

DRAFT MINUTES



CITY OF SHELTON
Shelton Community Gardens Ad Hoc Committee
Monday, May 24, 2010
7:00 p.m., Room 104 – Shelton City Hall



Roll Call

Chairperson Mary King, present
Guy Beardsley, absent
Teresa Gallagher, Conservation Agent, present
Linda Hooper, present
Mary King, present
Sharna Kozak, present
Alison Menendez, absent
Stacia Monahan, present (arrived 7:06 p.m.)

Other Persons Present

Kelly Walsh, volunteer

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mary King at 7:05 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag by all members present.

Teresa Gallagher indicated that Kelly Walsh was present. She is a big volunteer for Eklund Gardens and the Trails, and she has offered to help with deer fencing.

Public Portion

No one from the public was present to address the Committee.

OLD BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – 5/10/10

On a motion made by Teresa Gallagher seconded by Mary King, it was voted (4-0) to approve the minutes of April 26, 2010. Linda Hooper abstained from voting.

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SITE DISCUSSION

Deer Fencing

Teresa Gallagher indicated that she put in for a PO for the deer fence and if it is approved by the end of the month (next Monday), then they get the fencing materials. They were asked to call ahead because there has been a big run on deer fencing this year and the manufacturer has had difficulty keeping it in stock.

Sharna Kozac asked if it was wholesale or retail.

Teresa responded that it was retail but she priced it out last year and the prices were very good for specialty, agricultural-quality in the color orange and she received a discount. She got those materials for Eklund but she will have to install the fence differently than she did there. Without having trees like she did there, they will have to install it with 5x5 posts on the four corners which they can get at a lumber store. For the gates they are going to have to have either 4x4 or 5x5. Teresa suggested that they go to Eklund Gardens to take a look at the fences and posts there. The gates have to be very sturdy and they can be tricky to put in. The gates have to be assembled and they painted them black so that they would look nicer. The gates are separate at \$75.00/each. They have one extra from Eklund; they probably need two. She wants to keep it under \$1000 to prevent going out for a re-quote. They may not need any more than that. They can always be added at some point. Teresa commented that she didn't think it was significantly more work to add them one year from now as opposed to when they first put them in.

Sharna asked if that they are expecting this fencing to be permanent. Teresa responded that it would be semi-permanent.

Kelly Walsh asked if they would be interested in any galvanized pipe rather than wood because she works for a steel company and can look into the price. It would be the pipe part of a chain-link fence that comes in 21 footers.

Stacia commented that they would be just as strong as wood and wouldn't rot.

They determined where the gates would go up on the site map.

Teresa mentioned that they would need a spot wide enough for a vehicle to get in. She indicated that they would need to make a removable section of the fence that doesn't have the wire on the top and the bottom and get a thin piece of board, staple the fencing on to that and pull so that there is an eyelet that attaches to the post.

Sharna asked who is going to mow around the perimeter of the fence.

Mary King responded that at the gardens on the Cape the gardeners are assigned to bring in a mower and every week or every two weeks, two or three people take care of mowing outside of the fence.

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Sharna commented that she went up to the Derby gardens and was surprised by what she saw. She indicated that she can understand why residents are concerned because it is somewhat chaotic looking. Everyone puts up their own fencing and it has a very rustic look to it and the grass is high like hay. Teresa commented that it grows very quickly on the trails too. She asked if it was hayed by somebody once before. So do they continue to have them plow the fields?

Linda Hooper responded that it is still going to be. You don't do it weekly, you hay now and then hay it again until it grows back.

Teresa asked if it was a big deal that there was long grass near the fence because it is a hayfield. He can't hit right up to the fence anyway.

Mary suggested that if the garden is a success and in the following year, if people want to return that's when you begin to (inaudible) and set a schedule

Plowing/Tilling

Stacia stated, in regard to the tilling, they were surprised at the lack of rocks. Their harrow is too wide to drive across town on the city streets. Dean Cawthra offered Fred to use his tiller and hopefully, it can be done this week. They have a lot of their own planting to do this week and they are trying to get everything done that they can get done over there. She hopes that by the end of this week it will be tilled and then they can start marking off plots.

Someone indicated that they can do that before the deer fence is completely up and get in there and start working.

Sign-Ups

Sharna asked if the plots are dirt ready by the end of the week, how are they going to go about selecting the people to sign up. Is it just going to be the first 30 people who were on the list?

Teresa suggested taking the first 30, 40 or 50 people on the list and say that they can sign up/register first at say, 6 or 7 o'clock and then at 7:30 the next people eligible on the list can sign up.

