

## **NSCGA fall meeting November 6, 2021**

Maureen Spagnolo, President, opened the meeting at 12:05 on Zoom, with a quorum “present.” (There were 49 participants by the time of voting.) Maureen began by welcoming everyone at what, hopefully, will be the last time we have to use Zoom instead of gathering person at the Cleveland Park Library. She welcomed the many new gardeners, and thanked the various Board members and Committee Chairs for their service: Beth Kaplan, Membership Chair and Board member who is stepping down from both positions; Lynn Rothberg, Board member and important contributor to the membership Committee; Jane Brookstein, Treasurer; Arisa Koyama, outgoing Volunteer Coordinator and Board member; and Jon Mormino, Board member and webmaster and coordinator of the water project and garden services, who is stepping down from his Board position. She also thanked Tom Lore and Paul Basola for the composting efforts and Hillary Anderson and Jennifer Precht for running the children’s garden.

Membership report: Beth Kaplan reported that we had greatly increased interest over the past year. Of our 234 total plots, 67 were assigned to new members, compared to 46 in the previous year. The wait list is currently at 259; the average time on the waitlist is about one year and nine months. Typically, a number of people contacted on the wait list have moved, gotten a plot in another garden, or lost interest by the time their name comes up. This was especially the case with people who signed up at the beginning of the pandemic. (The full committee report is attached.)

The online invoicing system (which Jane Brookstein helped set up) worked pretty well. There were a few hiccups, but it was an improvement over the paper system. There is a new email address for membership: [nscgamembership@newarkstcommunitygarden.org](mailto:nscgamembership@newarkstcommunitygarden.org)

Lynn Rothberg has for the past six years been helping assign new members their plots and working with them to get started. Typically, abandoned plots are cleaned up at workdays to help new gardeners get an easier start. New members are also given a copy of the rules and are given a little grace period to get the plot planted. She said that existing members who wish to switch plots, e.g., to get closer to Newark Street, should contact the membership committee.

Treasurer report: Jane Brookstein explained that our income (mainly dues and fees) was approximately \$1,700 this year, compared to \$1,800 last years. Expenses (around \$3,300) were up in part because we had to arrange for commercial bulk pick-up, and also because of tool purchases and the cost of QuickBooks. We currently have \$48,860 in the bank, up from last year. The reason we have such a large balance is because we are budgeting for the replacement of the water system, which is likely to be around \$28,000. There was a brief discussion of possible things to spend some of the surplus money on, but no decisions. We always need a reserve for unexpected expenses and repairs.

Rules Committee: Bill Bonner gave an overview of the rules status. Over the season, about 20 percent of the plots get citations, so the good news is that 80% of gardeners are reliably in compliance. Most of the issues involved weeds, especially along fence lines. One problem with invasive weeds is that they set seed so fast that a gardener who cleans up after the first citation may have weeds again by the time of the next inspection. There have also been some communication issues, where people don’t see the email with a citation and therefore don’t know there is a problem until they get a phone call. Bill is looking for ways to improve communication.

Bill briefly addressed fall clean up. Furniture may stay in plots (recognizing that people in apartments don't have places to store it), but poles, trellises, and the like should be taken down. People should not store a lot of "visible" things like plastic bags. People who want to winter garden can use row covers as long as they are no more than 3 feet high. There was a brief open-ended discussion about how/whether the 6 foot fencing rule should be applied to doors and gates.

Bill is stepping down as Rules chair, but Marilyn Jones has volunteered to take over. He will work with her as a transition and continue to help with emails and computer things. They will also brainstorm about possible changes to the rules to bring them up to date and make them clearer. Any changes will be voted on at a membership meeting. Marilyn said that her priorities would be rules about height, weeds, and having the majority of the plot under cultivation.

Volunteer Coordinator: Arisa Koyama reported that we were able to resume the workdays in June and that there was a good turn out and much was accomplished. About 30 people turned out for the November workday to put away hoses, etc., and others volunteered on their own time. Arisa is moving to Virginia, but Chris Maloy has volunteered to assume the Volunteer Coordinator role as well as to serve out the remainder of her term as Board member.

