

HOLDEN COMMUNITY GARDEN COMMITTEE

July 19, 2021

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: Julie McCarthy, Mike Trigiano, Gina Tutela
Absent: Katye Brier, Tracy Acito (noted to resign)

Meeting called to order at 6:31 pm.

AGENDA

Julie did not attend the June 14 meeting. Unable to vote on minutes. Tabled to next meeting.

Sign/Seating Project/budget discussion

As per the vote at the last meeting, we have moved forward with ordering a bench and ADA accessible picnic table through the DPW instead of the large wooden sign. Order has been placed.

The temporary sign that was at the front of the property is no longer present and has not been recovered. Jessica asked the group if members would like to request replacing the temporary sign (as produced by a local resident Christina Dale), or leave the area without signage.

Motion #1

To approve the request to Christina Dale to create a replacement sign, explore cost.

Approved unanimously.

There is \$68.12 left on the card from the Fiskars Grant. Michael has asked that we consider purchasing more diatomaceous earth and a beetle control system (bag type).

Motion #2

To approve the use of Fiskar Funds to purchase items for organic insect control on site. Michael will use the card to purchase locally

Approved unanimously.

Girl Scout Project Update

Julie will be weeding out the front area and does invite help. Jessica will send out an email and post to Facebook for help this weekend. Julie has arranged for funds from the scouts to pay for stone to be delivered. She will also need help laying weed block and spreading stone.

There is the loam pile still present, some of which will be used to fill the beds in this area. That area needs to be weeded. The DPW is unable to help with this as noted by Chris when meeting previously with Jessica and Gina. Gina has done some research but is still uncertain about the nature of the weeds and the best way to remove them. Jessica will reach out to the contact at the USDA and Worcester Conservation Council to request advice.

Grant Updates

As above- Fiskars Grant funds remain and will be used for insect control.

There is \$81.93 remaining of the Worcester Garden Club grant funding. This will be used for perennials once Katye and Jessica have time to work with Chris on ordering these. Thus far, the remainder of the W.G.C. funds have been used for the fresh loam this year and the laminating system. Jessica will follow-up with Katye on the status of laminating signs (she is currently away) and offer help and support if needed to have signs posted regarding the areas where dogs should not be allowed, composting guidelines, and community bed use. Julie/Jessica will work to continue the perennial list to have plants labeled. Plot markers have been placed, but one is showing signs that the adhesive may not be working. Mike suggested considering bamboo stakes for this.

The garden was gifted new metal watering cans from George Klicka. He has been thanked in person and by email. The group was appreciative and recognize his contribution! A written Thank You note will be sent.

Davis Hill/School Updates

Jessica noted that the kindergarten beds seem to be wearing, and the top of the frames are falling down. Concerns for safety. Jessica to return to the garden to check for the extent of the damage and report to Katye and Gina about potential for structural issues and ideas to improve.

Jessica also let Mr. Norton know that there was a broken bottle at the entry of the garden today. He has agreed to request that custodial staff remove the broken glass.

The main area shows signs of graffiti on the picnic tables. We can try to remove it or repaint it.

The compost bin still has not been found or reported on by Mr. Norton.

The main area also shows some signs that the families may not be using the beds regularly. There are also weeds along the perimeter that need to be removed. Jessica still does not have contact information for the second family, just some texts from when they were getting started. Katye has the information which needs to be provided to the Town Managers office and forwarded to Jessica. Jessica will then try to follow-up with the families to check on their experience thus far, ask if there are any improvements to consider.

Community Harvest Update

Gina Tutela will continue collecting for the Wachusett Food Pantry. A social media post will make note that we will be collecting on the 3rd Friday of the month for senior distribution (including fresh produce)

or the 3rd Saturday of the month for general distribution. Volunteers can contact Gina for information on where to drop off donations. If there is surplus on other weeks, consider donations to the senior center.

Old and New Business

1. Tracy Acito has resigned. Jessica let her know that she needs to contact the Town Manager's office. There are 2 open seats as well as an opening for participation from anyone on the Agricultural Committee. Jessica to let all participants know that these seats are open via an email notice.
2. The issue of the extra plantings in the perimeter area has been resolved. The garden member who had planted outside of her plot removed the extra plants.
3. Mike would like help with the community harvesting bed- weeding and laying weed block this weekend. Gina will help. Jessica will reach out to the participants and as for additional assistance with this and with weeding along walking paths and the fruit patch.
4. Jessica checked with the Town Manager's office and was told that we are invited to use the Starbard building for meetings if we like, but we can also continue to meet at the garden if we prefer. Gina and Jessica both voiced concerns about the Covid virus and risk of meeting indoors with the Delta Variant on the rise. For this reason, we will continue to meet outdoors or by Zoom if the weather does not allow. All were in agreement.

Next Meeting

August 9 at 6pm at the Garden.

Adjourned 7:28 pm