

CCGA Coordinating Meeting Notes

October 19, 2021 – 6:00pm - 8:00pm

Location: CCGA Zoom Room (Virtual Meeting)

Present at the meeting were: Julie Samuels, JW Glass, Mamie Gray, Amy Olson, Angela Taylor, Barb Dennis, Marsha Wyatt and special guests Mary Fran from Allies for Community Business and Caitlin Spofford from Northwestern

We reviewed the agenda, which can be downloaded here:

http://chicagocommunitygardens.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ccga_coord_mtg_agenda_10_19_21.pdf

Welcome and Call to Order

Everyone introduced themselves. We welcomed Mary Fran and Caitlin. Caitlin is a grad student in product design at Northwestern. She is most interested in ways to connect people in the digital space via tools and apps, for instance. She encouraged us to reach out to her with ideas about how she can support community gardening. We reviewed the agenda. We made some minor adjustments to flow of the agenda which everyone agreed on.

2022 Conference Discussion

We took an informal poll to see what people felt about having an in person conference versus a virtual conference. The majority present felt that a **virtual conference** would be the best choice given the ongoing concerns about Covid-19 and the uncertainty about a large in-person conference.

We discussed the idea of having a virtual conference and later in the summer or early fall having an in-person outdoor event. The idea of having an **anniversary celebration** to mark the 10th year of CCGA was discussed. Additional comments:

- Regarding the anniversary: reach out to the original entities that were responsible for the creation of CCGA
- The event could be a fundraiser, seeking corporate supporters.
- Mary Fran offered the use of the Hatchery for the event
- Angela stressed that the celebration should be for all. In creating tickets for the event we need to keep in mind that we are all gardeners first and foremost. Inclusive and accessible.
- Marsha expressed that the fundraiser doesn't have to be expensive. \$25-\$40 for ticket prices. If we target donors in the business community for sponsorships we can greatly lower ticket prices for attendees. We could have a silent auction.
- Amy suggested the possibility of having a conference with sessions that are spread out. For example having 1 to 2 sessions per week over a period of a month. This way folks do not have to dedicate 4-5 hours in one day for the conference. Lorraine felt that this could be logistically difficult. It's something we can look into.

Garden list/database Update

JW give an overview of the garden list update process. This list is of community gardens that have participated in distributions and attended conferences in the past.

- It includes current contact info, garden address, and can also include any other info like group work days, volunteer needs, etc.
- The goal of this list is to develop tools to connect gardeners and volunteers with community gardens.
- Mamie said that she included Garden ZIP Codes on the sign-up sheet for the last distribution event, and she will include this from now on.
- Caitlyn suggested we could look into existing tools to incorporate into the CCGA website such as Calendly.
- Amy suggested reaching out to the UIC business school to see if we could have students help us. Marsha said she would forward contact information.
- We will include a call for gardens to provide contact information in the next newsletter

Committee Reports

Resources & Distributions:

Barb Dennis gave a report.

- Big distribution on Oct. 1 wet very well
- Upcoming event on Oct. 24 at African Garden at 1245 S. Central Park with allium, aster, garlic

Advocacy & Outreach

- Lorraine stressed that May Toy has been the strongest advocate for CCGA throughout the pandemic through her work on the Native Garden Ordinance.
- Marsha read the proposed mission and focus of this team.
- Julie stressed that we need to work on collaboration with our partners and bring a meeting together. There are many organizations that do similar work. We need to find out what they are working on and figure out ways that we can collaborate. We are all building community and preserving green space and need to be working together.
- Marsha mentioned that the Chicago Botanic Garden could increase access for community gardeners by offering free memberships.
- The question came up of why CCGA does not have a board. Angela gave a brief history and shared that at the 2017 retreat, we looked at different organizational models and decided to operate as a 'collective'. We all agreed that we can revisit this.

Education

- Lorraine shared that the committee has not yet met. Will be focusing on the conference.

Finance

- Angela Taylor gave an update and said that the final conference report will be ready soon. She is working with Amy to package all the info.

- She said that CCGA has a credit with the catering company from the 2020 conference. Food will be covered for 200 people.
- There was a question about CCGA accepting Zelle payments.
- Marsha shared that her org uses First Eagle Bank. They have worked out with Sally/NeighborSpace how to reconcile the account. It's a fee-free account for community orgs.

Communication

Lorraine Kells, Amy Olson and JW Glass gave an update:

- Making updates to website slowly – need to form a task force to tackle content development and updates.
- Amy mentioned that we can incorporate modules to allow our Facebook and Instagram posts to appear on the site instead of having a 'blog style' web site design. The site should be a resource for gardeners first and foremost. Folks have a hard time finding our content!

Other updates

Minutes from the September meeting were approved. They are on the website.

The next CCGA Coordinating meeting is Tuesday, November 16, 2021 at 6pm

Notes compiled by Amy Olson