

**URBAN AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday January 9, 2019**

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Levi Gardner, Joan Huyser-Honig, Steve Krogman, Eleanor Moreno, Jill Myer, Liz Visser, Rori Weston, Dave Zimmerman

Absent: Connie Bohatch, Rachel Hood, Lisa Oliver-King

Other: Wende Randall (Kent Coutny ENTf), Landon Bartley and Catherine Zietse (City staff)

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Joan Huyser-Honing, supported by Rori Weston, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Jill Myer, supported by Dave Zimmerman, to approve the November 14 meeting minutes. Motion carried.

Public Comments - None.

Round Robin Announcements

- Blandford Nature Center has recently hired a part time Farm Program Specialist to support expanded programming (Liz Visser).
- The Fulton Street Farmers Market winter market is open Saturdays 10am-1pm (Rori Weston).
- The community food access survey and listening sessions wrap up this month with partner organizations Kids Food Basket, Kent County ENTf, Kent County Food Policy Council, and Calvin College Center for Social Research. Results will be available near the end of Feb/early March (Eleanor Moreno).
- Urban Roots is expanding their composting program and community market (Levi Gardner).

New Business

Chair/Vice Chair Elections

Levi Gardner shared the responsibilities of the committee chair in setting agendas and special meetings, meeting with individual members, and setting tasks for subcommittees. The vice chair fills in when chair is absent.

Joan Huyser-Honig nominated Levi Gardner for chair. Jill Myer nominated Joan Huyser-Honig for vice chair. Eleanor Moreno nominated Jill Myer to chair. Discussion followed.

Levi Gardner was elected chair with 7 votes. Joan Huyser-Honig elected vice chair with 7 votes.

City Marijuana Policies and Urban Agriculture

Landon Bartley, Senior Planner with the City of Grand Rapids Planning Department, shared the city's current policies and processes for regulating medical marijuana.

The final ordinance for medical marijuana was approved in December 2018 and will go into effect on January 22, 2019. Both recreational and medical marijuana for personal use/growing is currently allowed. The City is anticipating to take action on recreational marijuana in Fall 2019.

The City has received an enormous amount of interest from practitioners and businesses. There are 5 licensed types of facilities that will be allowed in commercial or industrial districts – growing, processing, provisioning, secure transport, and safety compliance labs. Applications for Growers, Processors, and Provisioning Centers will be accepted starting on March 4, 2019, with a public draw on April 12th to select which applications will move forward for consideration by the Planning Commission.

Levi Gardner asked if growing was only allowed indoors for commercial operations. Landon confirmed this, and added that there is a de facto cap on the number of commercial facilities based on the number of suitable sites.

Personal use, possession, and growing of recreational marijuana is legal, with the limit of 12 plants per person. Potential problems with home growing include brownouts due to energy requirements and odors. There is no code or nuisance ordinance for home odors like there is for commercial growers. Joan Huyser-Honig asked if it will be legal to grow outdoors for personal use. Landon replied that the statute says it cannot be visible to the public, and most people will choose to grow it indoors regardless to avoid damage by pests or theft.

Levi clarified that the urban agriculture sections of the city ordinance will point to the marijuana section (rather than include language that also regulates marijuana growth). Landon confirmed this would be the case.

Rori Weston shared that the Fulton Street Farmers Market received their first application for a CBD vendor with CBD medical marijuana products, but the market is technically a city park. Landon suggested she require the vendor to show proof of state license, and volunteered to follow up with her outside of the meeting.

Landon encouraged committee members to visit the City's webpage on medical marijuana for more information, including a map of potential facilities.

Old Business

Policy/Best Practices Working Group

The committee reviewed the topic summary sheets for chickens and backyard animals (shared at previous meetings), and edible landscaping. Dave Zimmerman will be sharing a summary sheet on bee ordinances, and Liz Visser will share her current document on cities overall approach to urban agriculture ordinances (and will include mid-size cities).

Joan Huyser-Honig gave an overview of the edible landscaping document, in which other city ordinances focused mainly on the definition of edible landscaping and public land. Cities use edible annuals, perennials, and herbs in addition to food forest and urban orchard models. Public mapping, signage and food education is also an important component. Edibles are currently prohibited from the right-of-way/parkway, whereas in some cities it is encouraged. Grand Rapids parks already have a lot of leeway in what is planted, and Joan was glad to see there was no code obstacles.

In summary, a lot will be changing the practice instead of changing the code, and the city has an opportunity to lead by example. Wende Randall suggested that many local nonprofits would be excited about the volunteer and education opportunities of edible landscaping. Steve Krogman added that the Grand Rapids Parks Department is open to more planting and collaboration in the future. There is also potential crossover with the work of the Urban Forestry Committee.

