

MINUTES OF THE FOREST PRESERVE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING HELD  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2013 IN THE GREENBELT COMMUNITY CENTER

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Robert Snyder called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

PRESENT were members Donna Almquist, Valerie Elliott, Susan Gregersen, Robert Snyder, Yoni Siegel, Willis Witter and Joseph Murray. Mr. Ossi was absent due to illness. Ms. Hoffmeister was absent due to work scheduling.

ALSO PRESENT were City Council liaison Rodney Roberts and Celia Craze, Director, Department of Planning and Community Development.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved by a vote of 6-1.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: On a motion by Ms. Gregersen and seconded by Ms. Almquist, the minutes of the meeting of June 27, 2013 were approved as written, the minutes of the meeting of September 26, 2013 were approved with changes, and the minutes of the meeting of October 24, 2013 were approved with changes.

UPDATE OF FPAB CONTACT LIST: Members submitted updates to the FPAB contact list to Ms. Craze to be forwarded to the City Clerk.

COMMENTS ON CHAIRMAN SNYDER'S RESPONSE LETTER (OCTOBER 14, 2013)  
TO GCGC LETTER READ TO CITY COUNCIL AT THE SEPTEMBER 30, 2013

WORKSESSION: Mr. Murray asked that in the future that the Board be consulted on correspondence before it is transmitted. He expressed disagreement with some of the points in the letter. Chairman Snyder responded that he believed some of the statements in the September 30, 2013 letter questioned the Board's knowledge about forest ecology, that there had been some informal discussion about the September 30, 2013 letter and he felt it was necessary to respond to the letter. Chairman Snyder noted that he had signed the letter, and the letter did not reflect the opinion of the Board, but reflected his personal thoughts and opinions.

MOTION RE. ANCESTRAL KNOWLEDGE: Mr. Witter made the following motion:  
*The FPAB thanks Councilman Rodney Roberts for his offer to work with AK toward changes that would allow its children renewed access to the Forest Preserve, in compliance with Forest Preserve guidelines. In this light the FPAB asks the Greenbelt City Council cooperate with this effort and instruct city staff to do likewise".*

The motion failed for lack of a second.

REPORT ON TREE SURVEY WITHIN THE PROPOSED 8' ROUTINE MAINTENANCE PERIMETER ROUND THE COMMUNITY GARDENS: Chairman Snyder summarized the FPAB's survey of the three community garden areas (Gardenway, Henry's Hollow, and Hamilton Place) over two Sunday afternoons.

Ms. Elliott made the following motion: *That Public Works begin the tree trimming and clearing within the staked areas at Gardenway gardens. Staked areas are defined as the area starting at the gardener's fence line and measuring out eight (8) feet. Public Works have placed a wooden stake at the 8 foot point. It is recommended that a permanent marker such as a concrete pipe be placed at this point so that both Public Works and community gardeners know exactly where this point is located. It is recommended that this 8 foot point where the stake has been placed (and later a concrete pipe should one be placed) be called the permanent boundary point for the gardens at Gardenway. No gardens shall allowed beyond this point. No gardener shall be allowed to do anything beyond this point including the cutting of trees, trimming of vegetation or spraying of pesticides. In addition the entire staked area as defined will be maintained by the city and is not to be maintained by any other entity. It is recommended that an 8 foot wide area be cleared of trees and other vegetation around all of the Gardenway gardens with the following exceptions:*

- 1. There is an area of the gardens which borders/encroaches into GHI property, and that area should be left undisturbed for GHI to attend to.*
- 2. There are a few trees that should not be removed within this 8 foot area. These trees will be marked by the FPAB prior to Public Works undertaking its clearing.*

*Public Works should also remove any trees growing within gardens and along the fence lines (as referred to as routine maintenance as set forth in the Management and Maintenance Guidelines) and free access within the gardens will be permitted by the gardeners for the removal of these trees.*

