

HOLDEN COMMUNITY GARDEN COMMITTEE

October 20, 2020

Mission Statement:

The Holden Community Garden Committee is a volunteer organization working to provide and support Holden residents, individually and collectively, to grow food, flowers, fruits, and herbs on town land including the redeveloped property on Highland Street. Our efforts will enable residents to enjoy the beauty of our town while developing a sense of community through cooperative action, learning about sustainable and environmentally conscious gardening as well as ethical harvesting.

The Holden Community Garden Committee also exists to foster the education of the children of Holden through the support of community gardens in local schools and community groups. These gardens will help to develop the appreciation of future generations for the importance of agriculture and responsible environmental practices, and provide education and positive experiences through gardening and physical activity.

In Attendance: Jessica Cosenza, Chair; Members: Katye Brier, Julie McCarthy, Michael Trigianno, Gina Tutela

Absent: Tracy Acito (absent until joining meeting for discussion of updating applications)

Community Members: Sujatha Koduvayer, Mark Thorngren

Meeting called to order at 6:03 pm.

AGENDA

The minutes of the September 3, 2020 meeting was reviewed.

Motion #1

To approve the 9-3-20 HCG Minutes

Voted and Approved.

Sign Project

Jessica Cosenza verified that all members had received a copy of the last budget proposal as submitted by Marcia Hastbacka, and the email from John Woodsmall which reviewed the garden budget and funding considerations for our 2021 season. Jessica Cosenza and Katye Brier presented a review on discussions with the local sign company to get quotes: 3'x4' double faced wooden hand carved sign with vinyl end caps, installed. \$1388 quoted. If the committee votes to approve, we can move forward with a quote to the DPW, deposit, pick location with DPW guidance, and receive a sign permit from the Building Commissioner.

All members and participants had an opportunity to consider and discuss other items that may require funding during the 2021 season. \$195.40 remains on the gift card from Fiskar Grant. Table improvements should not require more money to complete per Mike Kendrick, as noted in his email to the chair this week. Soil testing is being scheduled for a \$40 fee through the Worcester County Soil Conservation District. Consideration for soil amendments will be made after results are received. Group agrees to use remaining funds/see sources of donation for added amendments as required. It is uncertain at this time if the town would allow the committee to seek a monetary donor for the sign or other projects. Email went out to Geri Herlihy to request a review with the Town Manager's office but

reply not yet received at the time of this discussion. Previous donations fell under the DPW general funding, as noted in discussions at prior meetings.

Motion #2

To approve the proposal for budget spending on the sign project, requesting the full cost to be funded by the DPW from the Buildings and Ground Operation Budget. Motion by Michael Triggiano. Voted and approved by all members, none opposed.

Initial Discussion of 2021 Budget Items

Jessica reviewed the budget for the Fiscal Year 20-21, and advised that our November meeting should focus on creating a budget proposal for 21-22. The committee should prepare for a very lean year. As our applications have never outnumbered our available plots, we do not currently plan to expand the garden in FY 21-22 (which would require loam, land preparation costs, as well the addition of another water tower system). Discussed focus on soil improvements which may be funded through the remaining money on the Fiskar Gift Card, as noted above, and consideration of ornamental features that may be funded through available grants. Further discussion and proposal preparation will be tabled to the next meeting.

Girl Scout Project Update

Julie McCarthy presented Marissa Pratt, a Girl Scout and Senior at WRHS. Marissa would like to propose a project to improve the nature pathways in the wooded areas on the garden grounds. She has a keen interest in the appreciation and preservation of the natural environments of the wooded areas adjacent to the garden. She envisions creating clear paths, a scavenger hunt, and nature info plaques. Gina and Jessica asked questions to clarify the site, and presented information indicating the committee's strong desire to have this project move forward with a dedicated volunteer (as it had been approved previously for 2 different scouts who could not complete the project for personal reasons). Jessica and Julie will meet with Marissa on site this weekend to do a walk through of the area and discuss initial ideas that she can consider for her proposal.

The compost unit guide for use has been emailed to participants. Julie will continue working on and supervising the projects. No request for community or committee assistance at this time.

Davis Hill Update

Gina reports that she found the trail camera on one of the picnic tables in the garden on 10/15/20. A text had been sent to Mr. Norton at the time of the finding, but a reply has not been received. Katie and Gina suggest a follow up email to Mr. Norton at this time. Jessica agrees and will send with cc to Katie.

Raised Bed Updates

Mike Kendrick to get a team together to fix beds before the snow falls. No additional funds requested. Discussed soil removal and means to save for future use. Gina to bring a bucket to the site to hold soil until it can be replaced.

Community Harvest Update

Gina Tutela to collect again for Wachusett Food Pantry November 20th. We will continue to coordinate with members to request donations throughout the winter and spring months, as a continued outreach project.

Motion #3

To allow use of our Facebook page and email to participants to request donations for the Wachusett Food Pantry throughout the off season, as coordinated and collected by Gina Tutela. Voted and approved without opposition.

Closing the Garden 2020/2021 Applications

All participants will be asked to clear the garden plots of any unnecessary plants, dead/rotting vegetables or fruits. Jessica to send an email. Healthy plants can be pulled and placed in the compost bin. Care should be taken to avoid placing diseased/infested plants into the compost bin, in order to avoid re-introduction of pests and disease in coming years. The compost piles at the back of the garden edge can continue to be the site for dumping weeds. Tracy will research removal and burning of tomato plants as she introduced this idea as a possible recommendation from a nearby nursery.

Jessica to email out the previous application for review. Katye will update the logo, and all committee members will come to the next meeting with any other ideas for changes that seem necessary on the 2021 application. Current participants will be allowed to indicate if they plan to come back, and a date for the official opening of application acceptance cycle will be decided at next meeting.

Next Meeting

Jessica will request the next meeting date of November 17 @6:00pm, with plan to request a Zoom link for the meeting to be held remotely. Will plan to discuss update on sign, application cycle for 2021, soil sample results if available, fundraising and ornamental ideas.

Adjourned 6:58 pm