Joan shared that the cities that have been the most successful with edible landscaping has been in partnership with schools, and asked Wende if the Kent County Food Policy Council will be making recommendations about school gardens. Wende was unsure because the council does not have seated members yet, but would like to align recommendations of the council and this committee.

Jill Myer and Joan Huyser-Honig volunteered to start an edible landscaping subcommittee to form additional recommendations around edible landscaping with opportunities for implementation. Dave Zimmerman agreed to talk with coworkers at Habitat for Humanity about edible landscaping in Plaza Roosevelt (in addition to Habitat's community garden).

Additional topic summaries to be developed for the next committee meeting include farm stands (Rori), accessory structures (Dave), bees (Dave), and composting (Levi).

Action items

Policy summaries/best practices sheets to develop (in addition to existing summaries on chickens, backyard animals, and edible landscaping)

- Bees (Dave)
- Accessory Structures (Dave)
- Farm stands (Rori)
- Composting (Levi)
- Big picture/policy approach, including mid-size cities (Liz)

Use similar format and content of past sheets that include trends, benchmarks, and recommendations.

Committee vacancies

The committee currently has two vacancies – a member representing GRPS (Mayoral appointment), and a resident (Commissioner Kelly's appointment).

Levi Gardner proposed that the committee seek to add two additional committee members due to the small number of committee seats for resident experts and the number of highly qualified applications being received. There was unanimous support for the idea. Catherine Zietse shared that with the committee's initial charter coming from city code, any changes to the number of members would be required to go before city commission. She will determine next steps in the process.

Review Committee Bylaws

Discussion postponed until next meeting.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting

- Review committee goals and bylaws
- Working session on policies and best practices

Meeting adjourned 7:16 p.m.

**URBAN AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday March 13, 2019**

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: Connie Bohatch, Levi Gardner, Rachel Hood, Joan Huyser-Honig, Steve Krogman, Eleanor Moreno, Jill Myer, Rori Weston, Liz Visser, Dave Zimmerman

Absent: Lisa Oliver-King

Other: Tema Jamison, James Hurt and Catherine Zietse (City staff)

Tema (Ayanfe) Jamison introduced herself as the newest appointed member of the Urban Agriculture Committee. She has lived in Grand Rapids for 1.5 years, and is currently a community connector at Belknap-Lookout and Other Way ministries. She moved here from Ashville, NC, where she was heavily involved in food sovereignty organizations and community gardens.

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Connie Bohatch, supported by Eleanor, to move City Composting agenda item to first. Motion carries.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Jill Myer, supported by Joan Huyser-Honig, to approve the January 9, 2019 minutes as presented. Motion carries.

New Business

City Composting Initiatives

James Hurt, Director of Public Works, shared the background and goals of City composting initiative. The Public Works Department covers snow plowing, all maintenance functions in the right-of-way, and material management (trash, yard waste, and recycling pick up). Recent innovations in the department have been the introduction of single stream recycling in 2010, and “pay-by-the-tip” for refuse in 2012 (which was very successful in encouraging more recycling). Because the yard waste brought to the Domtar Butterworth site has increased in volume over the last couple years, the City has recently entered into a new contract to compost yard waste on site through a contractor. Curbside organic composting collection is an ultimate goal, but the City is beginning with just yard waste composting. After receiving five proposals, the City selected WeCare Denali which is a national firm with good experience that also manages the Ann Arbor composting site. Mr. Hurt explained that the community interest is very high, and they are estimating 40-50,000 yards of yard waste per year. The department would like to provide composted material to residents and city operations at no charge. The yard waste composting operations will begin this summer.

Tema Jamison asked if this project is part of the City’s biodigester. Mr. Hurt replied that it is not, but the biodigester is being constructed and should be running next year.

Levi Gardner asked what the implications would be for residential composting ordinances if the City begins composting. Connie Bohatch replied that residential and municipal composting are separate but

friendly issues, and it will be up to the preference of the homeowner. James Hurt added that the residents who will opt for curbside collection of compost are those who don't want to do it themselves. Public Works currently does not hear a lot of complaints due to residential composting. Connie agreed, and said most code compliance violations are large brush piles that residents try to claim is compost.

James Hurt shared that major education regarding contamination will have to happen to reduce contamination, but the department is tentatively planning to roll out curbside pick-up of organic material in the spring of 2020. Rachel Hood congratulated James and his department for their hard work on this initiative that has been years in the making.

Joan Huyser-Honig inquired if curbside pickup will result in one more container by people's homes. As of now, James envisions it being part of the yard waste container but there will be more details to work out, especially in the winter months. Connie Bohatch added that the City currently sees issues with two carts in certain part of the city, so adding a third will need strong planning.

