

PHCF July 11, 2018 General Membership Meeting

Attendees

- Anna Rose Ha
- Catherine Or
- Cecelia Sh
- Eva Wa
- Joanne Di
- Kayla Sc
- Louise Br
- Luke Ro
- Martha El
- Melissa Bo
- Otilia St
- Rosemarie Ma
- Selina Ru
- Traci No
- Will La
- Zach Du
- J.P. Pa
- Judith Sa
- Vanessa Mo
- Josh Ru
- April Mc
- Dolores Br

Late Attendees

Prospective Members

- Rawaan Al
- Thomas Bl

Guest Attendees

- Andrea Ka - BANG

Traci chaired the meeting, opened it at 7:03 pm and welcomed everyone.

The May and June meeting minutes were approved, with an addendum to the May minutes that there was a motion passed to sign the BANG letter. Thanks went out to Anna for assisting with the May minutes. An announcement was made that many members are themselves or have friends or family facing illness, please send thoughts and prayers for “get-well-soons.”

Officer Reports

Service hours: Tilly reported

The garden’s June open hours were 98% completed. July and August are lagging, so please sign-up for hours during those months!

Tilly reminded all members that everyone must do 60% of their total hours as open hours and that the remaining 40% can be open hours or project hours, or a combination of both.

Compost: Rachel reported via email

Several changes have been made to the compost area for rat abatement purposes. To summarize:

- All bags and small containers are now hung on the back fence
- Our various bins have gravel under and around them to prevent rats from burrowing.
- The new finished compost munchers are rat proof, with hardware cloth and gravel underneath and around them, so rats are no longer peeing, pooing or chillin' in the compost anymore.

Big thanks to the members who acquired and unloaded all the materials to make these changes possible!

The compost area's sign has been updated and now reads:

- Total waste diverted from landfill to date: 53,122 lbs.
- Total finished compost produced to date: 15,128 lbs.

Please remember to cut houseplants, bouquets, plants from your garden, and weeds into smaller pieces (6" or smaller).

Compost will be participating in Open Garden Day this weekend. Tell your neighbor to come pick up some compost! We'll be giving away bags of compost, giving out information, and demonstrating some compost tasks.

Extra compost volunteers are always welcome. Please email compost@phcfarm.com if you would like to get involved.

Communication: Will reported

Nothing new. Went over listserv joining process for prospective members; please keep an eye out for the email saying you have been added and check your spam if you don't see it. There will be a total of two emails.

Boxes: Anna reported

Everything is growing well! Please water boxes that look dry, especially for members experiencing illness issues. Please keep up the communication and ask for watering help if you need it. A box map with names will be posted in the shed.

Master Gardener:

Catherine:

Accolades to Joey for fixing the water harvesting system! Reminder: We are in mosquito season, please ensure that everything that can or could collect water is either covered or tipped

over so that it doesn't collect water. Even a small amount of water can assist in mosquito reproduction.

I will begin pruning dead wood soon, please let me know if you would like to help.

Traci:

Reminder: Please clean around boxes, be sure to weed, clean up things like empty pots and anything that could provide cover to rats, habitat for mosquitos, or something for ticks to climb up.

Eva has been spraying for mosquitos and ticks. The spray is garlic based. It is being sprayed around the boxes but not in them.

Plant sale results:

- 595 total plants were sold, the garden or members grew 222 of the plants sold, or 37%
 - Of that 222, 80 were grown in the greenhouse (36% of PHCF plants or 13% of total plants)
 - Of that 222, 29 were grown by Ruth (13% of PHCF plants or 4% of total plants).

Treasurer: Martha reported

Rose has joined as co-treasurer and Martha is working on getting her access to the bank account.

Martha shared how to become a member

- Attend two meetings
- Pay dues, sliding scale \$5-\$25
- Attend orientation, on Sunday 7/15 or after the August meeting/workday

Current balances are: \$4476 in bank, \$41 in petty cash

Expenses since last meeting

- ~\$1100 in rat abatement expenses (debris removal, compost bins, circular saw, gravel)
- \$165 water tank repairs, \$115 new grill and cover, \$157 solar fan for greenhouse. It was suggested that these may be reimbursable by the BANG grant - a BANG member attended clarified that the "BANG money" can not cover reimbursements.

Johanna submitted some receipts for the Park Slope Co-Op, we will receive ~\$300 from them for compost expenses. They may pay additional funds for further repairs.

