

SHUNIAH SOIL MATES COMMUNITY GARDENS MEETING - JANUARY 18, 2018 at 6:30 PM

ATTENDEES: Susan Thompson, Diane and Peter Tracz, Gordon Milne, Linda and Len Seguin, Barb and John Young, Gerry and Jo-Anne Witoluk, Carol Bruni and Trish Somerleigh.

REGRETS: Trish Neely (Hawaii), Bob Zale, Laurie Garred, Angela Calaeizzi, Karen Neimi Stevens (Jamaica), Lori LaFormme, Kristy Hintz, Nadene Hanuley, Kathy Maunula (South) and John and Sandra Kuzik (Florida).

1. **GARDEN BOX REGISTRATION FORMS:** The 2017 registration forms are now obsolete and new registrations for 2018 are required. We need a new signed form for use of each garden box. The majority of last year's gardeners (and attendees) have already indicated that they wanted their garden boxes again this year.

2. **FINANCIAL STATEMENT** - Peter reviewed the Financial Statement that was included in the meeting agenda emailed to all members. Our bank account balance is \$135.50 and we have \$94.00 cash on hand. We did not have a working budget in 2017 as we apparently did not request any. Several expenses submitted to the Shuniah Administration were covered individually. Peter has submitted a request for a 2018 Budget of \$600 to our Shuniah Offices. This will be put before council at their February meeting. Other revenue possibilities will be noted later in the agenda.

One expenditure proposed will be to expand the watering system as indicated in the diagram in the agenda. This will give us 3 or 4 hose lines spread out in the site which will greatly facilitate the access to all our garden boxes. The plan will be submitted to Craig Baumann for his comment. This water system expansion was agreed upon.

3. Bob Zale approached Peter with information regarding funding that **Northern Credit Union Limited** has to offer for Community Projects. Peter prepared a presentation package including our history and photos. Bob was very pleased and will present this package to the Credit Union on our behalf. We asked for \$1000. They would receive our public recognition of their donation in an appropriate way, ie. a newspaper submission, plaque or ceremony on site. We were proposing the use of the funds toward building some elevated garden boxes (easier for gardeners with limited mobility) in the new spaces in the west end of the site. See details in agenda and below. A property drawing was included.

4. Gordon Milne also approached Peter regarding funding that is available from **FISKARS Project Orange Thumb Grant Program** supporting community projects. Most are familiar with this company who make quality garden tools and implements. This program award could be anywhere up to \$3500. We would not be restricted to buying their equipment. We could use it in any way we need. All present agreed and Gordon will send in our submission. The deadline for submission is 2 February 2018.

5. **GARDEN BOX #2** - Susan Thompson, last year, very graciously cleaned up this box previously used by seed savers. It was overgrown and unmanageable. We all appreciate her work very much. Susan

also planted some annuals to brighten up the box. It was suggested by Lou Prystansky (Walkabout) that this box be used as a herb garden for growing herbs that we can donate to the soup kitchens and food banks. Think Square Foot Gardening. All present agreed to help in the maintenance of the garden box during the growing season. Diane Tracz will take on the task of planting bedding plants or seeds in June. It was agreed that we could take funding from our bank account to purchase the needed planting materials and fertilizers to enhance the soil. She will contact the various soup kitchens to find out what kinds of herbs they would prefer. We should be able to harvest herbs several times during the growing season for donation.

6. DISCUSSION OF SUCCESSES AND FAILURES. Our tulip bulbs were a disappointment for some of the beds. Also blight and crawly things were an issue in some of the beds. We talked about testing the soil and further augmenting the nutrients as we still do not have consistent success in all the beds. Peter has brought several testing kits for members to use. More manure and peat moss as well as appropriate fertilizers will be advantageous. Lou Prystansky's wise words hopefully will see a lot of our issues on the mend. We recommend reading again the summary of his Walkabout Tour from last August. It was also suggested that we ask him to come mid-July for a Walkabout again. Perhaps if he can spot problems earlier we may be able to save more of our produce. For example, the blight that was seen in several of the beds can be stopped by the use of dormant oil on the soil in early Spring before we plant. Also the use of coffee grounds around the plants is a deterrent to worms and insects. **It was also stressed as important that we all be vigilant on the weeding of our gardens. It is very easy for the spores and seeds from the weeds from one garden to drift into any adjacent gardens. Please dispose of the weeds in the garbage and NOT the compost bin.**

7. THE COMMUNITY GARDEN COLLECTIVE: Lowes Thunder Bay Intercity, thru Catherine Swartz-Mendes, has donated to all TBay Community Gardens, a large amount of seed packets of all sorts of garden items. Catherine, who was chair of the Collective, has left her Hospital position here for another one nearer family in the Ottawa area.

8. BED 20A-Peter recommends that we expand bed #20A, rename it to Bed #32 (in the south west corner of the site) to full 4' X 12' size. It was built in that odd shape as we were accommodating the tamarac tree that used to be in that corner. All present agreed.

9. ELEVATED GARDEN BOXES- One person suggested to Peter that, if we were to build more garden boxes, it would be nice if we made them elevated to make it easier for people with limited mobility. There is a suggested design in the agenda. Peter suggests that we could build 3 at the west end with the funds hopefully coming from the above sources. There was a lively discussion about whether or not we need them elevated. It was decided that we would see what funding is received and how many garden boxes are requested this year. Peter has a quote on costs from Home Depot depending on whether it is all cedar (\$640.00 approximately) or pressure treated wood on the base and cedar on the top (\$422). He will also get a quote from Garden Lake Timber. Peter showed slides of various designs of garden boxes for this purpose.

10. CHANGE TO THE REGISTRATION PROTOCOL- After much discussion, it was decided that the

registration process would be simplified. We will have only one deadline of April 30, 2018 midnight, for requests for garden boxes from last years box users, requests from any new users and if there are any boxes unclaimed, for families to have a second box. The last two groups would be on a first come, first served basis. Please send your requests by email to Peter. All requests will be date stamped to the "second" .

11. **DUES**-The dues for the use of each box remains at \$10, payable by April 30, 2018.

12. **COMPOST STATION CARE AND MAINTAINANCE**-We are asking the membership's assistance with the weekly routine turning of the compost in the station bins. It will take a long time for the material to decompose so we do not anticipate having usable compost this year.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 PM.