

CCGA Coordinating Meeting Notes

May 18, 2021 – 6:00pm - 8:00pm

Location: CCGA Zoom Room (Virtual Meeting)

Present on the call were: Angela Taylor, Barb Dennis, May Toy, Julie Samuels, Marsha Wyatt, Amy Olson, Gina Jamison, Mamie Gray, JW Glass, Patricia Hart, and LaVerne Morris, with special guests Edde Jones, Suzanne McKenna and Harmony Picciuca from GreenCorps

We reviewed the agenda, which can be downloaded here:

<https://chicagocommunitygardens.org/ccga-coordinating-meetings-2021/>

GreenCorps Chicago NFP Presentation

Edde Jones, Suzanne McKenna & Harmony Picciuca introduced the launch of Greencorps Chicago NFP

Background from Edde (email):

... coordinating the work of the GC NFP with the Terra Firma program of Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative. It is a job training and community gardening program modelled after the original Greencorps Chicago except that it will have a geographical focus. Greencorps/Terra Firma will be improving lots along major roads in the Woodlawn, Washington Park, South Shore, Grand Boulevard, Greater Grand Crossing, and South Chicago community areas. Our plan is to have a number of community workshops and events throughout the year with the first one being held in late May.

We will also be looking for recruits and staff from the community areas mentioned above. Our first big ask is to get the word out. I am attaching the staff position descriptions we are currently seeking to fill in hopes that you can post or distribute to your members. I will forward you recruitment and community workshop information as they are finalized. We will be doing a general email blitz with the descriptions attached, so hopefully you will see them distributed a number of ways.

Overview:

- Reboot of organization. Received funding through [R3 program](#) (restore, reinvest, renew)
- Tasked with starting a job training program in the mid-South Side, focused on areas that have felt the most impact from violence and crime.
- Seeking partnerships with community groups
- 1 year pilot project - Terra Firma & GreenCorps collaborative program with Emerald South
- Mid-south Side focus: Washington Park, 51st to 63rd, east to Stony Island and down Stony Island. 10 neighborhoods including: Hyde Park, Woodlawn, Kenwood, Oakland, Washington Park, South Shore, Greater Grand Crossing
- The goal is to promote reinvestment in the communities and improve economic development and opportunities for the communities.

Available positions:

Social service coordinator, Crew members, and Admin assistant
Preference given to residents of mid-South Side

Work teams will focus on neglected gardens, vacant lots, receiving job training in the garden environments.

Update: CCGA posted these job descriptions on our Facebook page shortly after the meeting!

Discussion of possible ways CCGA and GreenCorps can collaborate:

- CCGA can work with community gardens in the mid-South side focus area
- Do collaborative workshops, possible resources distributions. Edde says June workshop is possible.
- LaVerne: She is from the mid-South Side. Many people do not know about GreenCorp in her area. Edde will talk more with LaVerne.
- pie-in-the-sky: creation of a Civilian Climate Corps! (Biden's Climate Corps) Create a core program: creating community gardens where they are needed most.
- Green Infrastructure
- May: A GreenCorps Youth Corp could be a part of the new Native Garden Registry. Need gardeners to help support native gardens. Helping seniors with gardens.
- Julie: Develop a curriculum for youth corps: include gardening and bikes!
- CCGA creation of community garden list and new MAP!
- CCGA can serve as a hub to start a community garden (501c-3 status!)
- **How best to engage and support community gardens? What do people want?**

Concerns:

- May: Will there be a program in place to maintain the sites after planting? Long term plan?
- Angela: After participating in job training programs in the past, noticed that there is a gap between training and real life. We are giving skills and a certificate, but no real jobs afterward. Where does the ongoing maintenance and support come from?
 - Suzanne: This project also supports community economics a few ways. Working with Sunshine Enterprises on economic development. Goal to increase landscape building capacity. To fund existing companies, to build businesses and new business models, and provide internships for trainees.

GreenCorps is seeking a “headquarters” space in Hyde Park, Woodlawn, Kenwood, Wash Park. Have resources to direct to this effort.

Community contacts discussion:

- 3 high-schools - Diet Homer, Marshall Orr and ?
- KAM Isaiah Israel <https://www.kamii.org/>
- Jerry Edelman – Openlands
- IDNR “Climate Corps”
- Collaboration with other institutions

Native Garden Registry Update

May Toy briefed everyone on the latest changes to the sub-ordinance language as well as the latest updates in negotiations with the City

- CCGA outlined our “make or break” negotiation items with the attorney from the City

- No cost for joining
- Creation of an advisory panel
- Most of our requests were granted – we are still pushing for removal of a rule to limit plants to 10” on a parkway. But the plant height on private property is not limited, as long as it does not encroach upon the public way.
- Advisory panel: They will be looking for an external group to define rules and help with training for plant identification when gardens are inspected. CCGA!
- Next steps: Waiting to hear about a final version. Then it will be reintroduced to city council, when?

Working group members: Lorraine, Amy, Breanne, and May

May presented one document: Native Garden Registry Subordinance, Version 2:
<https://chicagocommunitygardens.org/ccga-coordinating-meetings-2021/>

DePaul Rat Survey Update

Lorraine, Julie and Amy worked with Deirdre, the lead researcher from DePaul, on refining the language and flow of the survey. We are awaiting the final version and will include it in a newsletter and post it on Facebook to reach community gardeners. We will provide a link along with the survey to a CCGA web page with resources to assist people with addressing issues with rats in their gardens.

Marsha would like to be added to the working group. Amy sent her the survey draft for feedback.

Additional question suggestions:

- What are some successful strategies you use to deter rats? (hardware cloth beneath beds, clearing all trash and animal poop)
- What are other issues that hinder maintenance in your garden? (no trash pickup in alley, etc.)

Committee Reports

Resources & Distributions:

Barb Dennis gave a report on all of the wonderful work with plant distributions happening.

- May 8th – pansies
- May 15th - 94 gardens at New Horizons for vegetable and herb seedlings, pollinator plants, used garden tools, pots, canas, seeds, and more.
- Next is May 22nd, a Mini distribution with peppers, tomatoes, dahlia bulbs, elephant ears

Outreach & Advocacy

Julie Samuels gave a report on the newly formed Outreach & Advocacy team.

- The big goal is to reaching out to gardeners to see how we can best support them.
- Developing a survey (Marsha and Julie)
- Need to define our outreach and advocacy goals
- What is our vision for this team?

Education

Gina Jamison gave a quick update – nothing to report!

- Amy: We want to continue to do the monthly community garden meetup, but the last one had very low turnout, even though 20 people registered! Need to brainstorm ideas – happy hour? Meet in a garden? Raffle?

Finance

Angela Taylor gave a quick update and had a few questions:

- Funds from April community gardening panel zoom event should go to the education team budget? YES
- Amy will coordinate with Angela about wrapping up the 2021 Conference registration paperwork. Needs sample of report format.

Communication

Amy Olson and JW Glass gave an update:

- Starting to work on a new community gardening map.
- Possible opportunity to work with a UX designer on an app to locate community garden volunteer opportunities and membership.
- Making updates to website slowly.
- Next newsletter target date: July 4!

The next CCGA Coordinating meeting is Tuesday , June 15, 2021 at 6pm

Notes compiled by JW Glass and Amy Olson