

Minutes

Elm Village Community Garden Society

Spring Meeting
11:00 pm on 20th March 2010
Camden Garden Centre

Chairperson: Lucy Peltz
Secretary: Peter McGinty

Attendees: Frances Lee, Sandra Dystant, Catherine Cameron, Helene Fawcett, Colleen Cotter, Andrea Werner, Collette Joyce, Brian Harris, Anna Sharp, Shirley Richmond, Linda Norton, Ani Munos-Reyes, Mike Jackson (Camden Garden Centre), Deedee Levine, Michael Willis, Marina C Brando, Stella Timmins.

Apologies: Morag Tait, Fergus, Erica Tobias, Pat McGowan, Ed Lee, Jane Pelly (PfP), Glen Gibson, Rachel.

Agenda topics

1. Update on Improvement works

The secretary gave a brief update on the progress of the project:

1. Planning permission was applied for in September 2009 and permission with conditions was obtained from Camden Council on 17th November 2009.
The conditions were quickly satisfied and final and complete planning permission was obtained on 15th December 2009. [see www.camden.gov.uk planning applications numbers 2009/4042/P and 2009/5828/P].
Nine residents wrote to Camden Council in support of the project.
There were no objections.
2. Work on site commenced on Monday 22 February
3. Large Triangle Site (between Bergholt Mews and Barker Drive)
Work on this was started first and has been progressing well - the greenhouse has been erected and will soon be complete. The remaining work will be delivered soon so that the site can be handed back soon.
4. South Canal Site
The platform has been stripped back to its basic superstructure and repainted. The new platform deck and railings are planned to be delivered and installed within the next two weeks. At the same time work will commence on the landscaping of the earthworks.
5. North Canal Site
Work has yet to start.

Conclusion:

Work is progressing normally.

Action items:

None specific other than that residents should be kept informed.

Person responsible:

Secretary will inform residents of any significant events.

Deadline:

Update at next meeting.

2. Rules for use of Elm Village Green Spaces

The Secretary introduced a draft copy of proposed rules for use of the green spaces summarising resident suggestions over the past 18 months and explained that this was the first complete version and had been prepared from all the comments and suggestions received so far. The document was very much a work in progress and suggestions for improvement were being actively sought and would be very welcome.

The Secretary talked through the successive sections of the document inviting comments and feedback as he progressed. There was a healthy debate and many changes were suggested for inclusion. Some topics worthy of individual note are:

Security

The Secretary stated that the great majority of feedback so far had mentioned the absolute importance of maintaining the security of the gated areas. Although no formal vote was taken by those at the meeting, they indicated unanimous support for this.

Key control is important and it is intended to maintain an accurate key register. New locks are going to be installed (exact model still to be decided) and keys will not be automatically distributed, they must be requested for in writing, and an accurate key register will be kept, and the intention is to minimize the number of keys that need to be in circulation.

Stella pointed out at this point that she had asked Places for People if any resident could be denied a key and they had stated to her that every resident was entitled to possess a key, provided they pay reasonable costs. The Secretary said he had also spoken with Places for People about the same subject and they had confirmed the same to him as well. However he felt this was unlikely to be a problem as the intention was not to deny anyone a key, merely to put in place a system that minimised the need for individual keys and ensured full accountability for those wishing a key.

Places for People had also confirmed that the production of keys and maintenance of the key-holder register could be delegated to any mutually agreed body – EVTRA, the garden society, Camden Garden Centre. A decision on exactly which body it will be will be taken at a future meeting in conjunction with EVTRA.

Environment and Good Housekeeping

There was much discussion, particularly in consideration of neighbours adjoining the green spaces, about hours of use (9am to dusk), noise levels (be aware of and considerate to neighbours), radios (not permitted), removing tools (take them home or lock them in a tool chest), litter (take it home) and keeping the gates locked at all times (including when working within the green spaces). In nearly all cases the meeting moved rapidly towards agreement.

Costs

The Secretary described the basis of the suggested costs for water use, subscriptions, keys and refundable deposits.

There will need to be a subscription to join in with the communal gardening activities to cover basic expenses. Mike Jackson and another suggested a junior membership with a fee of say £0.50p to encourage youngsters to participate in the project.

Water from the three new standpipes, of which there will be one in each site, will also have to be paid for. Each of these is lockable and metered so that use can be controlled and accurately measured. The suggested contribution for water costs (£20) is based on a simple calculation of estimated water use multiplied by cost per m³. Any overpayment will be refunded at the end of the year.

