill the water barrels, including Zach.
- Workday after the meeting today. Lots of jobs await, including compost repairs and building wooden benches. (Members commented on the great job done on rebuilding the picnic table.)
- Enjoy the berries as they ripen. Look for strawberries and raspberries right now.

BANG (Louise and Joanne):

- A BANG event in August aims to help CNR Nursing Home on Classon Avenue in Crown Heights revitalize its garden area. Contact jiwonny@gmail.com to volunteer. Likely dates are August 18 or 26. A great way to reach out to the neighborhood.
- BANG is not meeting in August. The next meeting falls on the same day as our garden meeting, September 9.
- Brian followed up a contact with Councilwoman Laurie Cumbo about the traditional annual \$3000 grant to BANG through her office. With apologies, the office explained that in fact the grant would be \$10,000 this year. Thanks, Brian! BANG works out how to award the grant money to its gardens. Kayla explained that each garden must front the money for projects, then make a report to BANG in order to be reimbursed.

New Business:

Events in the garden: Louise hosted a lovely group of teen apprentices from the Brooklyn Botanic Garden as they explored and asked many questions. This report led to a discussion as to whether we should have an active **events or education committee** to encourage such visits and outreach to the wider community. There was enthusiasm for such outreach – not only to serve our neighborhood, but also to bolster our case for the existence of community gardens even as city real estate becomes more valuable. We should be documenting our services (e.g., keep an events record and inform GreenThumb, count how many persons visit the garden during open hours, etc.) **Do we want a committee to do short- and long-term strategic planning for our garden?** Discussion to be continued.

A Garden Barbeque is scheduled for August 26. A form will be put on the listserv for volunteers to help with the preparations and/or bring food.

A welcome sign for our fence: Brian had proposed a sign that would welcome our neighbors of all cultures. Volunteers had written into the listserv to offer help. A motion to go ahead with fashioning a sign under Brian's leadership passed unanimously. There are paints in the shed.

A composting sign explaining stages in the composting system was proposed by Joanne. The need for this explanation became evident with discussion, as did **a need for a "brush pile" (otherwise known as "cold compost") team leader**. Will volunteered to be that leader.

Do we want a separate Internet-based social network such as Facebook's Private Groups? Kyle suggested that it would help gardeners get to know one another more easily, apart from the business-oriented listserv that we already have. Some discussion pro and con followed. We agreed to continue to explore and discuss the idea.

Year-round Gardening Program grant – Michelle brought us up to date on events since the July meeting. Melissa R had made a motion to build a greenhouse where the "sunny herb garden" is now located. Melissa has written to the listserv that she wishes to withdraw that motion, because Jeff is in the process of suggesting two new plans, including to re-visit the possibility of using the composting space (the motion defeated at the July meeting) as well as an alternate plan involving the sunny herb garden. Michelle announced that she will call a board meeting to review Jeff's two plans (as required by our bylaws). If the board agrees to bring the two proposals to the general membership, a special membership meeting will be called to consider the proposals and to make a decision about whether to go ahead with accepting the original grant from the Citizens Committee of New York City (\$2300) and go ahead with realizing one of the two plans.

Announcements:

A Digital soil testing kit (Lee) is available in the shed, on the shelf on the right.

Workday tasks (Michelle) are awaiting our attention immediately after the meeting.

The next regular meeting will be Saturday, September 9, 11 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary P, Secretary