Joan Huyser-Honig asked if this initiative would put Urban Roots' composting program out of business. Levi Gardner said that it might, but from his perspective, he would like municipality to take over the service because it will be much more efficient. The Urban Roots program in Grand Rapids was based off of the Austin Compost Pedallers, who recently passed off their business to the City successfully.

Levi Gardner raised the question of contamination with recycling, and James Hurt confirmed this is an issue. The Public Works Department does regular audits, but some people try to skirt the system by adding trash to recycling bins to avoid getting charged per tip on their trash bins. Adding to the issue is the poor market for recyclable material across the nation - it costs the city more to get rid of recycling than to get rid of trash.

Public Comments - None.

Round Robin Announcements

- Rori Weston – Fulton St. Farmers Market has changed their seasons: May-October open 3 days/week (Wed. Fri Sat); second season Nov-April.
- Steve Krogman – the apple trees at Aberdeen Park are growing very well and are in need of pruning.
- Connie Bohatch – The City's code compliance and trash reduction program will begin April 8 with neighborhood canvassing.
- Joan announced that Oakdale Neighbors hired Kenneth Hoskins as new Executive Director.
- Dave Zimmerman – Plaza Roosevelt construction underway with Habitat for Humanity as they clear space for new public high school. Dave would like to see edible landscaping in the green space, and is working with GRPS to make this happen.
- Eleanor Moreno – Kids Food Basket survey results and report will be publicly available in April.
- Liz Visser – Blandford Nature Center is in maple syrup season and will have their Sugarbush festival on March 23.
- Levi Gardner – Urban Roots will be beginning a farmer apprenticeship program in partnership with Well House, and will have a plant sale in May to help fund the program. 2019 classes were just finalized (free for residents, \$5 for others). Annual fundraiser is March 19, 12-1 pm.
- Catherine was offered an outreach opportunity for the committee at the GR Children's Museum Earth Day event. Let her know if anyone can participate.

Old Business

Review Committee Goals

Levi Gardner opened the table for conversation surrounding committee goals. Connie Bohatch brought up the educational components mentioned in the Public Works Department's composting program, and asked the committee consider how they might assist in larger education opportunities. Levi suggested the second goal be altered to include education. Jill Myer and Liz Visser voiced support.

Liz added the role of well-designed communication material, and how information should be organized so it is as easy as possible for residents to understand with consistent and visual messaging. From her research, the most important part of ordinance changes is how they are presented and communicated to the community, such as having everything in one place on the website with links to every relevant topic. Search functions are also important in communication the city's approach to urban agriculture (for example, is the first thing that appears when you search chickens is "How to report a nuisance" or "How to get a permit"?).

Jill Myer proposed moving baseline study to future goal, revising the second goal, and adding a third goal as follows:

Goal revision: "Commit to intentional and meaningful public engagement for public review, education, and awareness."

Goal addition: "Develop consistent visual messaging to promote urban agriculture and create communication plan to educate and share ordinance revisions with community."

Levi Gardner referenced the Hatfield "City Food Policy and Programs" report and the importance of city staff dedicated to urban agriculture, and proposed the addition of a goal having a city staff member dedicated to urban agriculture issue. Connie Bohatch shared that any requests for additional resources should be supported from the City strategic plan (currently underway). Liz Visser shared that many mid-sized cities have great partnerships between cities, nonprofits, and university extensions.

Goal addition: "Secure more resources to support the work of the Urban Ag. Committee."

Eleanor Moreno raised a question on the goal of a baseline study, and wondered if there was opportunity to include a targeted question(s) in VoiceKent 2020. VoiceKent is a biannual survey on community health indicators that has included food security questions in the past through Kent County Essential Needs Task Force. The group agreed that the specific outcomes of the baseline study needed to be further defined. Connie Bohatch suggested that the study be more of a food systems map to explore what urban activities are being accomplished in Grand Rapids and by whom.

Moved to future goal: "Conduct a baseline study to fully understand current urban agriculture activities and stakeholders in Grand Rapids."

Tema Jamison suggested the committee goals should be more direct in encouraging and promoting more urban agriculture to happen. She shared that in her previous work in Asheville, there was an Urban Agriculture Alliance of different nonprofit and community groups. A grant provided a staff position to find where gardens were and meet with managers to determine their needs, and from that process a monthly meet up event was established, rotating in different community gardens that explored best practices and topics/skills people wanted to learn more about. It was a very successful approach.

Levi Gardner offered the idea of hosting a similar outreach-driven event at one of the committee's summer meetings. The committee will further discuss summer outreach opportunities at the May meeting.

Tema Jamison observed that many Neighborhood Match Funds go towards garden projects, and asked if there a way to request that the committee be involved in application review, providing expertise, or project oversight of garden projects. Connie shared that there always opportunity to suggest a different way to allocate resources when new expertise is added.

