

PHCF General Meeting, September 9, 2017 -- Minutes

Members Present: Anna H., Aaron D., Alex B., Alex K., Amanda W., Anne L., Casey F., Dana B., Debra P., Eva W., Greg M., Jeff S., Joanne D., Joey D., Johanna B., Kyle G., Louise B., Luke R., Lynn A., Melissa R., Martha E., Nathalie D., Rosemarie M., Rosemary P., Sarah F., Stav B. Traci N., Virginia W., William L., Zach D.

Prospective Members Present: Eliza S., Talia K., Martin B., Caitlin H.

Johanna opened the meeting at 11:02 a.m., welcoming everyone. We shared a moment of silence in honor of Ella M., a long time garden member who recently passed away.

The August 2017 general meeting minutes were approved.

Board Members' Reports:

Treasurer (Martha) – Martha reported that our checking account balance is \$4124.91 and our petty cash balance is \$406.53. Recent activity: ~\$50 for flowers sent to Ruth M. in the hospital and miscellaneous reimbursements for garden supplies.

Compost (Johanna on behalf of Lee S. & Jennie S.) – The bins are still in the process of being fixed. There are compost shifts available in October which count towards open hours. Compost shifts during the winter do not count towards open hours.

Boxes (Joey) – There are currently 39 people on the box waiting list. To retain box holder status or waiting list priority, members must complete open hours requirement by October 31. Members can check their open hours status and waiting list status on our website : www.phcfarm.com / Resources / Service Hours Status .

Service Hours (Aaron and Anna) – Members' hours tallies have been updated through August 31. Sign up sheets are posted for open hours in September and October. Keep in mind that 2 members can sign up for open hours credit at a time.

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. A PHCF Facebook group was recently established on a trial basis for informal conversation among members. The Yahoo email listserv is still the platform of record for PHCF business communication. Eighteen people have joined the FB group and the content has been appropriate. We will decide at the November meeting whether to keep the Facebook Group.

Master Gardeners (Virginia & Traci)

- The Green Thumb Harvest Fair will be at the Bears Garden (a BANG garden) on September 16, everyone is invited to attend. Bring garden produce to share, or just come.
- The soil tests are not back yet, Virginia is following up.
- This month is the 20th anniversary of Prospect Heights Community Farm. Any suggestions on ways to celebrate are welcome.
- Autumn Shrub Sale is coming up. Request stewards to make divisions and garden members bring in house plants to sell.

BANG: (Louise and Joanne)

- BANG has a large tent available to us as a member garden to use for 2 scheduled events each year.
- BANG is in the process of forming an Operations Committee.
- BANG is deliberating on how the gardens could use the \$10,000 programming grant it has received from the City Council. One idea is that it could be used to develop a proposal for the Participatory Budgeting Process to secure more funds for a larger project that could benefit all of the gardens. If anyone has experience with Participatory Budgeting Process, please contact Louise or Joanne.

New Business:

Brush Pile: Will reported that 5 gardeners met about how to better manage the Brush Pile. The materials provide valuable mulch to the garden and shall thus henceforth be known as the Mulch Pile.

They discussed the following:

- What should be put in the Mulch Pile? (Herbaceous materials from the front of the garden that could be contaminated with lead and woody materials. Any diseased materials should be put in the trash.)
- How should material be added to the Mulch Pile? (Chopped into 6" pieces)
- The Mulch Pile should be turned monthly during scheduled **1-hour** shifts.
- The board on the side by the beds will be raised about a foot higher.
- Signs will be made to explain how to use the Mulch Pile.
- Compost Coordinator was apprised of the plan and asked for input.

Rats: Traci reported that the Department of Health came to the garden during open hours while surveying the neighborhood rat problem. They did discover some activity mostly on the side of the garden near the stage and at the front of the garden. James G., a former Compost Coordinator garden member, has baited 3 traps along the front fence and below the windows near the stage. The materials he used to kill the rats (Agrid D3) will not harm other animals or plants. James will monitor and rebait the traps as necessary and we should buy a few more bait boxes.

Mosaic Project: Alex K. presented a proposal for creating mosaics in the garden. He is an art educator and would like to involve children as well as members

and others in the project. A budget of approximately \$375 was presented for covering the stage and the children's bed in mosaic that respects the garden, more pastoral, not flashy. About half of the cost could be paid by students participating as a suggested materials fee. It was determined that the Board would discuss further, particularly in light of Master Gardener Catherine's absence and the idea will be revisited and voted upon during an upcoming meeting.

Clarification of Voting Procedures: Johanna reviewed how votes are counted according to our bylaws. Our by-laws state:

"All issues to be voted on shall be decided by a simple majority vote of those members present at the meeting at which the vote takes place."

The [Wikipedia page on voting](#) states very clearly how to handle this and how it is different than just a "majority vote".

A "majority of the members present" means more than half of the members at the meeting. If 30 members were at a meeting, a majority of the members present would be 16. In any situation which specifies such a requirement for a vote, an abstention would have the same effect as a "no" vote.

Therefore, Johanna urged members to decide on a yes or no vote rather than to abstain.

Year-round Gardening Committee Update: Anna reported that the Committee had made a mock up to show the size and placement of the greenhouse that they are proposing be built on the sunny herb bed using the grant money received from the Citizen's Committee. The greenhouse could be used to grow our own seedlings and could reduce the amount of money we spend on plants for the plant sale (we currently spend about \$300 annually). There are plans to retain all of the plants that currently grow in that location. Some will be housed within the greenhouse. The Committee foresees an opportunity for community outreach by providing greenhouse demonstrations to PS9 students in the spring and fall of each year.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the proposal to build a greenhouse on the sunny herb bed.

Johanna read a statement from Catherine in her absence. Her main objection to the greenhouse is that the location is not large enough. Space is at a premium in the garden, and everything is a trade off. In addition, if the greenhouse becomes overcrowded there may be pests and disease issues that would be hard to resolve. She would like to see a proposal with the option of removable structures.

The first member to speak stressed her love of and knowledge of greenhouses, however, she agrees with Catherine's assessment. She added that a greenhouse would not be usable during the summer.

Another member commented on the unique landscaping of the garden and how friendly it currently is to pollinators. She stated that the Committee never presented any cold frame options to the membership, but cold frames would address most members desire to extend their growing season. She would gladly offer up her own bed for communal winter gardening if she was asked, and the children's bed would be available for cold frames as well.

Another member said that the grant has offered the garden a special opportunity to try something. She admitted that yes, there could be problems. She added that being in a greenhouse is a lovely way to be outside during the wintertime. If the project fails, the green house can always be removed.

A member of the YRGC replied that the \$2300 grant is far too much money for cold frames and that is why the committee doesn't think it is the right way to utilize the grant.

Another member commented that the plan for the greenhouse includes vents and windows so that there could be ventilation during the warmer months. He also said that if the people who founded the garden only thought about the problems that could occur, the garden would not exist as it does today.

A member of the YRGC commented that the sunny herb bed is not his first choice to locate a greenhouse in the garden; however, he thinks it could work well and that a greenhouse on the sunny herb bed would be an asset to the garden.

The members voted and votes were counted as follows: 17 in favor, 13 opposed, 1 abstention. The motion was passed. (According to our bylaws, a majority of members present must vote in favor in order for a motion to pass. In this case more than 50% of members present voted in favor.)

The meeting was adjourned at about 12:08 p.m.

[The next general meeting will be Sunday, October 15th at 1p.m.]

Respectfully submitted
Martha Elliot , Co-Secretary