Stacia commented that it would be a waste of their time though if they fill the 30 plots, so maybe they should do it a couple days later to fill any extra plots or contact people differently.

Sharna stated that they need to get a feel for what the participation level is. She suggested calling these people to find out if they are still interested.

Mary agreed that they may rethink it once they realize that they're going on vacation, or maybe it is too much to do.

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Stacia agreed that a quick call to everyone to see if they're still interested sounded good – or do they have to email it?

Teresa indicated that she has sent emails out to let people know what is happening. She let them know that they are only going to have 30 plots. They started with about 70 people pre-registered.

Sharna clarified that there are 89 people pre-registered.

Teresa responded that it's 89 people - that expressed interest.

Stacia added that (inaudible) she has talked to customers that come to her stand and they are very excited about it. There is a need for it.

Teresa commented that she would send something out stating that they expect that not everyone who pre-registered is still interested because of various reasons. They should probably be up front that the neighbors still have no access signs out in front of their houses.

Stacia suggested sending the email out stating all the facts and everything that is going on and asking those still really interested to respond and then take that total number.

Sharna indicated that she would do that and e-mail all 89 people individually. Stacia suggested doing a bcc and sending the same thing to everybody and they can just reply to her and they won't know who else got it.

Sharna stated that she would do that so that they could determine how many people are really interested. It was decided to start with those those that signed up first and Shelton residents only for right now.

Linda asked Sharna if she was really going to take care of all 89 people. Sharna responded yes, she would contact all 89 people and find out if they are or are not interested and then they'll have a master list.

Everyone agreed that they liked the staggered registration process to prevent all the plots from running out at once.

Mary suggested that she should go in order from the top of the list according to who pre-registered first.

Teresa indicated that she thought it was important that the people who registered months ago are taken ahead of people who just found out about it.

Linda asked if they were doing Shelton residents only.

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Teresa responded that it was decided that Shelton residents would be first. If there are extra plots, they can have non-residents at a higher fee.

Linda suggested starting with the top thirty and if they get ten that aren't interested, then move down the list to the next ten.

Stacia added that for those that there is no room left for, they could send a message indicating what the plans are for next year, apologize about this year, keep it in mind and volunteer if you want to help get this one up and going.

Teresa commented that if they have people who are willing to do some heavy labor, such as with the fence, then those people should get signed up even if they weren't the first. They could even ask people if they pledge to come out and volunteer then they can move up on the list. They need tall, strong people because putting in the deer fence is vigorous work. The fencing itself is 7 ½ feet and it is awkward to work with.

Stakes

Mary asked how they will mark the plots once Fred is out of there. They will need stakes to mark the gardens and she priced some small 3 foot wooden stakes at Agway and they want \$1.50/stake; about \$40 for 25 stakes.

Teresa asked if they were going to stay in the ground all summer.

Mary responded not necessarily. They can use them over again though. People might just want to put a pile of rocks there as long as they are marking their corners.

Teresa commented that there are no rocks there. Linda suggested using spray paint to outline them.

Sharna suggested bamboo stakes at about 99 cents but they would have to get someone to cut them.

Mary added that there is always old fencing, stockade fencing (inaudible).

Teresa asked how many they need.

Mary responded that she thinks about 100.

Teresa stated that they won't need them at the aisles at the end (inaudible).

Sharna counted the plots on the site plan and determined that they need 75 of them and that designates all four corners of each plot. They discussed getting something uniform in appearance.

Sharna asked Mary if she would look into getting the stakes. Mary responded that a bundle of 25 costs \$39 – they'll probably be really durable.

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Mary indicated that they would come out because they aren't going to be a four season garden as far as she could see – at least not this year. She thinks everything will have to be out – all string, stakes, tomato cages, old vines, etc. and they can be repositioned the next year.

There was further discussion about staking alternatives to mark all four corners such as stones, bamboo, paint sticks, etc.

Teresa indicated that she would look for 3 foot stakes at Wal-mart or Home Depot, put it on her credit card and get reimbursed.

Stacia suggested the bamboo stakes at about 99 cents.

Sharna indicated that she's seen them at Odd Lot, Big Lots, Wal-Mart, Costco, Lowe's, etc.

Mary commented that it is difficult to get the bamboo stakes to drive into the soil because the soil goes up the middle of it.

Stacia responded that when they need fence post, they cut down cedar trees and use a table saw to slice off one end at an angle for a point.

Sharna stated that they should number these plots so that at the center of the plot there is a stake that says 1, 2, 3, etc. So they need stakes that they could number.

