

HOLDEN COMMUNITY GARDEN COMMITTEE

July 19, 2023

Mission Statement:

The Holden Community Garden Committee is a volunteer organization working to provide and support Holden residents, individually and collectively, to grow food, flowers, fruits, and herbs on town land including the redeveloped property on Highland Street. Our efforts will enable residents to enjoy the beauty of our town while developing a sense of community through cooperative action, learning about sustainable and environmentally conscious gardening as well as ethical harvesting.

The Holden Community Garden Committee also exists to foster the education of the children of Holden through the support of community gardens in local schools and community groups. These gardens will help to develop the appreciation of future generations for the importance of agriculture and responsible environmental practices, and provide education and positive experiences through gardening and physical activity.

In Attendance: Jessica Cosenza, Chair; Members present: Katye Brier; Wayne Dodge, Michael Mazloff, Julie McCarthy; garden participants George Klicka, Matt Glavickas, Susan, Steve D'Aquila, Teddy Lofgren; scouts: Alison Grady; absent: Aleel Grennan, Gina Tutela

Meeting called to order at 6:17

AGENDA

The minutes of the June, 2023 meeting were reviewed.

Motion #1

To approve the June, 2023 HCG Minutes

Voted and Approved.

SCOUT PROJECT UPDATE

Alison Grady presented her ideas on paper for her Gold Award Girl Scout project. She presented photo examples of a stepping structure, clover box, log train, and table. Installations would all be made from renewable resources. Maintenance would be planned with hardy perennials and younger scouts. Front area near the rock wall proposed as the site.

Motion #2

To approve Alison Grady to move forward with planning a Natural Playground at the Holden Community Garden for her Gold Award Girl Scout Project, with the items discussed and in the location requested (Pending DPW approval).

Voted and Approved.

Max and Gina Tutela were not available for updates. Katye will share Max's "Go Fund Me" link with Mr. Norton for the school newsletter.

SIGNAGE UPDATE

Plot numbers and environmental information signs finished and paid for. Katye worked with Jim Diegnan on these, and she is just finishing up the stakes for placement. There are currently 3 "Don't Pick" signs. The participants and committee members suggest that more be printed and installed to remind visitors not to pick from plots. Katye also will create a social media post about not picking at the site. Jessica will reach out to other community gardens in the state to see how they manage this problem.

Motion #3

To approve additional spending on larger “Don’t Pick” signs at access points.

Voted and Approved.

APPLICATIONS AND FUNDING

There is no update to share on funding for 2023-2024 at this time. Plots are all in use currently, with the exception of the 2 new raised beds. No applications have been received for that program (see below). Jessica reached out to the Town Manager's office to clarify if guest participants need to sign waivers for participation at the garden. The response indicated that guests at the garden may participate without waivers, as long as the plot renter is responsible for their activity and use of the garden spaces.

WATER AND IRRIGATION

With all of the rain this season, we haven’t had to use the spigots often or ask the town to fill the cisterns. Communication from John Woodsmall of the DPW indicates that our first water bill was around \$400, but the majority of the charges were for meter installation. This suggests a \$70/month water bill, which is not a concern. John suggested allowing the high school students to design a schematic layout, then Chris and Jeremy will review it. There are some considerations mentioned about above ground vs inground systems, backflow devices, manual vs automatic systems, and how we would access power to the system. With all of the rain we’ve had this year and with the school not in session, further discussion is tabled to the fall.

GARDENING FOR ALL UPDATES

The person who was using the raised beds without permission has been identified and declined to participate in applying and following the established rules. She also removed the mulch that she had brought to the site. Michael removed the plants from those beds.

Jessica reviewed the MCC application summary that was submitted and approved, whereby our committee requested funding for raised bed garden tables to “allow better access to growing surfaces, and offer free workshops on container and low impact gardening”.

We must follow the guidelines created through the application submitted to the Cultural Council and report back to the Council on appropriate, successful use of funds. We have created a flyer that has been distributed in the community with acknowledgment of the opportunity available and the source of funding. Without any applicants this season, we discussed planning a garden tour to show the community what the garden has to offer, explain the process of application, and demonstrate the ease and joy of gardening in the community.

Motion #4

To plan a garden tour: pick the date, do a sign up at the senior center and elder housing facilities, and offer the tour to the community.

Voted and Approved.

Michael will be promoting this, coordinating with Jessica.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

An Opening Ceremony is being tabled to the spring when we get the next stage of the expansion completed. Julie may coordinate a plant sale with this opening ceremony.

Jessica did inquire with the Town Manager's office/Chamber of Commerce to see if the HCGC can participate in Holden Days with a spot at the main event. The cost would be \$95. Committee members have decided that we will not have a designated spot at the event this year, but Wayne and Susan will

inquire about possibly having a flier available to handout at the Garden Club tent.

Yoga in the garden may be planned for August and September. Jessica will follow up with Aleel to check on instructor availability.

DAVIS HILL UPDATES

We will plan to include the DH garden in the fall clean up event. Date TBD. Rebuild of beds is pending Max's availability.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Wayne is interested in cleaning up the area around the information kiosk. Jessica has asked for chips from the town.

Steve is concerned about Japanese Beetles. Natural deterrents discussed include Neem Oil and hand picking of beetles with soapy water collection jars in the garden areas. These products are on the approved list for garden use. Steve donated and demonstrated use of Neem oil sprayers.

Julie is planning to weed and split perennials in the pollinator garden, and Colleen McCarthy is planning to re-stain the bridge. A hedge row will be created with tall perennials.

The DPW has no plans to pave the access road and will not allow speed bumps to be installed.

Carry In/Carry Out is always encouraged by the DPW. They do not want to install trash containers on the site. If there is unwanted trash left by the public, it should be collected and they will come retrieve it.

ADJOURNMENT: 7:30; **NEXT MEETING:** August 16 at 6:15 at the Holden Community Garden.(NOTE-changed date to August 23)