Communications, water project and garden services: Jon Mormino was not able to be on the Zoom, so Maureen reported for him. The water project will replace all the pipes at a greater depth to eliminate the continual breaks/freezing we have had over the years. We had hoped to complete the project last winter but were unable to because of various bureaucratic delays in getting the necessary permits. Jon is not running again as Board member but will continue as webmaster and manage Garden Service, with Elizabeth Terry serving as Communications Chair.

Compost: Tom Lore is in charge of the six-bin garden waste compost. It is continuing to get better with experience. He recommends separating out woody stalks, which do not break down well. One possibility is to get a chipper for them. The compost is not completely weed-free. Tom suggested using it as top dressing, then letting seeds sprout, then raiunge up the weed seedlings before they bloom/go to seed.

Paul Basola is in charge of the veggie compost. There is more capacity now that McLean Gardens has started its own compost collection. For the brown material, we can use the leaves from the pile near the street (those leaves can also be used in individual plots). In addition, there are some bales of straw, but they should be used only for the veggie compost; they are our insurance in case the leaves run out. Paul thanked those who had assisted in the past and solicited a new volunteer to help.

Social Committee: Jennifer Baxter reported that we had to adapt to the pandemic situation (e.g., no snacks at workdays or potlucks) but that we still had various events. During the winter she organized several Zoom events. And during the summer we had an evening for greeting gardeners in their plots followed by an end of season socially distanced pizza party.

Children's garden: Hillary Anderson explained that the children's garden participants ranged from 3-8 years old (mostly on the younger side). At the start, they arranged for 15-minute appointments per child, but were able to do more group things as time went on. They incorporated some crafts and guest speakers into the program and hosted a class from the Capitol Hill Day School. Jen Precht said they

want to add more pollinator plants and will need some help with fence repair. Susan Akman, former Children's program organizer, praised them for their work.

Beautification: The beautification plots are the flower garden strips on the front and sides of the main garden which are communally managed. Dennis Enslinger, who has been coordinating them for years, is stepping down. Maureen and others thanked him for his contributions over the years. Carole Ruppel said she didn't think there really was a need for a formal chair for this in the future.

New Committee chairs: Maureen explained that while Board members often serve as Committee Chairs, those are distinct roles – a Committee Chair need not be a Board member, and a Board member need to serve as a Committee Chair.

Myriam Megouache agreed to take on the Membership chair, Chris Maloy, Volunteer Coordinator, Marilyn Jones, Rules, and Elizabeth Terry, Communications. In addition, Lynn Rothberg reported that a liaison group (not a formal committee) has formed to help support new gardeners with their plots and to integrate them into the community; Sally Winthrop, Jim Wiseman, Catherine Melson, and Chris Maloy have volunteered for this. The Education Chair position is still open.

Election of new Board members: There were three positions up for election (there are six 2-year board positions, staggered so three come up for election each fall). The positions up this year are the ones currently filled by Bill Bonner, Beth Kaplan, and Jon Mormino.

A question was raised on whether the election should be deferred and open to all members to vote. However, Cathy Winer and Ryan Fitzgerald pointed out that the bylaws provide that board members are to be elected at the membership meeting.

Beth and Jon did not want to run again, so the floor was opened for nominations. Jennifer Baxter, Charlyce Wilson, Myriam Megoauche, and Marilyn Jones were each nominated, and the nominations seconded, per Robert's Rules of Order. Each gave a brief statement of why they wanted to serve on the Board. Since there were more than enough candidates, Bill Bonner decided not to seek reelection. The initial poll which Jon had set up did not allow for people place more than one vote. Therefore, Jennifer volunteered set up a new online poll, with all four candidates listed and with each member voting for three. When the poll was closed, she had her husband take a picture of the results, which she then showed on Zoom. The vote was 35 for Charlyne, 32 for Jennifer Baxter, 25 for Marilyn Jones, and 24 for Myriam Megoauche. The first three were therefore elected.

By-Laws Changes: Because of a technical glitch in sending out the proposed by-law changes to the membership, Maureen deferred voting on them until the next meeting. This will enable people to review the changes and allow for ample discussion before any vote. Several people had objected to the suggestion that there be an up- or-down vote on the package of changes; delaying the vote will also allow reconsideration of that procedure.

Maureen concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and participating and for all their efforts over the past year. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Winer

Scribe