Working Session on Policies and Best Practices

Catherine shared framework for recommendations and asked for committee feedback. Liz Visser suggested the addition of definitions – what terms the committee will define and the level of detail in those definitions. Once Catherine receives the remaining topic summary sheets, she will update the recommendation summary sheet for committee review and approval next meeting.

The committee's recommendation to pursue the addition of two committee seats is in process. Levi Gardner also suggested the committee consider staggering two year terms to ease transition in bringing in new committee members.

Action items

- Committee members assigned to topic summary sheets will complete as soon as possible and send to Catherine
- Catherine will combine topic summary sheets into draft recommendations framework for review
- Catherine will update committee goals document for approval next meeting

Agenda Items for Next Meeting – May 8, Fulton St. Farmer's Market (1145 Fulton St E)

- Approve updated goals
- Policy recommendations summary
- Discussion of summer outreach event

Meeting adjourned 7:33 p.m.

**URBAN AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday May 8, 2019**

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 6:02 pm

Roll Call

Present: Joan Huyser-Honig, Ayanfe Jamison, Steve Krogman, Eleanor Moreno, Jill Myer, Lisa Oliver-King, Rori Weston, Liz Visser

Absent: Connie Bohatch, Levi Gardner, Rachel Hood, Dave Zimmerman

Other: Catherine Zietse (City staff)

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Lisa Oliver-King, supported by Liz Visser, to approve the agenda as presented.
Motion carries.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Jill Myer, supported by Lisa Oliver-King, to approve March 13, 2019 minutes as presented.
Motion carries.

Public Comments

Crystal Tunstall manages the greenhouse and garden programs at Baxter Community Center. She shared upcoming events at Baxter including the edible plant sale (June 1st at 9:00 am, with vegetables, edible flowers, and herbs), and Strawberry Jamboree (June 13th from 3:00-7:00 pm).

Round Robin Announcements

- Lisa Oliver-King – Our Kitchen Table is hosting a Women of Color Convening Series on May 16 6:00 – 8:00 pm at Sherman St. Church with guest speaker Remi Harrington. Also, Delta Dental was grant for healthy snack distribution at GRPS summer schools – let her know if you have any recommendations of local farmers or growers of color.
- Jill Myer – Promoting Fulton St. Farmers Market through WIC Project Fresh materials this spring
- Rori Weston – Opening day at the market was this past Saturday. MSU Master Gardeners will be on site Saturdays in May for gardening advice, and they hope to offer nutritionists on site in the near future. The Farmers Market will be hosting a community rummage sale on June 19.
- Ayanfe Jamison – Plant start distribution and community garden coordination in Creston neighborhood
- Liz Visser – The Blandford garden is starting to plant now that the weather is drying up. New accessible infrastructure is being installed for programming, and Liz has been growing plant starts for OKT, Garfield community garden, and St. Catherine's garden.
- Joan – just returned home from Tuscany, and was impressed how they grow food in every possible place. She also has a neighbor with mobility challenges looking to do a container garden (Lisa/OKT to follow up).
- Eleanor Moreno – Calvin College presented Kent County Community survey study today, with the full report coming next fall (Eleanor will share summary pdf). Growers on Grandville community garden will also be starting soon, and she is working with neighbors on the Cesar Chavez Farmers Market this summer.

New Business

Neighborhood Match Fund

Levi Gardner and Catherine Zietse met with City staff Stacy Stout and Suzette Long, who oversee the City's Neighborhood Match Fund grant program, to discuss potential overlap with the work of the committee. The Neighborhood Match Fund (NMF) contracts up to \$2,500 to Grand Rapids residents through a competitive process for projects that intentionally advance neighborhood connections, resident leadership, and social justice.

Early on in the grant process the City received numerous applications for community gardens, many with the only objective of food production. Recent projects have been more successful in connecting community garden projects to building resident capacity, preventing crime, preserving culture, etc. All garden projects are required to test soil and to include inclusive programming.

Our Kitchen Table provided the NMF team with a Growing Guide for garden projects that included things like tips on planting pairs, growing season calendar, and food justice. Lisa Oliver-King added that she would like to update the guide with more information on lead prevention, seed exchanges, and rain barrels. The guide is intended to provide applicants with resources and community partners city-wide, not solely services provided by OKT. Jill Myer stated that the NMF projects would be a good starting point for listing current community gardens in the city.

Potential for involvement of the Urban Agriculture Committee includes increasing connections to resources and trainings for current and past grant recipients, and creating additional guides for budgets, composting, water capture, etc.

Additionally, there is potential for the committee to have a presence at the 2020 Neighborhood Summit, for which the theme is "Environment." The Neighborhood Summit is an annual one-day experience for Grand Rapids residents to learn with and from each other about strategies, resources and opportunities to strengthen neighborhoods and advance equity.

