

Saco Community Garden Steering Committee Meeting

Saco Community Center, Room 203

Wednesday, November 13, 2019, 6:30pm 

Attended: Bruce Martel, Karen Martel, Walter Buczacz, Joel Hersom, Michelle Hiltz, Peg Mills, Laurie Thompson, Nancy Nelson

Bruce called the meeting to order at 6:32

Karen made a motion to accept the November meeting notes, Joel seconded, unanimously approved

Communication Secretary Report-

The website is going well. It is currently rated in the top 85% of community gardens hosted on Go Daddy

A volunteer has distributed fliers around to local businesses and organizations, though there are a few left over to leave at the garden

Clynk account balance is currently \$135.29

Treasurer's Report-

Peg presented the new budget.

Last year the community garden spent \$2,874.24

The new fiscal year started December 1, 2019

It is expected that the garden will have approximately \$3,575.00 available to spend this year between plot rentals (\$1,475.00), the Clynk account (\$100.00), and the forwarded balance (\$2,000.00). The proposed expenses total to \$3575.00.

The current budget numbers were deemed by the group to be appropriate at this time.

As of January 18th there are 11 garden plots still available.

Plot #7 (the accessible plot)-

There was a conversation regarding how this plot will be rented so that it goes to a person who could most benefit from it

Possible ideas-

-We could set a contact person and advertise on the website. The contact person could then reach out to potential renters

- We could reach out to the contact person for Age Friendly Saco- Joel will reach out to the contact person for this organization in hopes of finding someone interested.
- Use it as a demonstration plot if it doesn't rent

Volunteers-

Preseason tasks include:

- remove old stakes, staples, and fabric
- redo the fabric and stakes after the soil amendments and rototilling occurs
- refurbish plot #7- it will need to have more organic garden soil added to make up for the soil removed.

Building/repair

We will look to find one person to repair both the front gate and the broken fence posts

Wood for the spigots supports are purchased and at the garden but the project still needs to be finished

Other advertising- this may not be necessary since there are only 11 plots left. We anticipate that the plots will likely fill without additional advertising. We will revisit this at the next meeting

Nominating committee- We anticipate a need for at least one more member at large if not more in the next gardening year. Laurie will contact Bruce Aral and Theia Murphy to see if they are still interested in being members at large

501(c)(3) status

We are looking into changing the status of the community garden to an independent not for profit organization as opposed to a parks and rec organization

Cons/Concerns/Questions

- are not experiencing the same level of support or participation from the parks and rec staff
- the new director has a different focus from the previous director and is more invested in programming
- there may be an issue of liability
- is there a possibility of losing use of the land?
- how will we charge for the plots and determine residency and cost of the gardener
- it takes awhile to get reimbursement (cut checks only once a month)
- only one vendor, is there a purchase order option?
- who would mow?

Pro

- the advantage is that we would have more easily manage the flow of money.

Karen made a motion to remain with the parks and rec for this year and to continue exploring options and solutions. Joel seconded, 6 in favor and 1 opposed.

The next meeting will be February 12th at the Saco Community Center at 6:30

The annual meeting will be March 18th at Koi in Biddeford at 5:30