

SPRING 2025
Community Garden Public Advisory Committee Minutes



Date & Time: January 23rd, 2025, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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

Committee Members

Total (5): Dan Scott, Nathan Hamilton, Sylvia Blain, Jennifer Johansen, Marcie Finney

Staff: Rachelle Kelly

Present – Dan Scott, Jennifer Johansen, Marcie Finney, Sylvia Blain, and Rachelle Kelly

Absent – Nathan Hamilton

AGENDA

1. 3:30 – 4:30, *Individual Application Reviews, Q&A with Applicants*
2. 4:30 – 4:35, *Two Gardens Requesting Extension for SP 2024 funds*
3. 4:35 – 5:00, *Final Reviews and Votes*
4. 5:00, *Adjourn*

Individual Application Reviews, Q&A with Applicants (1 hour)

The GAC will review applications from nine (9) gardens for the Spring 2025 round of funding. If applicants are present, they may answer and ask questions. There is time for each garden to have ~6 ½ minutes dedicated to it. Once a garden has been discussed, applicants may leave if they wish, or remain for the rest of the meeting.

1. Urban Sol Community Garden (new) –

Amount Requested: \$1,500; Amount Approved: \$ 1,500.00

Note: New garden operating in Rose City. They are partnering or plan to partner with several organizations, including: The Village Place, The Sphinx Foundation, and AR Interfaith Power and Light. The Village Place is the nonprofit who we will be cutting the check to for the garden funds. Application is complete pending their business license.

Committee was read the questions about the plan for the garden being larger than the budget would allow along with the response from the Garden Manager, Janay Flowers. Committee Member, Marcie Finney, stated the application checks all the boxes and inquired about the water source and its location. The Garden Manager, Janay Flowers, stated the house across the street was going to allow them access to water until a meter can be installed on the property. The Committee discussed this situation with answers from the garden manager. Committee had no more questions regarding the application. Dan Scott motioned to approve the funding for the amount requested in the budget of \$1,500. Jennifer Johansen seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

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Score: 19.75/21

2. The Tea House (new) –

Amount Requested: \$1,060; Amount Approved: \$ 1,500.00

Note: New garden operating in the E. Argenta neighborhood. The property will be leased from River City Ministries. Paul Wilkerson, the ED at River City, attends the neighborhood association meetings. He and the neighbors who attended the most recent meeting were excited to hear about this new garden. Application is complete.

Committee Member, Dan Scott, inquired about their watering plan. Garden Manager, Natasha Smith, said they decided to go another route. Dan Scott suggested increasing the applications budget to the max of \$1,500 to cover the cost of installing a water meter, and insisted they work with River City to cover the cost of water usage. Dan Scott had some concern over the ask for greenhouse in their budget form, stating it was premature due to their not being any other infrastructure in the area planned for the garden. The Committee discussed the cost and installation of a water meter, plumbing, and the possibility of someone stealing items out of the greenhouse. Committee agreed removing the greenhouse ask from the budget and putting the money towards a water meter. Committee stated they were excited about a garden being created in the area. Committee had no more questions regarding the application. Dan Scott motioned to approve the funding for the amount requested in the budget of \$1,500 with specific changes for no greenhouse, installing raised beds, and a water meter. Sylvia Blain seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Score: 19.50/21

3. NLR 6 Academy of Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences –

Amount Requested: \$5,000; Amount Approved: \$ 5,000.00

Note: This is a new garden, though the NLRSD is not new. This was formerly 7th Street Elementary. The school district has renamed and rededicated the school with an agri and vet focus. Their project includes chickens, aquaponics, hydroponics, and a greenhouse. Their application is complete.

Committee Member, Marcie Finney, asks the Committee if any of our policies include assistance with poultry, aquaponics, etc.? Committee Member, Sylvia Blain, suggests that as long as all of the asks are “food producing”, it will fall into the programs guidelines. The Committee discusses the pitfalls of having animals with consistent maintenance on a school property. Dan Scott broaches the subject of this being considered a new garden, because the school district is not new to the program and asks the Committee to decide if they qualify for only for a new garden \$1,500 or the full \$5,000 request. The Committee discusses and agrees that based on the extent of their application that it should be funded for the full \$5,000. Sylvia Blain asks about the greenhouse being too small. The NLRSD Representative, Heather Rhodes, answers that the area planned for the greenhouse is very small hence why they budgeted for that size. She also stated they received their chicken permit from the city of NLR. The Committee discusses the remaining budget items on the application and how they all wish for it to succeed. Committee had no more questions regarding the application. Sylvia Blain motioned to approve the funding for the full amount requested in the budget of \$5,000. Marcie Finney seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Score: 20.75/21

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4. Boone Park Elementary–

Amount Requested: \$5,000; Amount Approved: \$ 5,000.00

Note: Returning garden located next to the Baring Cross garden. They partner with that garden and with the Calm & Confidence apiary project. This is their 2nd round of funding and they are planning to expand their gardening efforts. Their focus is not just the sciences learned in the garden, but also the social aspects and the well-being of the students. Application is complete.

