

Goldenrod Community Garden



Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting Hybrid Event – Tuesday 29 October 2024

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.

Attendance

Twenty-one members attended this meeting in person and 12 online, for a total of 33. Twenty-six were required for quorum.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by the Chairperson, Bryn L. She welcomed the attendees and ensured that the virtual participants could hear and participate in the conversation.

Welcome

Tanya S, Treasurer, opened the meeting by thanking the Hintonburg Community Association for lending us their audio-visual equipment, thereby facilitating a virtual meeting. She proceeded to introduce the Board of Directors for the 2023-2024 season.

Adoption of the Agenda

There were no objections or changes to the agenda – unanimously adopted as presented.

Approval of the Minutes of the 2023 AGM

No amendments were suggested. Approval was moved (Barbara S) and seconded (Lianne B) that the Minutes of the third Annual General Meeting held on October 17, 2023 be approved. Carried.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The major highlights for 2023-24 are:

- Soil building success
- The Parkdale-Bullman garden has been operational since the end of May 2024
- Engaged Board of Directors

- New garden members

Some challenges faced this season are:

- Critter activity: wasps, voles and groundhogs
- Produce went missing at both gardens
- Concerns expressed by observant gardeners that produce is going to waste
- Drop off in volunteer engagement midway through the season
- Managing two properties was more work than expected

Partnership Activities

- Richcraft built the Parkdale-Bullman Temporary Community Garden
- GCG hosted a Compost Workshop presented by Just Food and Box of Life
- GCG reached out to partner neighbours (Parkdale Food Centre, Somerset West Community Health Centre and Ottawa Community Housing) to offer plots to their members
- The National Capital Commission continued to support our garden

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Communications

Parminder informed that the Inbox was monitored by the Registrar this year due to the departure of a volunteer. There was not a lot of media correspondence to manage but the newsletter was dispatched monthly, which generated an increase of members joining the Facebook Page and the Facebook Group for gardeners – this is where you would post a request for someone to water your plot while you are on holidays. The Committee also does updates to the GCG website.

Events

Patrick was initially the lead of this committee. A seedling exchange was organized at the beginning of the season; Parminder hosted three potluck dinners at the GCG garden and a light supper was planned prior to the AGM. She is proposing a seed exchange for January 2025. She welcomed input from gardeners for more events. The Committee's main challenge is the lack of people to organize events.

Properties

Andrew informed that he oversees the soil building, ground maintenance, pollinator gardens and build teams, primarily at Goldenrod. He ensures the water tanks are full, orders straw for mulching and manages the soil building effort. There was minimal work required this year for the pollinator gardens; he thanked all the volunteers who helped with digging the trench around the second garden to slow the encroachment of grass, weeding the garden and dividing the perennials.

The soil building bins were reinforced in summer of 2023 (thanks to Patrick) and we received a worm bench in the Fall (part of a pilot project). Gardeners and local community members were invited to bring their kitchen waste as more material is required to feed the worms. A partnership with local cafés is being considered to receive their ground coffee to increase the soil generated in the vermicomposter.

Compost was obtained from the following sources in 2024:

Worm bench	4.2%
Hot compost	12.5%
Delivery	83.3%

Membership

Barbara informed that a membership survey was conducted at the end of last year's season and thanked all the members who provided feedback. A volunteer attended a few Parkdale Food Centre's lunches to publicise the Parkdale-Bullman Temporary Community Garden and encourage people to get into gardening. A few people accepted the challenge; she managed the registration process for both gardens; most people on the waiting list were offered a plot.

- There are 120 plots at the Goldenrod garden and 60 at Parkdale-Bullman
 - Returning members: 80 (70% of 2023 plot-holders)
 - New members: 94
 - Richcraft: 6
- Community Partner (sliding scale) plots:
 - Returning members: 11 (58% of 2023 plot-holders)
 - New members: 20
 - Total: 31 (18% of plots – target is 20%)
- Friends of the Garden: 5
- Total waiting list at April 2024: 61
 - Were able to offer everyone who applied by June a plot - but not all at first choice site
- Total waiting list at October 2024: 30
- It was challenging to manage the registration at two sites, particularly with uncertainty around opening dates at Parkdale-Bullman

Question: Could notices be posted on telephone posts in the spring to inform people about the garden's existence?

Answer: It was done the first year. We must now balance the size of the waiting list before advertising too aggressively.

Question: Do we need to put ourselves on the waiting list for next year?

Answer: An invitation to renew your plot for next year will be sent out in mid-March.

Question: How long will the temporary Parkdale-Bullman garden be opened for?

Answer: No one knows for sure but it will likely be around for several years. The developer wouldn't have invested all this money on establishing it for a short-term period.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS and THANK YOU!

Sara conveyed a huge thank you to everyone who volunteered with the garden, to all Board members, and all those who participated in the AGM to show their support. She encouraged the members to contact us with ideas for events or if interested in volunteering.

