

FALL 2023
Community Garden Public Advisory Committee Minutes



Date & Time: July 17th 2023, 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Location: NLR Neighborhood Services (3427 N Magnolia St.)

Committee Members

Present - Dan Scott, Nathan Hamilton, Sylvia Blain, Chelle Kelly, Marcie Finney

Absent – N/A

Garden Members + Program Staff

Present – Anna Sawyer

The meeting came to order at 3:33 PM. A quorum was present.

AGENDA

1. 3:30-3:35, *Welcome/Attendance*
2. 3:35 – 4:00, *Application Review and Scores*
3. 4:00-4:20, *Garden & Program Review*
4. 4:20 – 4:30, *GAC Unfinished Business*
5. 4:30, *Adjourn*

Application Review and Scores

1. **Veterans' Trail Garden** – Amount Requested: \$5,000; Amount Approved: **\$5,000***

Note: This application was submitted by a returning garden. Veterans' Trail joined in the Fall of 2021 with no funding requests. They applied for \$5,000 last year and were approved for \$4,000 – this funding was used to establish electricity in their greenhouse and to gain access to water. All reports and receipts have been submitted.

The committee reviewed the application from Veterans' Trail Garden for \$5,000. Overall, members are impressed with additional information added to the application, community reach, and event hosted on-site. Sylvia Blain and Marcie Finney have questions about EBT measurable, harvest tracking and volunteers mixing insecticide; Chelle Kelly wonders if the garden has cold frames. All members have questions about the waste-water drainage system and wonder if a rain-barrel collection system could offer an alternative. All members note that three (3) measurable goals were not stated in the application. The committee asks that these questions and missing components are addressed before funding is distributed. After much discussion, the application was given a score of 18/21 – receiving a 2/3 on project description (citing lack of measurable goals), budget (citing concerns of cost wastewater

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system) and feasibility (citing concerns of labor for wastewater system). Sylvia Blain moved to approve the application. Chelle Kelly seconded the motion. It passed with five affirmatives.

Score: 18/21

Garden & Program Review

- Distribute GAC onboarding folder & review contents which include; 2023 garden overview, spring 2023 GAC minutes, 2022 annual program report, resolution 9167 and 8372

GAC Unfinished Business

1. Review policy on water cost coverage.
 - a. Many gardens site this as being a strenuous expense and note that they would benefit from this cost being covered through program funding. Anna Sawyer, program staff, concurs. Nathan Hamilton mentions that Central Arkansas Water may be willing to cover these costs. Nathan Hamilton moves to adjust the application to include water-cost coverage. Chelle Kelly seconded the motion. It passed with five affirmatives.
2. Review policy on paying-to-mow.
 - a. Many of our gardeners are seniors and site challenges with this task – especially in the summer. Anna Sawyer, program staff, concurs. Dan Scott moves to adjust the application to include mowing costs. Nathan Hamilton seconded the motion. It passed with five affirmatives
3. Review options with remaining budget.
 - a. Leftover funding from the 2022 fiscal year will be used to convert the 3rd building on Neighborhood Services property into the Community Garden Office & Workspace.
 - b. Remaining budget from the current year (2023) can be used for new garden signs, an on-site greenhouse for the program. Marcie Finney proposed that the amount that gardens are eligible for (\$5,000) may need to be raised due to inflation. No decision was made.
4. Review options with program expansion.
 - a. Anna Sawyer, program staff, sites need for a functional greenhouse. The program has relied on an inoperable greenhouse at NLR Academy, a community greenhouse at SJCA, and a partnership with Heifer International Urban Farm & Village to produce year-round crops for gardens. These options are no longer available.
 - b. Dan Scott proposed that the department apply for a second full-time position. Anna Sawyer, Marcie Finney, Sylvia Blain and Chelle Kelly concur. Sylvia Blain notes that roughly half of the gardens are located on City property, and if they fail the responsibility will be turned back to NLR Parks & Recreation. There is an incentive to expand staffing. Nathan Hamilton notes that doing so may be difficult, because backend expenses would supersede the program budget. It was agreed that Dan will submit a proposal for the 2023 budget and see where it goes.
5. Review approach to data collection / tracking.
 - a. Committee as a whole would like to see program encourage gardens to track harvest yields and volunteer hours.

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Nathan Hamilton motioned to adjourn the meeting. Dan Scott seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 4:35 PM.

Fall funding allocated: \$5,000
Total funding allocated this year: \$23,252.20