*Since the best time to prune large trees is in the late winter, it is recommended that the cutting of the upper portions of the trees (whose trunks are within the preserve but upper branches are leaning over the gardens) be scheduled in late January or February; and that such limbs and branches be trimmed off at a 90 degree angle to the ground, at the point of the fence lines of the gardens.*

Ms. Siegel seconded the motion. Discussion continued as follows:

- FPAB was not ready to make a recommendation regarding maintenance boundaries for Henry's Hollow and Hamilton Place gardens, so the Board was moving forward with the proposed recommendation for Gardenway so maintenance work can begin.
- The recommendation for Gardenway gardens could serve as a prototype for the other garden areas.
- The best time to trim trees would be in January and February, so moving forward with a recommendation would allow maintenance work to begin.
- There are large trees adjacent to and within the 8 foot maintenance perimeter which should be saved, including a large willow oak.

There were questions about the vertical clearing within the 8 foot perimeter. It was expressed as a general understanding that the 8 foot perimeter related to ground clearing. Mr. Witter suggested that shading caused by trees outside the 8 foot

perimeter be evaluated for possible pruning on a case by case basis. In response to a question by Mr. Roberts, Chairman Snyder stated that recommendations for the gardens at Henry's Hollow and Hamilton Place would probably not reflect a strict 8 foot perimeter, but would be reduced based on specific circumstances.

Mr. Murray stated he believed that the buffer needed to be wider in some locations, especially along the southern edges, and he supported the 40 foot meadow buffer suggested in a letter (previously submitted) by Lauren Whittaker. Mr. Murray also asked that the garden club be invited to any future surveys of the proposed maintenance buffer at the community gardens scheduled by the Board.

Ms. Almquist moved that the following amendment to the main motion under discussion:

*There is also a willow oak located on the southeast corner of the Gardenway gardens which had been flagged by Public Works and should be saved.*

Ms. Siegel seconded. Mr. Witter stated he did not believe that the tree specified in the motion should be saved due to shading.

The amendment passed by a vote of 5-2.

The main motion with the amendment passed by a vote of 7-0.

**DISCUSSION OF THE USE OF PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES IN THE FOREST PRESERVE AND COMMUNITY GARDENS:** Chairman Snyder read from the author's introduction of the book Natural Solutions to the Things That Bug You (2012) by Dr. Myles Bader. He then read passages from an article in the Chesapeake Bay Foundation magazine (Spring, 2013) on the decline of the bee population attributed to the use of pesticides. The discussion continued about the garden club health guide, which does not prohibit the use of pesticides and herbicides. Ms. Almquist asked Mr. Moll if the Garden Club Executive Board had surveyed gardeners about use of pesticides, and he indicated that they had not.

Maggie Cahalan, of Green ACES, stated that they had done an extensive study of pesticides and found no reason why gardens in the forest preserve should be exempted from the city's Sustainable Land Care Policy. She stated that the use of pesticides is a public health issue, and GCGC should be made to justify why pesticide use should be allowed.

Further discussion will be held to an upcoming meeting.

**DISCUSSION OF GRILLING, COOKING AND THE USE OF FIRE IN THE FORST PRESERVE AND COMMUNITY GARDENS:** Chairman Snyder stated that during the Board's survey of the proposed maintenance buffer at the community gardens, they had seen grills, fire pits, and containers of flammable liquids in the gardens. Ms. Gregersen noted that cooking and having fires in the forest preserve, which includes the gardens, is prohibited by city code. Mr. Murray stated he did not believe that these regulations applied to the community gardens and Mr. Witter stated he believed that having cookouts was part of the social activity of community gardening. Chairman Snyder

asked that the forest preserve regulatory signs be placed in the garden areas. Ms. Craze stated that the code was clear on this issue, and grilling or having fires in the preserve, including the gardens, is prohibited,

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting was scheduled for December 19, 2013 at 7 p.m. in room 114 of the Community Center.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER: Chairman Snyder read a quote by Rachel Carson.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Celia W. Craze

Director

These minutes were approved by a vote of 9-0.