She explained briefly the roles of the Board members. Diane acknowledged not just what they do but how they fulfill their responsibilities: Barbara did the registration for the two gardens from abroad during her holidays, Tanya participated in a recent meeting on her cellphone from the Toronto airport; these are just a few examples of how the Board members go beyond the call of duty, so a big thank you to all of them.

Volunteers were thanked for helping the garden community this year. The ongoing need for committed volunteers was mentioned to help with the following tasks:

- Develop/maintain the property at Parkdale-Bullman
- Soil building/compost at Parkdale-Bullman
- Organize/lead events
- Coordinate volunteers

Opportunities are available for any level of time commitment.

To volunteer, reach out to inbox@goldenrodgarden.org with your interest, respond to volunteer requests in the newsletter and/or survey, or talk to a Board member.

Question: Could we explore winter gardening, it's too bad we have to close.

Answer: Yes, you can continue gardening into the winter, however, access may be an issue when there is snow and ice; we won't be able to open the gate at Parkdale-Bullman. Do so at your own risk.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Tanya Salewski, Treasurer, informed that GCG is in an excellent financial position. There was a \$17,000 surplus by the end of December 2023; the balance at the end of September 2024 was \$20,767.88 however there remains an expenditure of about \$700 (donation to PFC, purchase rain barrels, AGM costs).

- In 2024, GCG had more revenue and fewer expenses than budgeted:
 - No new self-funded special projects were undertaken – all build costs for Parkdale-Bullman were funded by Richcraft and the garden furniture was donated
 - Fewer events were held than planned -> lower administration costs
 - Lots of rain in May and June -> less need for water
- Surplus means GCG is in a good position for future years
 - Added \$2,300 to reserve fund to cover liability deductibles, and eventual and significant maintenance costs (e.g. to repair beds and shed, replace water tanks, etc.)
 - Funds are available to improve garden infrastructure (e.g. rainwater harvesting, seating)
 - The Board will review the annual rental fees for 2025
- Responsibilities carried out:
 - Developed an annual budget and work plan
 - Made payments, maintained the general ledger and tracked all funds in and out
 - Produced monthly financial reports to the Board
 - Maintained the reserve fund to save for anticipated major maintenance of the Goldenrod garden in years to come

Question: Does the garden have insurance, as it's not included in the list of expenses.

Answer: The insurance is currently paid for by the City of Ottawa, however they are reviewing if community gardens should pay for their own insurance in future.

Question: How much is in the reserve fund?

Answer: There is \$7,700 in the reserve fund, resulting from fundraising in the first year, and grants obtained from Just Food, TD, and Home Depot.

Question: Do you have an idea of the cost of maintenance?

Answer: The cost is currently low but repairs will be required for the raised beds and lumber is expensive, and we will have to replace the water totes eventually. Other community gardens have indicated lumber required replacing after 6-7 years (on average).

ELECTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Chairperson invited nominations from the audience, who were informed they can nominate themselves as well as other members. She went over the requirements, stating that 'many hands make work lighter' and encouraged people to join. At least one representative is required for the Parkdale-Bullman garden. She specified that people are not elected to a specific position, that will be decided at the first meeting.

The following members were nominated and acclaimed as Goldenrod Community Garden Board of Directors members – nine or fewer nominations don't require a vote:

- Sara C
- Parminder D
- Andrew M
- Tanya S
- Barbara S
- Donna A
- Jane O
- Kumari P
- Diane M

The term is for 12 months, until the next AGM (October 2025). Roles (President, Registrar, Secretary, Treasurer, and Directors) will be decided by the Board members at their first meeting, and can be shared.

OPEN FORUM

Question: Did the NCC inform that they would renew the lease?

Answer: The agreement must be renewed every April. Just Food is negotiating with them for a lease extension. We ask every year for permission to install a permanent water line but have not received approval yet.

Question: Could Just Food come talk about the community gardens in Ottawa?

Answer: A show of hands online and in the room indicated interest in the subject, GCG will look into booking a room at the Hintonburg Community Centre in January or February for this presentation.

Question: When involved with building in the first two years of the garden's existence, there was mention of a Phase 3. Will it happen?

Answer: No Board member in the room ever heard of a potential Phase 3. It would require permission from Just Food and the NCC for a larger footprint. There is no appetite for it right now as there is not enough volunteer energy at present and there is more work to do at Parkdale-Bullman to make it fully operational.

Question: If the Minutes could be posted online within 2 or 3 months, people could comment through email so the Minutes would be finalized before the next AGM, as done at their condo.

Answer: The AGM Minutes have been available on the webpage within a month after the AGM. People are welcome to forward their comments whenever convenient to them. Please see the website.

Question: Now that there are several picnic tables at Parkdale-Bullman, can events be hosted there?

Answer: Certainly this may be easier now that we have representatives on the Board from that garden, and if we have volunteers step forward wanting to lead an event.

Question: Does anyone know how the Tunney's Pasture redevelopment project is progressing?

Answer: There was a community engagement event this year, it's a long term project.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chairperson thanked everyone who attended in person and online, all Board members from the past year and all Board members for the coming year.

The Treasurer thanked the Chairperson for officiating at this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.