

Grand Lakes Green Committee

Meeting Date: December 18, 2021, 10:30am-1pm (Virtual)

Committee Members in Attendance: Leigh Anne Goerland, Teresa Huddleston, Julie Bush, Margie Benitez

Committee Members Absent: none

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **Community Garden**

The committee reviewed the draft of a presentation Teresa put together regarding the current issues and proposed actions for the Grand Lakes Community Garden. The goal is to present at the January HOA meeting.

The committee agreed on Teresa's statement of the garden's purpose. It is a convenient space for interested gardeners that offers the opportunity to enhance gardening skills. The garden also promotes a healthy lifestyle and creates a sense of community among Grand Lakes residents.

The majority of the meeting was spent discussing issues and goals. The committee agreed on the following issues:

1. Lack of maintenance and activity by some gardeners leading to weed overgrowth, end of life/dead crops that sometimes persist in the beds longer than they should, and periodic empty beds. These issues exist in both the reserved and shared beds. The gardens are often thriving. However, because they rely solely on volunteer residents to weed and maintain them and have no structured maintenance, during busy or hot times of year the garden can become neglected.
2. Need to replenish crushed granite. Margie noted that this also includes removing the weeds growing through the granite. A weed barrier, heightening the rim to contain the granite, and addressing any drainage issues were also identified as needs. The Board committed to resolving the crushed granite issue by the end of 2021, but did not do so.
3. Need to replace the Celeste Fig tree that died on the north side of the garden.
4. Destruction of the reserved bed signs via vandalism. One sign was taken and the five others are twisted and/or detached from the beds.

Regarding goals:

Leigh Anne proposed to take a break from the reserved bed concept at the end of the current winter growing season. The time spent to monitor the beds, the varying levels of resident interest in the concept, and the destruction of the reserved signs were given as primary reasons for the break. Julie expressed concern at ending reservations for gardeners with thriving beds who were taking good care. The committee reviewed the current reservations and how long each gardener had the opportunity to garden. Discussion commenced on whether we should recommend a break to the Board or whether we should continue with the reserved concept. It was noted that stopping the

reserved concept for now does not mean that it could not be reintroduced later in conjunction with the purchasing of sturdier weatherproof signs. Leigh Anne asked for a vote on this decision; the committee unanimously voted to recommend taking a break from the reserved bed concept at the end of the current winter growing season.

We also discussed implementing scheduled weeding in the beds by a landscaping company. Leigh Anne raised the issue that landscapers weeding the garden may not know the difference between weeds and budding crops (an issue IMS had mentioned when Leigh Anne had broached the subject with Stan Castleman a couple years back); the committee acknowledged that this may also be true for residents who weed the spaces. The committee agreed that paid scheduled weeding and removal of dead crops would be beneficial for the space and that we would recommend it to the Board.

Margie suggested a monthly walk-through of the garden plots by Green Committee members to ensure the space is receiving the weeding and trash removal attention it needs. Julie and Leigh Anne shared an issue with PVC poles meant for the trash that lingered atop the pergola despite a TownSq request; eventually Julie and her husband brought a ladder and removed them. Alternating the walk-through responsibility among committee members would help spread the load. Margie volunteered to do the first few months, and committee members agreed.

Teresa expressed interest in increasing resident awareness of the space. The committee discussed newsletter articles and possible Facebook posts but did not make any decisions. Teresa suggested an Earth Day event at the community garden to encourage residents to utilize the space. The committee discussed a previous idea of planting native ornamentals in the space to attract beneficial insects. Providing residents with a list of suggested plants and inviting them to plant ornamentals at the garden during the event was well received by the committee. Teresa also suggested inviting a master gardener to speak and volunteered to coordinate the event. The suggested natives from Amy Barta as well as any Teresa gathers from research or local nurseries can be used. We will include the event as a goal in our presentation to the Board.

The structure of the presentation was discussed and it was clarified which goals the committee would be responsible for and which we are asking the HOA Board to be responsible for. Margie took an action to capture pictures for the presentation, and Teresa took an action to update the presentation and circulate to the committee for review.

### **Next Steps:**

Next meeting TBD.

Meeting adjourned at 1:00pm.