



SHELTON COMMUNITY GARDENS COMMITTEE

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Meeting Minutes, Monday, September 10, 2018

Present: Sharna Kozak, Allison Menendez, Patty VanSickle, Teresa Gallagher, Theresa Syc, Ann Singletary

Absent: Mary King

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Chairman Sharna Kozak.

1. Meeting Minutes: Patty VanSickle made a motion to approve the minutes for April 9, 2018. Seconded by Allison Menendez. All were in favor.

2. Public Portion. No one wished to speak.

3. 2019 Meeting Dates: Theresa Syc made a motion to adopt the following meeting dates for 2019: February 11, March 11, April 8, September 9 and October 28. All dates are the second Monday of the month with the exception of the October meeting. All meetings will be held at City Hall in Room 104. Seconded by Allison Menendez. All were in favor.

Allison Menendez said she would try to find a speaker for the February meeting.

4. Shelton Lakes Garden (Soundview). Sharna Kozak noted that the house has been rented out, and there is a problem with garage. The Mayor had said the Garden Committee could continue using the lower level to store supplies, but the new tenant has filled it with personal items, apparently because the upper level is filled with City surplus office equipment. She is afraid to open the lower level and retrieve garden supplies because it would now be trespassing. Teresa Gallagher said she spoke with the Mayor's assistant Cyndee about the issue but has not heard back.

Sharna Kozak continued that a second issue is the septic and whether that could impact the garden now that someone is in the house. And third, there is an erosion problem with the new drive down to the garden. The driveway cut is channeling stormwater runoff from Soundview Ave down the driveway. Allison Menendez said she would try and set up a meeting with the Mayor to discuss these issues.

Beans and delayed planting: Sharna Kozak reported that the delayed planting is not working at Shelton Lakes. Bean beetles were terrible. The delayed planting works at Long Hill, but not Shelton Lakes. Teresa Gallagher said she thinks there are organic gardens nearby at Shelton Lakes, and that's why it's not working. The bugs travel to the surrounding gardens early in the season, then

migrate to the community garden after everything is planted. At Long Hill, there are no organic gardens nearby, so the bugs die or go far away. She suggested having delayed planting only at Long Hill. Another possibility is to have a one year moratorium at Shelton Lakes, which is something Mary King said they did at the community garden she runs at Cape Cod. Sharna Kozak said she would do two sets of rules, one for Long Hill and one for Shelton Lakes.

Garden Captains, Inspections, and Rules: Garden Captain Theresa Syc asked about height restrictions, since there is some very tall corn at Shelton Lakes that is shading other plots. Sharna Kozak read the applicable rule, which states that crops cannot be planted so that they shade out neighboring plots. It's in the rules, so it's a matter of the Garden Captain staying on top of the situation and talking to the plot holder. The Garden Captain/inspection routine doesn't seem to be working at Shelton Lakes. Allison Menendez noted it's been a very difficult year with the heat and rain. Teresa Gallagher agreed. Theresa Syc was only able to do one garden inspection due to the heat.

Sharna Kozak and Theresa Syc thought inspection-related emails would carry more weight coming from Teresa Gallagher and her City of Shelton email address. Teresa Gallagher agreed. Issues that require a warning will be forwarded to her and she will email the plot holder. Sharna Kozak and Theresa Syc will do the inspections together and email the results to Teresa Gallagher.

Sharna Kozak said it was also important to send out reminders via a bulletin. Teresa Gallagher does that at Long Hill but not Shelton Lakes because she doesn't have a plot there and does not want to interfere with any communications that may be taking place. Allison Menendez said it was important to be upbeat and positive with the bulletins. Teresa Gallagher agreed, saying gardening was supposed to be fun. Sharna Kozak said she would do some bulletins for Shelton Lakes. However, there are times when she needs other Committee members to step up and contribute.

5. Long Hill Garden (Longview). Sharna Kozak stated that she wanted to have work parties at both gardens sometime around the end of October. If anyone has an item that should be addressed during the work party, let her know and she'll add it to the list. Teresa Gallagher said she could not commit to any events in September or October.

Inspections: Garden Captain Teresa Gallagher conducted two inspections so far. She said it was very effective to let people know ahead of time when the inspection would be. Most gardeners are pretty consistent and don't worry about the inspections, but there are a few plot holders who tend to get very weedy plots, and those inspections motivate them to clean up the plot. There is one existing gardener this year who had some family issues and has not maintained their plot. Several of the new gardeners were pretty marginal attending to their weeds, but this was a very difficult year to start a garden. She said she has spoken with several gardeners over the summer about various issues.

Rules: Patty VanSickle noted she had to speak with a couple of gardeners who let their dogs run loose inside the fenced area. Teresa Gallagher said she also had to speak with one of the new gardeners about that issue. She had to speak to a gardener about keeping her voice down. The new plots are located closer to the houses at the end of Longview Drive. Sharna Kozak read the rule that states gardeners are supposed to keep noise to a minimum. Teresa Gallagher said she would send out a reminder.

Deer gates: Teresa Gallagher said there had been a rabbit and a cat inside the deer fence more than once. She repaired holes in the fence at each gate multiple time, but it looks like people are hitting the fencing with the wheelbarrow and punching new holes in it very quickly. The gates need some kind of kick guard.

Road gate: Sharna Kozak noted that when the hayfield is not too tall, the mailman drives into the field and then does a loop around the garden. She also experienced an unauthorized man in a pickup truck drive in and park, saying he was looking for his dog. She thought perhaps gardeners might want to lock the road gate while they are in the garden.

6. Nells Rock Garden (Dog Park). Allison Menendez she has received some complaints about the garden looking weedy. Sharna Kozak that she had heard compliments about the shade garden. People are probably focused on how the main bed looks when they drive by. When you go into the Dog Park, it looks good. Allison Menendez said that people liked it when zinnias were planted, but those are annual and require a lot of work, so she tried some perennials. At this point she would like the entire bed to be dug up so she can start over, but she would need help from Parks & Rec to dig everything up. She wants to go back to some zinnias and maybe some perennials as well.

Allison Menendez said she's been having trouble getting volunteers. How can we get volunteers? Teresa Gallagher said the Anti-Litter Committee had asked for a webpage on the City site dedicated to community service opportunities because it's difficult for people to find community service opportunities even while various departments are looking for volunteers. The main "community service" page would have links to whatever departments need volunteers, such as the library or trails, and each link would have information on how to volunteer for that department. Sharna Kozak said the idea of a community service platform was good and said that Griffin Hospital has an excellent platform for attracting volunteers.

7. Eklund Garden. Teresa Gallagher said the garden has been pretty weedy this year, but the rustic style of the garden amongst the ruins is such that it's not that important when it gets overgrown. She said she did spend a lot of time repairing the deer fence after the February storm, and there is another section that needs repair.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 pm.

Meeting minutes were prepared by Teresa Gallagher.