

CCGA Conference Planning Meeting on January 5, 2023 • Notes

January 5, 2023 from 6 to 8 pm

Location: CCGA Zoom Room (Virtual Meeting)

Present:

Mamie Gray, Lorraine Kells, Angela Taylor, Gina Jamison, Marsha Wyatt and Amy Olson

Conference Planning Discussion

We did not have an agenda for the meeting so we spent a moment sharing what we wanted to accomplish during our time together:

- Do we want to have a conference?
- Do we have the bandwidth and time to plan and host an in-person conference in March?
- New Ideas: What do we envision the conference could be going forward?
- Summary and next steps

Do we want to have a conference?

The overall sentiment of the group was to **reframe** how we engage with large groups of gardeners in person. After 10 years, what can CCGA offer to gardeners that provides support, inspiration and opportunities for growth? How can we make the conference more inclusive?

Do we have the bandwidth and time to plan and host an in-person conference in March?

- We identified and vetted a venue for the 2020 conference: Whitney Young High School. This could help streamline planning.
- We could, but the timeline is very tight.
- Very little time for fundraising.
- 2022 key dates for reference:
 - Jan 11: Announcement and RFP
 - Feb 1: RFP submissions due
 - Feb 18: Registration open (ideally 1 month)
 - March 16-30: Conference sessions

New Ideas: What do we envision the conference could be going forward?

This is a summary of the ideas shared by the group:

- The conference is usually in late March, but it does not need to be!
- We could have a conference without workshops. A gathering where gardeners can be a part of setting the goals of CCGA going forward. Inclusive round tables.
- CCGA does not have members – we are stakeholders
- Going “Back to basics” to revisit and reconnect to gardening and why we do it. Perhaps there could be working groups in different neighborhoods.

- Community events in different neighborhoods across the city
- Community gatherings to bring gardeners together
 - Self-guided garden tours
 - Food!
 - Workshops
 - Speakers
 - Networking
 - Live streaming from event
- 4 events, 4 topic ideas, in 4 areas of Chicago. April, May, September, October
- Bring community partners and organizations into the planning and co-create these events.

Summary and next steps

The cliff notes version is that we decided to not have an in-person conference in March. Instead, we propose to have a series of 4 community events across the city - each one in a different area N,S,W and E in April, May, Sept and Oct. Each one will include a speaker/workshop/panel, food, self-guided garden tours, etc. to bring gardeners together to learn about and experience community gardening in that area. CCGA would engage garden groups and orgs in each area to collaborate.

We could still issue an RFP for speakers/workshops. We will need to brainstorm an overall theme and the thematic umbrellas for each event soon. We will still have an ad hoc planning team for this “**community event series.**”

A motion was proposed by Angela:

"CCGA proposes to re-envision our approach to the annual conference and adopt a series of events for community gardeners in the north, west, east and south areas of Chicago. These events will occur in April May, September, and October and will feature workshops, speakers, networking and other resources to support community gardeners across the city."

Lorraine and Marsha seconded the motion; The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned around 8:15pm.