

## **PHCF General Meeting, November 12, 2017 --Ratified Minutes**

**Members Present:** Brian T, Casey F, Cecelia S, Jeff S, Joanne D, Joey D, Johanna B, Lee S, Louise B, Melissa BR, Martha E, Marva WS, Michael C, Philip A, Rachel I, Rosemary P, Traci N, Virginia W.

Traci opened the meeting at 1:10 p.m., welcoming everyone and asking us to briefly introduce ourselves.

**The September and October 2017 general meeting minutes** were ratified as amended and corrected. (All approved minutes are posted on the PHCF website.)

### **Board Members' Reports:**

**General co-coordinators** (Traci reporting for herself and Virginia):

- Michelle F, one of our general coordinators, has resigned from the garden, for two reasons. She has moved to another neighborhood, and she was frustrated during her role as a general coordinator of the garden.
- Virginia has made hard copies of the by-laws available (at the meeting and in the shed) for those who prefer them; the by-laws and rules are also available on the website. Johanna has offered to lead a committee to review and suggest possible revisions to our by-laws. As a part of this review, Anna has offered to look at the process of proposing new projects in the garden. Motion: the PHCF accepts the offers of Johanna and Anna to lead a committee to review the by-laws, and to suggest revisions by January 15, 2018, which will give garden members time to study these suggestions and be ready to vote on any changes at our annual meeting in late February or early March, 2018. The motion passed unanimously.

**Treasurer** (Brian): Our checking balance is \$4,678.15, which includes the amount of the greenhouse grant from CCNYC less reimbursements already made, about 2/3 of the grant. We have \$577.53 in petty cash. Note: our bank's name has been changed from Astoria Bank to Sterling Bank.

**Boxes** (Joey): There are 43 names of the wait list and 2 names on the "change box" list. After the service hours accounting has closed at the end of 2017, Joey will determine what boxes might be available for 2018.

Jeff wondered if some boxholders might be willing to let other members use their boxes over the winter season. If that is the case, please let Jeff know, or email the listserv.

**Compost** (Lee): A leaf-drop drive is ongoing. Please help distribute flyers and publicize. We ran short of leaves last year, which we chop up and use for browns in the composting process.

**Service Hours** (as per Anna and Aaron's reports on the listserv): Members' totals are updated on the website. It's always good to check your totals for accuracy ([phcfarm.com](http://phcfarm.com)). In general we have had a very successful year keeping our garden open to the public for at least 20 hours a week. Thank you, members! There are some 29 people who still owe hours. Some service hours opportunities are still available – e.g., compost team and snow removal.

**Communications** (Will reported via the listserv): Will and the mulch pile team will be working on the signage for the mulch pile over the winter months. (No report on the garden's trial Facebook social group.)

**Master Gardeners** (Traci and Virginia):

- As we clean up the garden for the winter, remember to put all nightshade plants (tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant), which might have blights, in the garbage/trash, NOT the compost or mulch pile.
- Other plants should be chopped up and added to the mulch pile.
- It's a good time to put compost around roses and other plants to prepare them for cold winter weather. Take the compost from the "munchers" containers.
- Stewards of specific areas should communicate with Traci about their plans for next year. New proposals will be requested soon for 2018.

**BANG** (Joanne):

- Sheila is stepping down as president of BANG.
- The \$10,000 grant from the city to BANG through City Councilmember Cumbo needs follow-up work. How should the member gardens use the money?
  - Several gardens want to develop rainwater reclamation systems, but we already have such a system. Do we want some kind of solar device that could be put under the same environmental-friendly umbrella as rainwater systems?
  - Another idea is to use the money to fund the process of city district participatory budgeting.

- BANG wants an operations committee with members from each member garden who can share various skills, to help with projects and chores that each garden undertakes. We need to follow up and decide how or if we participate.
- BANG holds its annual meeting in late March, and asks each member garden to hold its annual meeting before the BANG meeting in order to approve the BANG proposed budget for the coming year.
- BANG has a social media committee, which Louise helped with.
- There was a meet and greet event, which Joanne attended.

### **Other Business:**

**The mosaic project** as proposed at the September meeting has been postponed to the spring. One possible idea is to combine the Ella Morgenlander memorial bench and the mosaic project.

**Visitors**, 15 sixth-graders, will be coming to the garden on November 17 to help with the compost project, under the supervision of Virginia. Any garden members are welcome to volunteer.

**Tax exemptions:** Brian proposed a motion to deny reimbursement of sales taxes on garden expenditures over \$50, since we are a nonprofit under the auspices of BANG.

There was considerable discussion, which included these points:

- The tax exempt form must be easily accessible.
- The form should be easy to obtain from designated officers, but cannot be available without observing a process.
- The entire process of carrying out a project, including any purchases, should be clarified (which is what Anna has volunteered to undertake under the auspices of the by-laws review committee).
- A new rule not to reimburse should allow for exceptions, since complications can sometimes occur. (Brian agreed to amend his motion to allow for exceptions.)
- Given the lengthy discussion, it was suggested that we put off a vote until more consideration could be given to this motion. Thus a motion to table the motion was offered, which was defeated with 3 yes votes, 7 no votes, and 7 abstentions.

The final form of the motion was: Given that PHCF is eligible for tax exemption on purchases using BANG's tax exempt status, the tax portion on approved purchases above \$50 may not be reimbursed. (That is, as a rule it will not be reimbursed. Exceptions can be made.) This motion passed, with 12 yes votes, 2 no votes, and 2 abstentions.

**Our resident rats.** Virginia has been interviewing potential consultants and exterminators. The experts think the rats are not finding food in our garden, but have a whole underground system under our garden where they live.

Fees for professional extermination are very high, more than we can afford, so here are some important steps we can do ourselves:

- Line the perimeter of our garden with hardware cloth.
- Eliminate the brick pile on the north side of the water tanks.
- Bait our own traps. Double the number of traps.
- Interest our neighbors in joining us in combatting rats.

Virginia is attending a “Rat Academy” on November 16 (at the Nursing and Rehab Center on Classon Avenue at Park Place) to see what else she can learn. She hopes other members will also attend, and will send out details on the listserv. She thinks we can start on our do-it-ourselves steps almost immediately.

Joanne offered to study the recommended steps and devise and propose a work plan.

**The greenhouse.** Jeff reported that the greenhouse is almost ready for use. The committee invites members to start seedlings and put other plants inside the greenhouse, labeling all contributions with your name and the date. Please, no empty pots. If it turns out that there are too many contributions, then the committee will devise a more specific plan and announce it via the listserv.

**Greenthumb** has sent out reminders to the gardens to take care of our sidewalks throughout the winter, shoveling snow and salting thoroughly.

**Workday plans for today** include some finishing touches on the greenhouse and winterizing the garden.

**The year in review:** Traci gave us an impressive overview of our garden's accomplishments and activities over the past season.

- Education: Hosted 2 classes this year- BBG teen apprentices and Brooklyn Urban Gardeners.

- Outreach: Compost workshop and giveaway, BANG Bike tour, Pumpkin Smash, our garden's 20th anniversary committee formation (Cecelia to start planning), Leaf Drop and Mulchfest.
- Fundraising: Plant Sale and Autumn Shrub Sale. Received two grants, for the Compost and Greenhouse projects, and completed both.
- Miscellaneous: hosted a Buy Nothing Prospect Heights meet up; added 3 new stewards over 2 areas of the garden; 2 members won on their entries at the GreenThumb Harvest Fair; experimented with an internal Facebook group; the garden added 41 new members this season, through October.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary Palms, Secretary