

# CCGA February 2023 Coordinating Meeting Notes

Meeting Date: February 28, 2023 - Virtual Meeting, CCGA Zoom Room

In Attendance: Barb Dennis, JW Glass, Lorraine Kells, Angela Taylor, Amy Olson, Kimberly George, Julie Samuels

## Welcome and Call to Order

JWG presented the agenda and last meeting minute notes for review. Motions were made to accept the agenda and previous meeting notes. The meeting started at about 6:15pm

## Committee Reports

### Resources & Distributions

Barb Dennis reported on the Resources Committee's next few events.

There will be a workshop on vegetable garden preparation as well as a houseplant sale on Saturday March 11th at the Hatchery at 9:30am. Steve Schultz and Niki Urell from **Chicago Farm Works** will present, the event is free and requires RSVP to Mamie. The flier has been mailed.

Plans are being made for the April hardy plants distribution.

Plans are being made for the May vegetable and flower distribution.

### Advocacy and Outreach Committee

Julie Samuels commented on the turnout and overall excellent meeting and summarized the recent February 25th PFAS Panel discussion ***on the safety of biosolids and PFAS from a soil and plant perspective*** held at The Hatchery. Julie said that 'MWRD has to do more' to be transparent and respond to all legitimate questions. And that we all learned a lot about PFAs in the MWRD compost.

### Next Steps

Julie stated the next step is another meeting with our partners to determine the next steps that likely establishes a framework for testing for PFAs or even a moratorium on distribution of biosolids. 'It is through our work that we will all know what is in our compost.'

Amy Olson stated that video of the February 25th discussion would be posted. Amy also indicated a follow-up email would be sent to attendees with a summary of the outcomes and asking for feedback and provide presenter slides, recordings, and resources for PFAS safety. Amy also indicated we need a PFAS Safety page on CCGA website to provide resources for gardeners about limiting exposure to PFAS.

Lorraine K. said 'this is round one.' Julie S.: 'This is a world-wide problem.'

The panelists at the PFA event were:

**Dr. Dominic Brose** is a Senior Environmental Research Scientist at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRD).

**Nance Klehm** has been working in bioremediation for over 10 years and has been an ecological systems designer, landscaper, horticultural consultant, and agroecological grower for more than three decades.

**Dr. Andrew Margenot** is an Assistant Professor in the University of Illinois Crop Sciences.

**Mariyana Spyropoulos** was elected to the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Board of Commissioners in 2010, serving as Board President from 2015-19.

**Jennifer Walling** is the Executive Director at Illinois Environmental Council, where she has served since January of 2011.

**May Toy** (moderator) is the President of the Skinner Park Advisory Council and a member of the CCGA Advocacy & Outreach and Resources & Distributions teams.

### **Education Committee**

Follow up from the February 25th PFAS Panel discussion continued when Lorraine K. opened for Education by stating that the slides presented by presenters Jennifer Walling and Andrew Margenot can help us identify a 'panel' of PFAs that we should be most concerned about and that we could test for that are prevalent in Chicago. LK said that Education will continue to work with Advocacy & Outreach to follow-up on the impact of PFAs in MWRD biosolids in home and community gardens and provide guidelines for PFAS safety.

LK also stated that in the next phase/steps that CCGA would strive to get other soil ecology entities, AUA, NeighborSpace and others to join CCGA as partners as well as gardeners to support CCGA PFA soil testing initiatives.

Amy O. broadened the PFA discussion by noting that this topic would eventually involve the large PFA producers of things like microwave popcorn bags, waxy food containers and via cosmetic exposure and what a long-term task this actually is. Lorraine K. said that is why we need the broadest possible coalition of partners.

Angela T. mentioned an urban orchard project in East Garfield Park that MWRD is sponsoring and that could mean more oversight might be needed on this project.

The next topic was a **grant project update** by Kimberly George. Kimberly indicated that she and Cordia Pugh have submitted a grant application by CCGA for a planning-type grant from [NCH2](http://www.nch2.org) to support the **Legacy Gardeners Film Project**. The granting organization is the Nature Culture and Human Health Network (<http://www.nch2.org>). This is a planning-type grant and not an implementation grant.

If selected, this planning grant will assist the team on developing a process for how to select legacy gardeners to profile. Kim suggested that everyone join the NCH2 network for the valuable resources on their website. The grant is a Catalyst Seed Grant, and the organization will follow through with support on the specific project.

Amy Olson is to update the Legacy Gardeners Project page on CCGA website, including "who is a Legacy Gardener" and specifically follow-up with Lorraine K.

### **Communications Committee**

JW Glass mentioned again the process fielding queries from gardeners to find community gardens to participate in or find a plot in their neighborhood. This opened a wide ranging discussion about details on the map of gardens. JW pointed out that we need to continue the process started last year to update our existing list. JW indicated he would send out an invitation to join the team updating the list and restart this effort. We discussed having some personal emails and phone contact data of garden leaders but have no authorization to make such data public on the map. We do make public any website, Facebook or Instagram account if we have it for a garden. We decided to ask permission to share this info with the public via the map and the team updating the garden list will draft and send out such a request. We can also include this topic in the next CCGA newsletter as well as post it on the CCGA social channels. Barb Dennis also mentioned procuring a current list of contact info for NeighborSpace gardens.

### **Finance**

Angela T. stated there has been no change to our financial position since the last coordinating meeting and therefore nothing to report.

### **Project/Event Updates**

#### **Community Event Series Ad Hoc Planning Team Meeting**

We scheduled a meeting for Monday, March 6 at 6pm. Amy O. will send a reminder email about that meeting. Possible collaboration for event series: The Field Museum wants to expand its pollinator program into tours and community gardeners. They're focused on the SE side. We talked about creating satellite events in collaboration with public institutions during the time period of the event series. This could blend nicely with the idea of having community garden tours.

**Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn made by and seconded. The meeting adjourned at around 7pm.

The next monthly coordinating meeting is Tuesday March 21 2023.