Catherine Zietse clarified that there were no immediate action steps as a result of the meeting; it was an introductory meeting to make sure both groups are aware of what the other is doing and can share resources as needed.

Old Business

Revised Committee Goals

Catherine presented updated committee goals with revisions from last meeting's discussion. Updates include edits to goals 2, 3, and 4, and moving the baseline study goal to a future goal. Motion made by Eleanor Moreno, supported by Liz Visser, to formally approve the updated goals. Carries unanimously.

In relation to the edible landscaping goal, Lisa Oliver-King advised that information about lead in soil should be clearly and widely communicated. On a larger scale, the committee should always be considering how information is being shared so that people can make informed decisions.

Edible Landscaping Subcommittee Updates

Jill Myer and Joan Huyser-Honig put together additional recommendations for edible landscaping based on the edible landscaping policies and best practices summary. They are looking for feedback on the four recommendations presented, which were intended to be visible and easy wins.

Lisa Oliver-King recommended to include identifying type of trees in the urban forest canopy when considering edible landscape. This will require people to map these trees – is anything like this being done through the Urban Forestry Committee? Ayanfe Jamison suggested Wild Roots or Fallen Fruit as a crowd-sourced data resource for edible plants in public spaces. Joan Huyser-Honig added that these resources have not been used widely in Grand Rapids, but would be worth promoting.

Joan Huyser-Honig asked the committee which of the four recommendations should be prioritized this year, and what are next steps.

Steve Krogman shared that Dwelling Place is planning to care for the beds in Pekich Park this summer, including remediating the soil and watering. He does not know the extent to which they plan to plant edible landscaping in addition to flowers and other greenery, but he will follow up with Jenn Schuab.

Eleanor Moreno shared that the Grand Rapids Public Library goal seems very feasible as well, as their strategic planning effort is currently underway and they already have gardening classes. Joan Huyser-Honig offered to follow up with John at the library to consider edible landscaping at the main branch downtown.

Joan Huyser-Honig asked about the feasibility of edible landscaping at Heartside Park. Steve Krogman replied that there used to be raised beds at Heartside south of the restroom near west fence, but they were taken down. There are no fruit trees in the park. Joan would recommend planting current bushes or gouda berries that require little maintenance. Catherine shared that there is a group of neighbors working on fresh food access that came out of the Heartside Quality of Life Study, and she can connect the group with this committee.

Joan inquired if the Parks Department would be interested in starting a nursery (outdoor/in-ground, grown for a couple years then transplanted elsewhere). Steve Krogman replied that his staff does not currently have capacity to explore anything like this. Liz Visser said there might be potential at Blandford, but she would follow up with land stewardship manager. They have run into issues in the past with deer, rabbits, and squirrels. Ayanfe Jamison offered to support any nursery project.

Joan Huyser-Honig asked if the fruit trees at MLK Park are still alive. Steve Krogman was unsure, and would have to check (there is not irrigation at this park). The fruit trees at Aberdeen Park are doing well, and just needed to be pruned. Lisa Oliver-King know of a neighbor(s) near MLK Park that might be interested in caring for the fruit trees there.

Policy Summary and Recommendations

Catherine Zietse updated the committee that a few policy topic summary sheets still need to be completed, and committee chair Levi Gardner decided it would be more beneficial for the committee to spend their time this evening discussing outreach opportunities. A full draft of policy recommendations will be completed and shared with the committee at the July 10 meeting. City Manager Mark Washington has also been invited to attend the July meeting.

Discussion of Summer Outreach Event

Catherine shared that at last meeting's discussion of committee goals, the committee desired more emphasis to be placed on awareness and promotion of urban agriculture. The idea for a summer outreach event was proposed, and the floor was opened for discussion of planning an event.

Liz Visser shared that at community feedback session last fall, residents were mostly concerned with how City ordinances affected their personal gardens and properties. An outreach event could be structured around OKT's Growing Guide or to explain current ordinances, with practical application or

demonstrations. Ayanfe Jamison suggested a skill swap or conference for local farmers to do demos, which would probably work best in early spring. Something could be built into the Neighborhood Summit next spring. Liz Visser shared that Blandford hosted a seed share event this past spring, and something of that format could potentially be replicated at Neighborhood Summit. She agreed to follow up with the event coordinator to discuss expanding the event.

Lisa Oliver-King suggested the committee have a presence at existing markets and meet ups this summer to raise awareness, which would build momentum to a larger event next spring (whether a standalone event or participation in Summit). One potential outreach event could happen at the Southeast Area Farmers Market at MLK Park, combined with a workshop about the fruit trees there. Joining in with existing events and programming will be much more successful. Lisa Oliver-King and Jill Myer volunteered to develop a list of existing summer opportunities for next meeting.

