

## Community Gardens "Demand" Workgroup

Meeting Notes - October 28, 2009



### **Attendees:**

Jason King, *Chair*, Greenworks;  
Maren Murphy, Depave;  
Caitlen Blethen, Growing Gardens;  
Marlys Mock, Portland Public Schools;  
Jenn Bildersee, Portland Brownfields Program;  
Cassie Cohen, Vision Into Action;  
Patricia Brown, Janus Youth Village Gardens;  
Amber Baker, Janus Youth Village Gardens;  
Leslie Pohl-Kosbau, Portland Community Gardens;  
Jenny Holmes, Ecumenical Ministeries of Oregon.

### **Members absent:**

Kat West, Multnomah County; Michelle Ratcliff, EcoTrust; Karen Wolfgang, Independence Gardening; Cindy Dietz, Portland Water Bureau; Christine Leon, Portland Bureau of Transportation

**Facilitator:** Stephanie Hallock, Oregon Solutions

### **NOTES:**

Chair Jason King opened the meeting with roundtable introductions. He then provided copies of the vision statement from Commissioner Nick Fish and the Portland Community Gardens budget for 08/09 and 09/10.

He also handed out a set of questions [see attached] for discussion under the following broad topics:

- Identify what we mean by "demand"
- Summarize resources that we have in our group
- Who can make this happen? In our group? Others?
- What can we reasonably accomplish in 6 months?

The group spent most of the meeting discussing what is meant by "demand." Key elements identified were:

- acquisition of land for gardens
- providing long-term maintenance
- connecting those with knowledge and resources to those with land
- providing learning gardens
- "invisible" or "silent" demand (people who don't know about or aren't served by gardens)
- addressing physical impairments to access
- meeting the need for food
- community building
- education and outreach
- equity in location/allocation of garden space
- addressing low-income populations
- scope - broader than just the city/parks program
- ensure quality, sustainable gardens without being too restrictive

## Community Gardens "Demand" Workgroup

Meeting Notes - October 28, 2009

- link to public health

The group then discussed what is needed to address the demand for gardens.

- city program needs more resources and staffing to reduce backlog and build the program
- commitment of city leadership and parks dept. to community gardens is essential
- everyone around the table, plus others has a role to play as a partner
- land can be acquired by forming partnerships (as well as by purchase)
- garden plots in community gardens can be made smaller so more are available
- encouraging home gardens can help reduce demand
- coordination is needed between city, county, and METRO to maximize program and avoid duplication/overlap
- someone has to be dedicated to fundraising and grant writing; either staff or through partnerships
- bring in more partners, build volunteer workforce (someone needs to manage volunteers)
- achieve the city program goal of "gardens within walking distance"

The latter part of the meeting the group discussed how to focus their efforts and what could be done in the next six months. They agreed that although having a regional (METRO boundaries) community gardens program would be wonderful in the future, the group should focus for now on meeting the demand within Portland, and possibly Multnomah County.

The hierarchy for implementation for this group should be prioritized:

1. Portland Area (focus of the study)

with additional opportunities beyond including the larger:

2. Multnomah County
3. Surrounding Metro Region
4. Full Tri-County Area

They agreed that they needed to start by understanding the current universe - garden's provided by the city program and others, as well as potential property for gardens. Leslie Pohl-Kosbau, Director of the Portland Community Gardens program, will share the demographics of the current waiting list (but not personal information) and the check list her program currently provides to those interested in starting a garden. The group expressed interest in understanding how decisions are currently made about acquisition and allocation. Leslie indicated it is basically a first-come, first-served system but that sometimes opportunities arise that need to be taken advantage of. She currently has 10 potential garden sites in the works and will bring those to the next workgroup meeting to provide a hands-on experience on how decisions are made.

Maren Murphy of Depave (also a student in the Urban Planning program at PSU) offered her skills in "mapping" all of the information the group could bring in about current and potential gardens. Leslie said that Amanda Rhoads, formerly with the city, had a bunch of information and she would try and track it down. Stephanie said that she would followup with Kat West of Multnomah County who was not able to be at this meeting but is a member of the workgroup. Maren said that she can provide information from the Food Accessibility Project. All members will bring whatever information they can gather to the next meeting.

## Community Gardens "Demand" Workgroup

Meeting Notes - October 28, 2009

Creating a "best practices" guide for community gardens that is Portland-specific was discussed. Any group that currently has guidelines for community gardens will provide them electronically to Stephanie to post on the website and Stephanie will bring hard copies to discuss and compare.

Stephanie reminded the group that in addition to thinking about actions during the next six months, they should also be thinking about longer term commitments to be captured in the Declaration of Cooperation next spring. The group adjourned at noon.

**Next "Demand" Working Group Meeting:** Tuesday, November 10, 2:30-4:30 pm.

**Location:** TBA

Stephanie has reserved a conference room at Oregon Solutions in the Urban Center at PSU but also has a call in to Kat West about using a room at Multnomah County. PPS did not have a room available. Stephanie will send an email when location is confirmed.

### **Summary of Follow-up Assignments:**

- Leslie will bring the waiting list and check list and will try to track down information prepared by Amanda Rhoads
- Stephanie will follow up with Kat West of Multnomah County and will arrange next meeting location
- Jason will craft a draft definition of what our group collectively means by "demand" for review & input to guide the group
- Maren Murphy will get information from the Food Accessibility Project and identify a process for mapping information in future steps.
- All group members will bring whatever information they have about current and potential garden locations – including previous efforts and information
- All group members who have guidelines for community gardens, or identified national standards that are good models will email them to Stephanie
- Any other suggestion for assignments, please feel free to add to this list...

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Also, mark your calendars for the next full group meeting:

Time: Friday, November 13, 9am to noon;

Location: TBA