Committee had no questions regarding the application. Scores were discussed, and compliments were given to the Garden Manager, Xiomara Vasquez, for her efforts to manage the garden and include it in the STEAM classes she teaches. Committee had no questions regarding the application. Dan Scott motioned to approve the funding for the amount requested in the budget of \$5,000. Sylvia Blain seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Score: 20.25/21

5. Iris Park Community Garden–

Amount Requested: \$3,345; Amount Approved: \$ 3,345.00

Note: Long time garden in the program in good standing. Jennifer Johansen recently joined as the assistant garden manager. They would like to expand and improve their garden. They have included some things, such as tree trimming that our staff felt was appropriate for the garden and their situation. They plan to apply for other beautification funding from the city to help address issues that garden funding won't cover. Application is complete, pending a 2025 business license.

Committee Member, Jenifer Johansen, abstained from voting on this application as she is the assistant manager for this garden. Committee Member, Marcie Finney, stated the notes answered her question about them receiving funding from other sources to cover the cost of items not included in their budget. Jenifer Johansen informed the committee about collaborating with a local native plant distributor to supply their funding request with native plants. Sylvia mentioned how she thinks having a shed at all gardens to lock tools up was beneficial. Committee had no more questions regarding the application. Sylvia Blain motioned to approve the funding for the amount requested in the budget of \$3,345. Marcie Finney seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Score: 20/21

6. LPOA Garden –

Amount Requested: \$5,000; Amount Approved: \$ 5,000.00

Note: Returning garden in good standing. This will be their second round of funding. Their garden is still young and they are looking to recruit more members and to focus on improving their watering system. They had a few bumps in the road this past year, but are still excited to bring fresh food and community to the neighborhood. Application is complete.

Committee member, Marcie F., asked Garden Manager, Mark Shaw, about the \$2500 for water lines and spigots. Mark explained the request for the funding, and how the watering system would be designed. The Committee discussed the request for the amount of funding with Mark answering questions as they arose. Committee member, Sylvia Blain, asked about who was responsible for watering, etc. Committee member, Dan Scott, asked about the use of shade cloth being used on the garden. The

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Committee had nothing more to discuss regarding this application. Sylvia Blain motioned to approve the funding for the amount requested in the budget of \$5,000. Jenifer Johansen seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Score: 20.50/21

7. The Garden of Eating (Greater Shiloh MBC) –

Amount Requested: \$5,000; Amount Approved: \$ 5,000.00

Note: Returning garden in good standing. Their garden has been with the program for a few years and they have continually maintained, flourished, and improved. They are seeking funds to help improve and maintain their space for another year. Until the Tea House garden goes in, this is the only community garden in a neighborhood without a grocery store. All produce grown here is used! Application is complete, pending a W9 and a 2025 business license.

Committee Member, Sylvia Blain, asked about the request for funding to be used to create a container for produce that's been harvested. The Garden Manager, Rodnie Ford, answered that it was to be used to display produce given to the community as it is being harvested. Committee had no more questions regarding the application. Sylvia Blain motioned to approve the funding for the amount requested in the budget of \$5,000. Dan Scott seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Score: 20.25/21

8. Skyline Community Garden –

Amount Requested: \$2,000; Amount Approved: \$ 2,000.00

Note: Returning and long-time garden in good standing. They are requesting funds to continue to improve and maintain their garden for the coming year. Application is complete.