Action items

- Steve, Joan, and Catherine to make contacts to advance edible landscaping recommendations
- Liz to explore expansion of Blandford's seed exchange event
- Jill and Lisa to develop a list of summer farmers markets and gardening events to share with Catherine for next meeting
- Levi, Joan, and Catherine to complete draft policy recommendations for next meeting.

Meeting adjourned 7:07 pm.

Next Meeting – July 10, Garfield Park Neighborhoods Association (334 Burton St. SE)

**URBAN AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday July 10, 2019**

Call to Order

No quorum – members present facilitated a conversation with residents who attended.

**URBAN AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday September 11, 2019**

Call to Order - Meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm

Roll Call

Present: Joan Huyser-Honig, Ayanfe Jamison, Steve Krogman, Jill Myer, Lisa Oliver-King, Liz Visser, Rori Weston, Dave Zimmerman

Absent: Connie Bohatch, Rachel Hood, Eleanor Moreno

Other: Wende Randall, Kristin Trovillion, Catherine Zietse (City staff)

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Jill Myer, supported by Lisa Oliver-King, to approve the September 11 agenda as presented. Carries unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Lisa Oliver-King, supported by Steve Krogman, to approve the May 8 minutes as presented. Carries unanimously.

Public Comments

Kristen Trovillion introduced herself as the newest appointed member to the Urban Agriculture Committee. She is the Sustainability Coordinator at Grand Rapids Public Schools. Many schools in the system have community gardens, some of which are interested in resurrecting old gardens that have fallen out of care. She and others in the organization are looking at how administration can better support teachers for successful gardens at school sites.

Wende Randall with Kent County Essential Needs Task Force reported that the ENFT Food and Nutrition Coalition participated in conducting a survey around food security and health of neighborhoods, led by Calvin College Center for Social Research. The full data set will be released this fall or winter. She also shared a success story of Allen Manor Senior Living Facility connecting with nearby neighbors to create a community garden, supported by Bates Place.

Round Robin Announcements

- Rori Weston – There has been an increase in attendance at the Fulton St. Farmers Market (10 vendors have had record breaking days this summer!). MSU Extension and Master Gardeners present at the market throughout the season has been well received.
- Liz Visser – Blandford Nature Center's Jeans & Jewels Gala is on September 19. At the farm, they have been increasing programming with community events like tomato and wine pairings.
- Catherine Zietse – New members were appointed to the Urban Agriculture Committee yesterday at City Commission. In addition to Kristen Trovillion who represents GRPS, Crystal Tunstall from Baxter Community Center was appointed.
- Steve Krogman – City Commission approved a ballot measure for a renewed and expanded Parks Millage, which will be on the ballot this November.
- Dave Zimmerman welcomed everyone to Habitat for Humanity. They have a large native garden out back, with three bee hives down the hill in the learning garden. Habitat's biggest current

project is Plaza Roosevelt, which is under construction with 48 low income apartments in addition to a new high school and green space. It will be finished next year.

- Ayanfe Jamison – The SE Area Farmers market is entering second half of the season and will be at LINC Up on Saturdays, 11am – 4pm. New City Farm Café will be open for the rest of this month on Thursdays.
- Lisa – OKT's Program for Growth at MLK Leadership Academy has been very successful in improving the school menu and growing relationships with parents and nutritional services. The program has primarily worked with students and parents in pre-K and K to grow and harvest over the summer. She will be attending the Rise Up & Drawdown Conference in September and will represent OKT on a panel discussion on food and climate change. She also attended the Closing Hunger Gap conference in North Carolina this summer. The Black Farmers and Urban Gardeners conference in New York City is coming in October.
- Jill – Garden at Kent County Health Department has been tended this summer by the Urban League's Urban Fellows, which has gone very well. She will be attending a Farms, Food & Health conference in Traverse City this month.
- Joan – Went on Dwelling Place tour of downtown gardens in August and reported that it was very exciting and encouraging to see where garden activities are occurring. Pekich Park now has a designated spot for annual and perennial vegetables.

New Business

Vice Chair Election

Joan Huyser-Honig became chair per committee bylaws after Levi Gardners' resignation as chair in May. Lisa Oliver-King nominates Jill Myer as vice chair, supported by Steve Krogman. No discussion. Motion carries unanimously.

Letter to City Manager

Jessica Bown from Aquinas College submitted a letter to the Urban Agriculture Committee regarding the temporary use of goats on Aquinas campus for invasive species and brush removal, which is against current City ordinance. In response, committee chair and vice chair have drafted a letter to the City Manager requesting a pilot project for such use next summer in partnership with Aquinas. The pilot project could be used to inform future policy changes regarding such uses. They present the letter to the committee for feedback and approval.

