

Goldenrod Community Garden



Minutes of the 2023 Annual General Meeting Hybrid Event – Tuesday 17 October 2023

The Goldenrod Community Garden (GCG) By-laws require that an Annual General Meeting (AGM) be held once a year, usually at the end of the gardening season. The main purpose of the AGM is to elect the board of directors and inform their members of previous and future activities. It is also an opportunity for members to receive the financial report, as well as reviewing fiscal information for the past year and ask questions about the operations.

Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by the Chairperson, Bryn L. She welcomed the attendees and ensured that the virtual participants could hear and participate in the conversation. She subsequently introduced Hazel G who was offering a presentation on the second pollinator garden.

Presentation on Pollinator Garden

Hazel G offered a presentation on the planning and creation of the second pollinator garden. She informed that the GCG garden is on the banks of the Kichi Sibi in the Anishinaabe Algonquin homeland, and likely on the hunting territory of the Partridge family. What used to be a closed canopy forest was intentionally shaped via cultural practices so ancient the culture and the plants co-evolved; e.g. selective felling of ash trees for basket making was an essential part of the ash trees' regeneration, creating space in the forest canopy for new ash to grow.

Cultural picking of the sweetgrass made the grass grow more vigorously and made sure it did not choke. The control patch of grass which was left alone, grew choked up and diminished. Traditional ecological knowledge from elders states that "If you ignore it, it will go away. Pay attention to it and it will thrive." Not all human interaction with nature is negative.

The land is now a meadow full of edible or medicinal plants. There are 420 species of native bees, plus wasps, flies, butterflies and moths, all with specific relationships with native flowers.

The second pollinator garden was mapped out, then laid out by volunteers in spring 2023. Goldenrods, milkweeds, and asters are keystones, each family has species that will suit any and every ecosystem type and need. They are all major supporters of hundreds of insects.

Future plans for the pollinator garden include labelling the plants and offering a seed gathering workshop. She welcomed ideas on other pollinator garden workshops that GCG members might be interested in.

Question from the audience: Has the Board contemplated keeping beehives in the garden?
Answer: Beekeepers expressed interest in leaving beehives in the GCG garden but the National Capital Commission (NCC), on whose land the garden is located, does not permit it.

Introduction

The Chairperson asked the attendees to introduce themselves in order for their name to be captured in the minutes. Some attendees participating virtually introduced themselves in the Chat line while the participants in the meeting room were invited to say a few words about themselves.

Attendance

Twelve members attended this meeting in person (Renée B, Sara C-W, Parminder D, Hazel G, Carmela G, Bryn L, Diane M, Andrew M, Alexander P-W, Tanya S, Barbara S, Patrick W) while seven participated virtually (Linda B, Kirsten G, Patrick J, Zak K, Nicole Mc, Monalisa N, Cheryl S).

Apologies were received from Dietrich S, President of the current Board of Directors, who elected not to run for another term.

Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes of the 2022 AGM

No amendments were suggested. Approval was moved (Barbara S) and seconded (Diane M) that the Minutes of the second Annual General Meeting held on October 12, 2022 be adopted. Carried.

Approval of Minutes of Special General Meeting

No amendments were suggested. Approval was moved (Sara C-W) and seconded (Barbara S) that the Minutes of the Special General Meeting for the Parkdale-Bullman Community Garden held on August 10, 2023 be adopted. Carried.

Board of Directors for 2022-23

After the second AGM in 2022, the Board was made up of the following members:

- Dietrich S (President)
- Eniko M-L (Secretary until April)
- Tanya S (Treasurer)
- Barbara S (Registrar)
- Sara C-W (Director)

During 2023, Eniko resigned. Then two more members joined the Board:

- Diane M (Secretary)
- Parminder D (Director)

Annual Report to Members

GCG's vision was reiterated as a reminder of the garden's existence: it includes a commitment to support relationships, mental health and well-being; act as stewards of the environment; provide opportunities to give; be inclusive and diverse; and provide opportunity to educate and learn.

The major highlights for 2022-23 are:

- Completed the second pollinator garden
- Initiated the vermicompost pilot project
- Installed picnic tables, seating and a second toolshed
- Held a potluck gathering
- Membership approved entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with Richcraft to operate a temporary garden to be constructed at the corner of Parkdale and Bullman.

GCG's partners remain: Just Food, NCC, Somerset West Community Health Centre, Parkdale Food Centre, Ottawa Community Housing, and now Richcraft.

