

HOLDEN COMMUNITY GARDEN COMMITTEE

February 8, 2023

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 present: Katye Brier, Wayne Dodge, Aleel Grennan, Julie McCarthy; joining by phone: Michael Mazloff, Gina Tutela; Selectman Tom Curran; garden participant George Klicka

Meeting called to order at 6:19

The committee recognized Tom Curran who joined us and announced his assignment to the Community Garden Committee. Introductions of all members present were completed. We welcome his participation and look forward to working with him.

AGENDA

The minutes of the January 18, 2023 meeting were reviewed.

Motion #1

To approve the December 18, 2023 HCG Minutes

Voted and Approved.

APPLICATION 2023 update

Applications from returning gardeners have filled all plots already. We are hoping to fill the raised beds present (Jessica to reach out to prior applicants), build and assign the next raised beds to be funded by the MassCultural Council grant, and build out the expansion as proposed to allow further applicants to garden with us in 2023. The overhead photo was discussed, highlighting the area that was prepped in the fall. That should allow for 3-4 new beds in 2023, pending further loam to allow the area to be built up and gardened with a no-till method. Further prep would be required to ready additional plots, with the goal of 23 plots total in 2023.

IRRIGATION SYSTEM- COLLABORATION WITH WRHS

Aleel is working with the staff of the MakerSpace/Engineering Classes. Those classes will be participating in the design and build of the irrigation system. Aleel will follow up now that the new semester has begun. Michael is awaiting confirmation of the proposal in order to move forward with researching funding opportunities and news to the public.

BUDGET & GRANT PROPOSAL UPDATES

The Town Budget proposal has been reviewed. This will be sent to Tom Curran for review and discussion with the Town Manager's office. Additional Grant opportunities may be available if a collaboration with the High School becomes active. Aleel and Michael will work on drafting an agreement defining the collaboration and showing our active relationship with the school and students.

Michael would like to write a publication for the local newspapers (Landmark and Telegram) to reach the public about the work being done, the opportunities to participate, and the need for funding. A draft was circulated for review and Michael would like edits before the next meeting. Michael feels that if we could get donations from individual contributors, we may be able to reach our goals of expansion. Jessica communicated that the \$25 application fee goes to the overall building and grounds budget for maintenance; it is not available for spending on projects. Jessica has also reached out to Jessica Chase of the Holden Cultural Council for an update on funding the MCC grant. No details received so far on process or timeline.

DAVIS HILL WINTER/SPRING PROJECTS

There is nothing currently announced at the school for winter after school sessions. Max Tutela is ready to move forward. He plans to start a GoFundMe. He will return to speak at a future meeting once a plan to start is established. Aleel is still interested in starting a mushroom project at the school garden. Katye and Jessica will work on signage that highlights sensory stimulation in the garden, as well as the pollinator preservation projects in place. A seed library was discussed. If a scout is interested in finding a community project, this would be a good project to suggest. We do have seeds available. Katye may reach out to Mr. Norton to publish an update in a future newsletter, inviting students and families to reach out if they are interested in receiving seeds to start on their own.

COMMUNITY HARVESTING UPDATES

Gina will be available next weekend for bringing items to the food pantry. Ethical harvesting in 2023 was discussed and will continue to be encouraged throughout the growing season.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Julie announced that the Girl Scout Bridging Ceremony will take place June 2, 2023. The scouts have requested to perform the ceremony at the garden bridge.

Motion #2

To approve the use of the garden property for the Girl Scout Bridging Ceremony on June 2, 2023.

Voted and Approved.

Julie will follow up. She has a leadership meeting next month. The ceremony went very well last year and the grounds were appreciated by the attendees.

Jessica reminded the group that the Town of Holden 2022 Committee Annual Reports are due by the end of March. To be included will be photos and descriptions of 2022 garden events including the Spring/Fall Clean Up, Yoga, Bridging Ceremony, Eagle Scout Table project, Sign Placement, and Michael's work with the senior living communities.

Jessica brought up a question received from a participant regarding Miracle Grow. The group is unanimous in agreement that Miracle Grow products are not allowed to be used at the garden, as their composition is chemical based, and the parent company historically does not support healthy environmental practices.

ADJOURNMENT: 6:50; NEXT MEETING: 3/22/23 at 6:15 in the Starbard Meeting Room