Steve Krogman has not had any direct experience working with goats in Grand Rapids parks, but has seen successful use in many cities around the state and country and he is in favor of a pilot project. He believes goats have been used in Ottawa County Parks. Kristen Trovillion shared that the City of Indianapolis (her previous employer) used goats for vacant land maintenance and found that it worked best with thorough upfront communication to neighbors. They rotated four goats to different properties. Liz Visser also shared that Ada Christian School uses goats as part of student curriculum and to maintain landscaping. She suggests more local examples could be added to strengthen to the letter.

Catherine Zietse explained that once the letter is submitted to the City Manager, the process would be to get the proposal on the City Commission agenda (variable timeline depending on other agenda items). Aquinas is hoping to pilot the project next summer.

Wende Randall suggested the letter recognize that there would be a plan in place to communicate with neighbors.

Dave Zimmerman made a motion to approve the letter, supported by Lisa Oliver-King. Unanimously approves.

Old Business

Draft Policy Recommendations

Joan Huyser-Honig reminded the committee that research on policy and best practices has been completed for backyard chickens, backyard livestock, bees, and edible landscaping. She is seeking input on the general layout of the document and whether the committee should submit this document to the planning department now or wait until more topics and recommendations are completed.

Ayanfe Jamison asked that George Washington Carver Edible Park in Asheville be added to list of examples for edible landscaping.

Wende Randall inquired about the process of submitting these recommendations. Catherine Zietse explained that the document would be submitted to Planning Department staff, who would take the lead on crafting ordinance language that would accomplish goals and outcomes set out by the committee in this document. A public hearing would not occur until after ordinance language has been finalized by City staff. Wende shared that the Food and Nutrition Coalition is very interested in staying involved in this policy process, and a communication plan should be in place for once policy is available for public comment to maximize public support.

The document is pending the research and recommendations for residential composting. It was determined to move this topic to section V, Future Policy Recommendations. Joan's research and recommendations for backyard livestock will be incorporated into section II and III.

Lisa Oliver-King made a motion to approve the policy recommendations document with proposed edits and additions of backyard livestock section. The motion is supported by Dave Zimmerman and carries unanimously.

Future Agenda Items and Further Discussion

Joan Huyser-Honig asked for a committee member to commit to the researching for two remaining subjects. Liz Visser and Lisa Oliver-King will work on accessory structures for the January 2020 committee meeting. Rori Weston will continue her work to create recommendations for farm stands and farmers markets.

Joan Huyser-Honig asked the committee what other work they should focus on in the near future, acknowledging that there will be some waiting for City staff to respond to recommendations. Liz Visser stated that community members present at the July meeting expressed the desire for more opportunities for engagement and education on current ordinances. If the committee does outreach work now, they will have an existing base to share policy updates with when the time comes. The committee had previously discussed presenting at the 2020 Neighborhood Summit and should discuss a proposal at the November meeting.

Jill Myer suggested another project to move forward with is mapping current community gardens and urban agriculture activities throughout the city, leaning on local colleges and universities for research or service-learning support.

Meeting adjourned 7:00 pm.

Next Meeting – November 13, City Hall (300 Monroe NW), Conf. Room 601

**URBAN AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday November 13, 2019**

Call to Order - Meeting was called to order at 6:04 pm

Roll Call

Present: Joan Huyser-Honig, Steve Krogman, Jill Myer, Lisa Oliver-King, Connie Bohatch, Kristen Trovillion

Absent: Crystal Tunstall, Rori Weston, Liz Visser, Ayanfe Jamison, Rachel Hood, Eleanor Moreno, Dave Zimmerman

Other: Brianne Czyzio-Robach (ENTF), Janelle Johnson, Catherine Zietse (City staff)

Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Kristen Trovillion, supported by Jill Myer, to approve the November 13 agenda as presented. Carries unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Jill Myer, supported by Steve Krogman, to approve the September 11 minutes as presented. Carries unanimously.

Public Comments

Brianne Czyzio-Robach introduced herself. She is representing the Essential Needs Task Force.

Janelle Johnson introduced herself. She represents Mercy Health St. Mary's.

Round Robin Announcements

- Kristen Trovillion shared that GRPS is designing a system-wide assessment tool and inventory of schoolyard natural features and programs, as well as those within walking distance of schools (rain gardens, vegetable gardens, etc.) with the intent to increase access and outdoor learning opportunities. Data collection will begin in spring 2020.
- Catherine Zietse thanked those who voted last week in support of the Parks Millage.

Old Business & Information Items

Updates on items submitted to the City

A letter to City Manager requesting a pilot project for temporary goat use on Aquinas campus was submitted on behalf of the committee. Connie Bohatch shared that there is support from City Manager and City Attorney's office on this project, and City staff will need to determine the best processes and agreements to put in place. The City Attorney would like to view location to better determine the process, proximity to houses, etc. Code Compliance Manager Eric Jordan will be following up with Aquinas and leading the project. There is potential for future committee involvement with neighborhood communication and education.