Committees that support the garden:

- **Communications:** Monitored the inbox, managed media correspondence, produced regular newsletter and ad hoc bulletins, maintained social media channels
- **Events:** Organized education session on garden planning and seed starting, conducted a guided nature walk to understand the natural environment of the garden, held a potluck dinner at the garden. Its main challenge is the lack of people to organize events.
- **Properties:** Completion of phase 2 build, toolshed and fencing around new water tanks, purchased garden seating (picnic benches and Adirondack chairs) with a grant from uOttawa, installed new cascading water butts on shed, maintained the grounds (i.e. lawn mowing), kept the water flowing
- **Membership:** Conducted membership survey, outreach to partner organizations, managed the registration process
 - The garden currently has 120 plots. 78 (73%) of members from last year returned, including 11 sliding scale plots. 47 new members joined the garden, including 9 for the sliding scale plots. 17% of the total plots were therefore allocated to sliding scale (the target is 20%)
 - 5 members gave up their plots during the year: 3 were returning gardeners, 2 new ones
 - Friends of the Garden membership remains at 21.
 - As of October 2023, the waitlist for plots consisted of 33 people
- **Pollinator Garden:** The first pollinator garden was established in May 2022 with the help of uOttawa students who volunteer on pollinator projects. The second was built in spring 2023: detailed map was prepared by Hazel G who identified varieties that bloom at different times during the season. The focus was on plants native to the Ottawa region and were sourced locally. Volunteers helped with the maintenance throughout the summer.
- **Fundraising:** Committee not active this year as we have a healthy reserve fund. Members who have an idea for something at the garden that they would like to lead were instructed

to prepare a proposal for the Board's consideration. The vermicompost project is an example of what was funded this year.

- **Compost:** Goal is to reduce waste and build our own soil. Our compost was too airy, so Bin 1 was walled in; it had too many "browns", so members were invited to bring their kitchen scrap contributions; it was too dry so we added a tarp system
 - A compost sifter was built and gifted to the garden by a volunteer
 - A meeting was held to develop the compost system and sift the soil, and another one held for a vermicomposting workshop
 - A pilot project with "Box of Life" was started on vermicomposting

Thank you! Volunteers were thanked for helping the garden community this year. The ongoing need for committed volunteers was mentioned to keep the garden and activities running, avoid exhausting a small group of regular volunteers, and shape the garden for the short and long-term.

Financial Report

Tanya S, Treasurer, informed that GCG is in an excellent financial position, with a surplus of over \$18,000: in 2023 it had more revenue and fewer expenses than budgeted.

- A reserve fund was created to cover eventual and significant maintenance costs (e.g. to repair plots and shed, replace water tanks, etc.)
- Funds are available to improve garden infrastructure (e.g. rainwater harvesting, seating) and hold more events
- Review annual fees for 2024

The Board now has a better sense of how much it costs to operate the garden (e.g. for water, mulch, etc.). It must decide what is a reasonable surplus, how much should be put aside.

Question: Was the cost of water delivery higher this year?

Answer: It remained the same as last year.

Question: Will a long-term solution to water be implemented?

Answer: Several options were contemplated but none are feasible. The Board is trying to get a water line installed from across the street.

Question: How many liters of water were used this year?

Answer: The Treasurer only knows how much it cost, the liters would have to be calculated by a volunteer of the Properties Committee familiar with the size of the water tanks.

Election of New Board Members

Current board members clarified that being a board member requires a commitment of 3-5 hours every two weeks, including participation in board and committee meetings.

The following members were nominated and acclaimed as Goldenrod Community Garden Board members:

- Sara C-W
- Parminder D
- Hazel G
- Andrew M
- Diane M
- Tanya S
- Barbara S
- Patrick W

The term is for 12 months, until the next AGM (October 2024). Roles (i.e., President, Registrar, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.) will be decided by the Board members at the first meeting.

Other Business

Parkdale-Bullman Temporary Garden

- Membership approved at the Special General Meeting in August 2023 of GCG entering into an agreement with Richcraft
- A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Richcraft
 - Richcraft will build the garden for Spring 2024
 - GCG will operate the garden – plans of operation were described (e.g. membership, waiting list)
- That garden is temporary, until Richcraft are ready to build on the site
- Opening date, number of plots still to be determined

End of Season Workday

Saturday October 28 was chosen as the day for gardeners to clean up their plots, prepare the garden for the winter, and help chop the compost. Members were encouraged to request help from the Board if they require assistance. To avoid plants being pulled out by the volunteers, members were asked to add a sign stipulating “Active Garden” to their plot to ensure that plants still growing are not removed. Additional instructions will be forwarded to the members in the near future.

Question: Will there be any callouts for volunteering for the various committees?

Answer: The September 30 newsletter includes a list of email addresses for the different committees. Anyone interested in volunteering should reach out to the emails listed at the bottom of the newsletter. The immediate need would be for someone to help prepare the forthcoming membership survey.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.