

Grand Lakes Green Committee

Meeting Date: March 18, 2018, 4:30-6:00pm

Committee Members in Attendance: Leigh Anne Goerland, Julie Bush

+ 1 resident attended the meeting (Ivan Galindo)

## Meeting Minutes

### **Old Business:**

#### Community Garden:

The committee discussed multiple topics regarding the garden:

- Soil samples were taken on March 8<sup>th</sup> for TestAmerica (precautionary heavy metal testing) and the Texas AgriLife Extension (nutrient testing). We expect to get the results from TestAmerica this week and the AgriLife Extension in a couple weeks. We will ask IMS to till (already approved by the Board) once the TestAmerica results are in. We do not need to wait for the nutrient testing to till or plant. Nitrogen or other needed nutrients can be added to planted beds.
- Signs: We discussed the suggestions emailed from Denise Dibble's Girl Scout troop:
  - Bed number/markers: We decided not to put numbers on the beds, but rather include a diagram on the garden rules sign. This solution is simpler and does not require drilling into the brick of the beds. The reservation beds will be those furthest east - these get the gentler morning sun, not the hot afternoon sun. This also enables the open beds to be in direct view from the Barn Park.
  - A garden usage sign: The rules were finalized and have been sent to the Board for approval. We will hard laminate the 8.5"x11" page and staple it to two posts at the garden gazebo (place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> post from the ends facing inward on the east set of posts). *Action: Leigh Anne to draft the bed reservation/diagram sign, which will be stapled under the rules sign.*
  - Plant labels: We selected the zinc version of the signs recommended by Girl Scouts, as copper is often stolen. We will keep it simple for now, and plan to write on the labels with sharpie and omit any additional plant info. Idea for the future: explore adding QR codes (that link to plant info) to the plant labels - the FBMG does this at their beds by the FB County Fair Grounds. The plant name and QR code are printed on a label, laminated, and then affixed to the wire label with a binder clip.
- Jump Start Plants:
  - We will plan to plant in 1-2 beds. We decided on the following plants:
    - a variety of herbs as these are popular and relatively easy to grow: basil (3), oregano (3), parsley (3), cilantro (3), thyme (3)

- a couple large generally popular plants: tomatoes (6 - any kind), bell peppers (6). Contingency would be celery if others not available.
  - We will need to construct a trellis or buy cages for the tomatoes. *Action: Leigh Anne to research/price and ask Girl Scouts if they would be willing to donate since we decided to forgo purchase of bed numbers.*
  - *Action: Leigh Anne to reach out to Cecil Jones with above plant list. If desired plants are not available, we will work from what is available at Enchanted Gardens and if needed supplement with purchases from Home Depot or the like.*
- Considerations/Notes:
  - Suggested planting dates for jump start plants are April 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup>. While planting in March is ideal, concerns about lead time were expressed by Leigh Anne. *Action: Leigh Anne to follow up with Denise on these dates.*
  - We will plan to have the Girl Scouts put up a grid in the bed and plant within the grid squares. Ideally plants needing less water should be planted in areas of the beds that receive the least irrigation (based on spray pattern). Also, larger plants need more space. Ivan agreed to review suggested plant placement for us if he cannot attend the event.
  - *Action: Leigh Anne to follow up with Board to ask if rules and reserved bed application form have been approved.*

### Recycle Drive

The recycle drive is April 14<sup>th</sup> (noon-4pm). Leigh Anne will email the survey email list to ask for 2 volunteers per 2 hour slot (incl. volunteer waiver). Julie plans to attend noon-2pm and stay if needed. Leigh Anne plans to attend noon-4pm. We will keep tabs again this year on number of cars/families participating day-of. Leigh Anne will bring the safety vests and drinks/snacks left over from the litter pickup for volunteers. *Action: Leigh Anne to inform Board we wish to put out "Resident Recycle Drive noon-4pm Alexander Elementary" signs next to the garage sale banners the week of the event. To do this we will tape a note to the back of the litter pickup signs.*

### Common Area Sprinkler Watering During/After Rain

Ivan provided an overview of how sprinkler systems work, and we reviewed information previously provided by Stan Castleman (IMS). Leigh Anne asked about feasibility of adding moisture meters to supplement rain sensors and the weather station; Ivan indicated meter corrosion, uneven moisture throughout a zone (causing problems deciding where to put a meter) and cost can be issues.

We identified a number of questions:

- 1) How does the weather station communicate to the controllers (hard cable, over air signal, internet connection)? How could we improve this communication to prevent watering during/after rain events?
- 2) What criteria is used to determine the frequency/duration of irrigation for each zone? (in household use can use the 1" per week tuna fish can test)
- 3) How does the software for the irrigation connect to the controllers (hard cable, over air signal, internet connection)?
- 4) Are there rain sensors around GL or is only weather station data used?

The objective of understanding how the GL irrigation system works is to be able to better inform GL residents about why issues occur, and what they should do to report an irrigation issue. We decided that a newsletter article and/or website info would be a productive outcome of our discussion with IMS. We are also open to hearing from IMS about any potential improvements to address watering during/after rain.

*Action: Leigh Anne to ask Stan for some suggested meeting times. Meeting at the Barn Park would be ideal as it would also allow Stan to demonstrate for us how the watering in the Community Garden works.*

**Next Steps:**

1. Progress community garden action items and target April completion of garden revitalization.
2. Recycle Drive - April 14<sup>th</sup>
3. Set up meeting with IMS re irrigation.

Next meeting TBD.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.