Committee Member, Marcie Finney, broached the topic of the program being more specific of how much money is being committed to the cost of water usage in the application process. Rachelle Kelly informed the Committee that applications and policies will be covered and updated at the April GAC meeting. Sylvia Blain asked for more time to review the last questions on the application. Sylvia Blain asked for more clarification on their education plan and how to educate the community and volunteers at the garden. The Garden Manager, Ashley Mobley, answered the question informing the committee that one of the volunteer's homeschools and while visiting the garden the volunteer's children inquire about how to garden. Ashley offered to setup a time to host a "seed starting" workshop with the students/children. Ashley also mentioned how they also send out mailers to the neighborhood to engage the community. Committee had no questions regarding the application. Marcie Finney motioned to approve the funding for the amount requested in the budget of \$2,000. Sylvia Blain seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Score: 20.25/21

9. Calm & Confidence/Urban Patchwork Apiary Garden –

Amount Requested: \$5,000; Amount Approved: \$ 5,000.00

Note: Returning garden in good standing. They are located within the Baring Cross Community Garden. They have been successful over the past year in harvesting honey with the students at Boone Park

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Elementary and were able to send lots of honey home with them, even though they only harvested from half of the hives. They are seeking funds to expand and improve their current project and would like to involve more neighbors as well as students. They work closely with our garden program at Baring Cross and would like to plan events in the coming year. Application is complete, pending a 2025 business license.

Committee Member, Dan Scott, asked for clarification on which name the funding check would need to be made out to as there was 3 different names listed on the application. The Apiary Garden Manager, Lauren Anderson, stated to use Urban Patchwork as the name as it is the name of their 501(3) C. The Committee discussed the ask for funding to be used to attend the 2026 AR Grown Convention as a presenter as an opportunity to highlight their garden/business/the program. Committee Member, Sylvia Blain, asked about the policy for offering funds for training. Dan Scott agreed that it was beneficial for the program to pay for training. Committee had no more questions regarding the application. Dan Scott motioned to approve the funding for the amount requested in the budget of \$5,000. Jenifer Johansen seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Score: 20.50/21

Final Reviews and Votes (30 minutes)

There will be time for the committee to have a brief final review of each garden, then there will need to be a motion and a second made from committee members, and a call for votes. Committee members are voting to recommend funding to the NLR City Council. Each garden will have ~3 minutes.

1. Urban Sol Community Garden

___Dan Scott___ motioned to recommend funding for the Urban Sol Community Garden in the amount of \$_1,500__.

___Jennifer Johansen___seconded the motion.

Aye votes: All in Favor

Nay votes: 0

2. The Tea House Community Garden

___Dan Scott___ motioned to recommend funding for The Tea House Community Garden in the amount of \$_1,500__.

___Sylvia Blain___seconded the motion.

Aye votes: All in Favor

Nay votes: 0

Notes: Dan Scott proposed to increase the funding ask to the full \$1,500 to cover the cost of installing a water meter at this new garden.

3. NLR 6 Academy

___Sylvia Blain___ motioned to recommend funding for the NLR 6 Academy Community Garden in the amount of \$_5,000__.

___Marcie Finney___seconded the motion.

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Aye votes: All in Favor

Nay votes: 0

Notes: Committee agreed to allow the school district to receive the full \$5,000 ask instead of the \$1,500 limit for "new" gardens. Committee agree due to the NLRSD not being new to the program that it qualified for full funding on any gardens within the district; established or "new".

4. Boone Park Elementary

__Dan Scott__ motioned to recommend funding for the Boone Park Elementary Community Garden in the amount of \$_5,000__.

__Sylvia Blain__ seconded the motion.

Aye votes: All in Favor

Nay votes: 0

5. Iris Park Community Garden

__Sylvia Blain__ motioned to recommend funding for the Iris Park Community Garden in the amount of \$_3,335__.

__Marcie Finney__ seconded the motion.

Aye votes: All in Favor

Nay votes: 0

Notes: Jennifer Johansen abstained from voting.

6. LPOA Community Garden

__Sylvia Blain__ motioned to recommend funding for the LPOA Community Garden in the amount of \$_5,000__.

__Jennifer Johansen__ seconded the motion.

Aye votes: All in Favor

Nay votes: 0

7. Garden of Eating

__Sylvia Blain__ motioned to recommend funding for the Garden of Eating Community Garden in the amount of \$_5,000__.

__Dan Scott__ seconded the motion.

Aye votes: All in Favor

Nay votes: 0

8. Skyline Community Garden

__Marcie Finney__ motioned to recommend funding for the Skyline Community Garden in the amount of \$_2,000__.

__Sylvia Blain__ seconded the motion.

Aye votes: All in Favor

Nay votes: 0

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9. Calm & Confidence Apiary Project at Baring Cross

__Dan Scott__ motioned to recommend funding for the Calm & Confidence Apiary Community Garden in the amount of \$_5,000__.

__Jennifer Johansen__seconded the motion.

Aye votes: All in Favor

Nay votes: 0

Notes: Committee voted to allow \$950.00 budgeted for this garden to attend and present at the 2026 Arkansas Grown Conference.