



****DRAFT****

Community Gardens Resources Workgroup

Meeting Notes - October 30, 2009

Attendees: Jill Kuehler, Co-Chair, Zenger Farm; Nancy Stevens, Co-Chair, Kaiser Permanente; Mara Reynolds, Community Gardens; Nell Tessman, Growing Gardens; Laura Barton, Oregon Dept. of Agriculture; Mary Anne Cassin, Portland Parks Board; Kellie Torres Walker, Portland Parks; Claudia Knotek, New Seasons Market; Nancy Bond, Portland Public Schools; Erica Stokes, West Multnomah SWCD; Nat Lichten, Growing Gardens; Deb Lippolt, Growing Gardens

Purpose: Develop a public/private funding strategy to enhance/sustain the community garden program

Nancy and Jill opened the meeting by inviting roundtable introductions, with each member sharing their most memorable gardening story.

The group then reviewed the vision statement from Commissioner Fish and the "charge" to: "Develop a public/private funding strategy to enhance/sustain the community garden program." They discussed the difficulty of identifying resource and budget needs without knowing what organizational structure might ultimately be proposed.

Stephanie assured them that there will be a lot of overlap in the discussions of the three work groups: organizational structure, demand, and resources and that it will be natural for their discussions about resources to include discussions about organizational structure and demand for gardens.

The group reviewed the budget for the city's community gardens program and had several questions about the role played by Friends of Portland

Community Gardens, a 501(c)(3) non-profit. The group agreed that someone from Friends needs to be added to the resources work group or at least come to a meeting to explain more. Stephanie shared that Friends has been struggling to stay viable and she will follow up to bring someone from Friends to the group.

There was a fair amount of discussion about scope of the community gardens program - is the group just to look at funding for the city's program? In reviewing the Nick Fish vision statement and hearing from Stephanie what the other work groups have discussed, the group agreed that the expectation is that the work group should think more broadly than just the city's Community Garden program and might be as broad as Urban Gardening (outside the Portland City limits).

The group unanimously agreed that the level of resources for the city's current program is not adequate, and talked about other models that could be looked at. Stephanie said that P-Patch, a thriving program in Seattle is going to be invited to speak to the entire Oregon Solutions Team. Information about P-Patch will be provided. Nancy indicated that she has a contact with Denver Urban Gardens and will get more information about them. Mary Anne pointed out that several thriving organizations, including the Portland Japanese Garden and the Portland Chinese Garden began as a Parks program, just like community gardens. The key has been to find a strong cadre of support. The conversation turned again to Friends and the importance of a strong non-profit entity to help generate funding for community gardens.

Nancy described her experience as a funder and the shifts she has seen in the what funders are looking for over the past five years:

- more requests for funding operating costs than projects (funders don't like funding operating costs as much)
- requests for funding have quadrupled
- funders are shifting to supporting technical assistance and capacity building
- looking at program sustainability and availability of matching dollars
- requiring more proof that applicants are able to meet the terms of a grant award by shifting resources within their current budgets
- individual donors are becoming an even more important source of funding

Claudia Knotek pointed out the need to bring more business people into the effort to support community gardens. Discussion followed about the opportunity that is available to build support from the business community (or anyone else), but remains untapped due to the lack of capacity by the city or Friends. Everyone agreed that there was greater potential for appealing to other resources because of the "ethic" in Portland. Claudia reminded the group that to make an organization appealing to donors, contributions need to be tax deductible. At this point, it seems that Friends could serve as a fiscal agent for contributions but does not have the capacity to mount a large scale fundraising

campaign.

Stephanie gave a homework assignment for each group member to bring to the next work group meeting names of potential businesses who might support community gardens.

The group discussed developing both a short-term, "finger in the dyke" strategy for supporting the current city program, and a longer term strategy for building a sustainable program. They agreed that the term "resources" means more than money, and started a list of potential resources:

General types of Resources

- . Tax base, tax subsidies
- Individual giving
- Structure to manage volunteers: loaned execs, SCORE, RSVP
- Donation of space for city's staff
- Donation of land
- Volunteers
- Business sponsorship (adopt-a-garden)
- Grants
- Education
- Technical assistance
- Shared resources among non-profits
- Look at "green spaces" model

Organizations that might provide resources to community garden

- Federal (NIH, USDA, stimulus dollars)
- Portland Business Alliance or Portland Business Council
- Technical Assistance for Community Service (TACS)
- Portland Parks Foundation
- Foundations
- School district
- Mercy Corps.
- Housing Authority

The group concluded with a candid discussion about the program infrastructure. They agreed that the program does not have to stay within the City's Parks department and that it might be easier to find funding if it does not. If it does stay in the Parks Dept., the group agreed it must have more funding and staff. The group discussed "beefing up" the Friends group and/or creating a new, stronger 501(c)(3) and creating a transition plan to move community gardens out of Parks. The city would need to provide budgetary support for the transition in addition to funding the current program. Discussion about how this transition might work will be a focus of the next work group meeting.

The meeting adjourned at noon.

Next Work Group Meetings: Monday, November 16 from 3 to 5 pm and Monday, December 7 from Noon to 2 or 3 pm - both meetings will be at the Food Innovation Center, 1207 NW Naito Parkway.

Next full Oregon Solutions Team meeting is Friday, November 13 from 9 am to noon, location TBA.

Summary of Followup Assignments:

- **Stephanie** will contact Friends of Community Gardens to have someone attend the next work group meeting
- **Nancy** will get more information about Denver Urban Gardens
- **Everyone** in the group will bring names of businesses that might support community gardens