Members discussed purchasing a chimney starter for the grill versus making one from a coffee can or other item. The request to purchase one was approved.

BANG: Joanne reported

No new update from most recent meeting because the meeting is scheduled for after this one.

Updates on old business:

- More hurry up and wait on the grant to BANG discussed previously, no conclusion yet and no funds have been disbursed yet
- The bike tour was a success, hopes for more participation from and at PHCF next year
- The social media committee is working and the website is up to date. Please submit pictures
- The website has Open Garden Day info on it for all BANG gardens participating.

Joanne explained what BANG is and its touring meeting practice.

Two other BANG gardens are also having rat problems. There has been a good offer from a local exterminator to assess, treat, and follow-up. They will use the exterminator and want to know if we want to use them too.

Coordinator: Traci reported

Twentieth Anniversary Events:

- Memorial for Ella and Francis: there are a variety of choices. Discussion about doing a plaque, bench, engraved brick ensued. Zach moved to allow the board to decide which to do, with a maximum budget of \$750. Cecilia seconded the motion. Traci called for a voice vote; the motion passed.

Bylaws Change:

- Not calling for a vote today but in accordance with the bylaws, there will be a proposal in September to fix the current problem of new members being required to attend a second meeting and how this puts October and November joiners in a difficult/impossible situation.

Rat Committee Report:

Martha updated the garden on tasks completed since last meeting:

- Lots of debris moved and gravel poured in needed areas
- Stage removed
- Whole compost area reworked and better secured
- The rats haven't seemed interested in the current traps.

Catherine summarized the BANG operation committee meeting on June 20th which focused on rat problems. The group discussed an offer from Alley Cat Exterminators: for \$150 they would perform an initial site visit, bait, and follow-up with rebaiting. The Alley Cat offer is also the offer mentioned previously in the minutes above.

Catherine shared that she spoke with Alley Cat and learned that the only poison they use [IS] bromadiolone in bait boxes. This substance is toxic but, with their methods, does not come in contact with soil, plants, or water. The bait boxes are tamper proof. They would also like to post a small sign sharing they are performing this service.

Catherine proposed:

We along with other BANG gardens with rat issues have the opportunity to have an exterminator come and place traps as well as bait them for a very nominal amount. The initial visit would be in the neighborhood of \$150 and all the subsequent visits would be donated. The traps would be baited with Contrac All-weather Blox (I can provide a copy of the label). We have an existing rule that prohibits use of non-organic pesticides in the garden. I propose in light of the extreme problem with rats in our garden at the current moment that we make an exception to our rule in order to get the situation under control, and join with the other BANG gardens to take advantage of this offer. We have taken some remedial actions dictated by DOH, and there is still an issue with rats. This is the one step recommended by DOH that we haven't done, and if they find that we are not in compliance it is possible that they could bring in their own exterminator and charge us standard rates which could exceed \$1000. (She added a caveat that we do this for one full calendar year to be able to fully compare it over the course of the rats' reproductive cycle).

A conversation followed and included topics of what the consequences from the city would be if we do not make progress/meet their expectations, whether the poison is dangerous and to whom, how using it might affect the local hawk population, members self-identifying as no longer using the garden because they fear the rats will make them or their children sick, whether we could attempt other things like dry ice, snap traps inside fake rocks, and other pros and cons of using the rodenticide and general frustration with the rat problem in our garden and the neighborhood as a whole.

A BANG meeting attendee mentioned that in her opinion, based on how her garden dealt with rats (snap traps provided by a tv show), the offer from Alley Cat or the use of the rodenticide listed above is likely the only workable option.

At a vote, the proposal failed. Yes: 8, No: 9, Abstain: 5

Martha then moved, "That we join with the other BANG gardens to consult with Alley Cat to obtain their recommendation for rat abatement." This motion was made with the general understanding that the rodenticide may continue to be considered in another vote in the future after attempting other options or learning more from Alley Cat.

Martha's motion passed: yes: 19, no: 1, abstain 2

General Announcements

Attend the Terrarium Build-Along on July 14th from 11:00 am - 3:00 pm. All are welcome!

The next meeting is scheduled for August 11th at 11:00 am.

Zach needs someone to act as secretary or, at minimum, take a recording with notes of the meeting. He will be out of town on August 11th.

Meeting adjourned around 8:35.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Zach Dugan