Stacia suggested paint sticks from Home Depot

Animals

There was a discussion about the possibility of animals getting into the garden and some preventative measures. Teresa expressed concern about the animals that can get under the fencing. The deer and turkey can be kept out with the fencing but the woodchucks and rabbits may require them to dig deeper with the fencing and use chicken wire.

Stacia commented that the best way to keep crows away is to kill a few and leave them on the edge of the property to deter the other crows.

Rules

Sharna asked Mary if she could get the long list of rules from the Milford Community Garden in an electronic format so that she could modify it.

Mary responded that there was another list of garden rules that are basic and useable for them. They can be modified each year as needed as problems arise year to year.

Teresa reiterated that the rules, the application should all be ready to go so if they decide to do a registration tomorrow – everything is done.

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Mary commented that there will be a list of rules ready to go with the applications and would make copies of it.

Teresa indicated that she asked about an account for them but right now it is a difficult time of year for the Accounting Department. Checks would be made payable to the City of Shelton.

Linda suggested keeping track of everything that they get. Teresa added that they are really going to need their own account though.

Gardening without Water

Gardeners need to understand that mulching is going to be a very important thing. Teresa commented that they may or may not have water later, there is no guarantee. Everyone agreed that it is important that all the gardeners are aware of that.

Mary added that it may change some people's minds about doing it. Teresa added that she had to do that with Eklund last year. There may be water later on but there are no guarantees. People need to know this going in so they aren't upset later on.

Sharna suggested that they should let people know that there is no water available. Stacia suggested using gallon jugs and bringing them in the trunk of the car.

Teresa stressed that people need to know about the water going into this so that they aren't upset later on.

Mary commented that she would strongly suggest mulching – chopped leaves, beach grass, etc.

Stacia indicated that they should not use mulch hay because of the grass and weed seeds. Chopped weeds, grass clippings, landscaping paper, newspaper, black plastic are good to keep the weeds down. Straw is fine because the seeds are removed but not mulch hay.

Sharna asked if straw, newspaper, black plastic, chopped leaves – are these the only approved mulch. Stacia responded that they are suggestions; people are going to do what they want but if they put down regular mulch hay (inaudible) there is going to be a hayfield in their garden.

In regard to fertilizers, Mary commented that Miracle Grow is the only synthetic that they are going to OK.

Stacia suggested any water soluble or granular. Many people are probably going to use the slow release which is OK. Organic and non-organic is OK.

Sharna suggested that this should be a part of the information provided to the list of people interested – the lack of the water, the fertilizers types, etc.

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Teresa reiterated that they need to know about the neighborhood signs. Mary suggested that they be told that they need to observe the speed limit and respect the neighborhood. She suggested that it be added to the rules of conduct list as well. Additionally, it will provide them some leverage if there are complaints about cars speeding through the neighborhood.

End of Tape 1A 7:52 p.m.

Mary commented that she would really like to see this be a success this year despite all the glitches, no water, a late start – because the soil is good there, with no rocks.

Stacia commented that Dean came back very surprised that there was no rock.

There was further discussion about the criteria for who should have plots first including – Long Hill Avenue area residents, volunteers, first come/first serve, etc.

Linda commented that they shouldn't separate people who aren't able to volunteer from those who do – because they signed up to do the garden not to be volunteers. No one should be put in a different lottery because they aren't volunteering. As soon as they tell people that they have to bring their own water and stuff that is going to weed out a lot of people out who aren't interested in carrying water across town.

Someone suggested that they set aside two or three or five plots just for Long Hill residents and Longview residents because if they have a plot they are more likely to care about what goes on there and because there were people present at the meetings who liked the garden idea but not the access idea.

Stacia agreed and suggested 5 plots for that neighborhood because if they have plots, they are more likely to care about what is going on there.

Mary indicated that she won't be at the meetings for a few weeks because she'll be at the Cape for the summer. She'll have the Rules of Conduct prepared and ready to go. Teresa offered to make copies of everything that is done.

There was a further discussion about how adherence to the rules will be mandatory for garden members including speed limit, respecting the neighborhood, etc.

Stacia stated that somewhere in the rules it needs to be stated that there are consequences of not following the rules – they'll lose their plot.

They discussed the possibility of having to make adjustments to the plot assignments if some people are physically unable to get to their assigned plot or require help from someone closer to their plot. Also they talked about accommodating neighbors, family or friends that wanted to have plots near each other.

Adjournment

On a motion made by Stacia Monahan seconded by Linda Hooper, it was unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karin C. Tuke

Clerk, Community Gardens Ad Hoc Committee

Tape (1) on File with the City Town Clerk's Office.