Policy recommendations were also submitted to the Planning Department last month. Connie Bohatch shared that Kristin Turkelson (who typically oversees crafting new ordinances) is on acting assignment as the Planning Director. At this point, staffing levels in the Planning Department have not changed to be able to have capacity to address urban agriculture recommendations in coordination with attorney's office. The committee should consider what other goals and educational opportunities they can work on in the meantime.

New Business & Discussion Items

2020 Meeting Calendar

A draft calendar of 2020 meeting dates was presented for committee review and approval. A new start time of 5:30 pm was suggested. Locations for summer meetings were discussed, with representation in each ward. Catherine Zietse will finalize locations and share with the group.

Kristen Trovillion, supported by Lisa Oliver-King, made a motion to approve the 2020 calendar with proposed dates and amended times. Motion carries.

Committee Members

Joan Huyser-Honig opened the discussion regarding the attendance of current committee members and asked the committee to weigh in on if replacement positions should be sought. Specifically, committee member Rep. Rachel Hood has been able to attend one of the six meetings in 2019, and there are other residents willing to participate that have more capacity to regularly attend.

Committee bylaws state, "Committee members are to miss no more than three meetings in a calendar year. At the third absence, the Committee may recommend a replacement be sought." This committee would make a recommendation to Committee of Appointments, who ultimately makes the decision.

Lisa Oliver-King clarified the option to be present via phone. Catherine Zietse confirmed this is a valid way of attending the meeting.

Jill suggested the committee write a formal letter to Rachel thanking her for her service, stating committee attendance policy and sharing our desire to keep her up to date with committee business. Joan Huyser-Honig volunteered to draft the letter.

Lisa Oliver-King made a motion to recommend to the Committee on Appointments that the City seeks a replacement for Rachel Hood based on previous attendance in 2019 as based on committee attendance policy (Committee Bylaws 3.11). Jill Myer seconds, motion carries unanimously.

Community Engagement

Committee Status Report

Joan Huyser-Honig shared the idea to create a one-page summary of committee accomplishments and goals to share with the community. She opened discussion for what should be included in a report.

Connie Bohatch mentioned that if it is determined that the goat project needs to be brought before City Commission, the committee can include their formal approval of the project in the report. Lisa Oliver-King suggested to include brief profile of each committee member.

Kristen Trovillion inquired if there is an entity that already puts out reports on urban agriculture activities or locations in Grand Rapids. There have not been any reports currently. Connie Bohatch cautioned that any such content should only include activities or operations that are legal under current ordinances.

Joan Huyser-Honig summarized that the most important things to include would be who we are, our goals, accomplishments, any challenges, and next steps. Jill Myer, Joan Huyser-Honig, and Lisa Oliver-King volunteered to create a draft report for the committee to review on January 8. Connie Bohatch suggested the report could also be published on the committee three-year anniversary (May 2020).

2020 Neighborhood Summit

Catherine Zietse reported that the 2020 Neighborhood Summit Theme is “Growing Community & Justice” and will take place on March 7th, 2020, at GVSU’s Pew Campus. Submission deadlines for proposals are end of December.

Connie suggested the session could be hosted by the committee with educational components or a panel discussion. Kristen Trovillion advocated for a panel discussion in order to elevate existing organizations and residents successfully doing urban agriculture work. Panelists could share challenges or misconceptions they have encountered or unique stories or models worth replicating. Jill Myer agreed, but advocated to also keep education as a main component in alignment with committee goals. Lisa Oliver-King thought panelists should be those who have benefited from the work of the committee. Lisa Oliver-King, Kristen Trovillion, and Jill Myer volunteered to form a subcommittee to further develop and submit a workshop proposal.

Joan Huyser-Honig suggested that the committee could hand out seed packages at a tabling event (a hearty annual like alyssum flowers). Jill Myer stated the Health Department can commit to printing labels. Kristen shared that the City High/MS Eco-Club could potentially volunteer to package seeds.

Additional Community Engagement Activities

Jill Myer opened discussion for additional activities or other engagement opportunities. Brianne Czyzio-Robach shared that ENTF Food and Nutrition Coalition has nothing planned right now.

Lisa Oliver-King shared that OKT will be involved in hosting Midwest “Why Hunger” gathering on March 20 and 21 at Plymouth UCC Church, which could be an opportunity for committee involvement.

Other opportunities mentioned were the Blandford Seed Share event in March, the Hunger walk in May, Baxter Jamboree in June, and Metro Health farm market.

Future agenda item: City’s Age-Friendly Communities Plan

Meeting adjourned 7:12 pm.

Next Meeting – January 8, 5:30 pm at City Hall (300 Monroe NW), Conf. Room 611