For keys there will need to be a charge for getting copies produced. A 'deposit' is also suggested – either a one-off refundable deposit or a recurring annual charge. Stella suggested the benefit of a recurring annual charge to key-holders was that it would be a way of raising revenue to cover other costs e.g. water.

Decision Making Process

The Secretary suggested the following decision making process for getting the 'rules' formally adopted:

1. Update the 'rules' document with changes and options as discussed at this meeting.
2. Email/post it to everyone, including EVTRA and PFP, the Secretary has contact details for and ask EVTRA to post it on their web site (and perhaps a simple flyer to all households to say it exists and to look at it and request comments)
3. Then work at producing a 'final' version that represents a consensus in time for the next meeting. A consensus would be evidenced by the fact that the majority of responses from residents were either neutral or positive.
4. Present that version for adoption as the interim rules of use at the next meeting which will have representatives from both EVTRA and PFP present.
5. The interim version can then be used and improved until this year's EVTRA AGM is held, and which Places for People attend, at which it can be voted on and ratified as 'final'.
(Of course amendments can still be implemented at future dates)

Conclusions:

Drafts of this document will need to be circulated widely amongst residents and their comments solicited in order for it to become an accurate summary of the wishes and preferences of the majority.

An updated version with all the comments from the meeting needs to be prepared and circulated as soon as possible.

Individuals with comments and suggestions should make them known to the Secretary as soon as practicable.

Action items:

- 1) Prepare an updated version of the document within a few days and copy it to attendees of the meeting.
- 2) Arrange for a copy of the updated version, and all future versions, to be posted on www.evtra.org.uk. So that all residents can view and comment upon it.
- 3) Email all contacts informing them of updated version and request comments and feedback.
- 4) All comments for the next version of the 'rules' should be returned to the Secretary within two weeks.
- 5) Prepare a version that can be proposed for adoption at next meeting

Person responsible:

- Peter McGinty (Secretary)
- Peter McGinty (Secretary)
in tandem with EVTRA
- Peter McGinty (Secretary)
- All attendees
- Peter McGinty (Secretary)

Deadline:

- 23/03/10
- ASAP
- 24/03/10
- 10/04/10
- 20/04/10

3. Preparing for Election of Officers at next meeting

The Chairperson stated that elections were to be held at the next meeting and that any person wishing to stand for election was to make themselves known to the secretary before or at that meeting. The offices for election were:

- Chairpreson
- Secretary
- Treasurer

The Secretary confirmed that provided a nomination was received, it was not necessary to be at the meeting to be elected.

The present Secretary (Peter McGinty) and Treasurer (Pat McGowan) will both be standing for re-election. Unfortunately due to personal commitments the Chairperson (Lucy Peltz) will not be standing for re-election so nominations for Chairperson are required.

Conclusion:

Nominations, including self-nominations are open.

Action items:	Person responsible:	Deadline:
Inform Secretary of any nominations	All	Next meeting.

3. Any Other Business

1. The Secretary stated that he and Mike Jackson would be meeting with the contractor in a few days to agree handover of the greenhouse. As spring was advancing the Secretary asked if anyone had any objection to allowing **Mike Jackson to immediately start work in the greenhouse, preparing it for the 2010 planting season.**
There were no objections and it was agreed that Mike would start work in the greenhouse as soon as it was handed over from the contractor and the site was safe.
2. **Mike Jackson presented Elm Village with a gift - its first plant for the greenhouse. A beautiful miniature Nectarine.**
There were immediately discussions about how the nectarine harvest should be celebrated, which included at least two offers of cake-making!
3. **Opening Ceremony and Party**
It was suggested that there should be an opening party.
This was enthusiastically agreed, and will probably be held sometime in mid-late summer when things were planted and growing well. Places for People said (via the Secretary) that they were also in favour of this and would attend. Ideas were mentioned for music, celebrities, etc. More on this later.
4. **Mike Jackson volunteered to present a Gardening Course**
Mike has very generously offered to run some gardening classes for Elm Village Green Space Gardeners. These will be on a Wednesday from 5:30 – 7:30, start date and more details to be defined when project handover dates are confirmed.
Thank you very much Mike.

Conclusion:

N/A

Action items:	Person responsible:	Deadline:
Mike will take start on the greenhouse as soon as it is handed over from the contractor.	Mike Jackson	N/A

3. Date of Next Meeting and End of Formal Business

Discussion:

The next meeting will be on Saturday April 24th at 11:00 am at Camden Garden Centre.
The Secretary proposed that now that all business had been dealt with the meeting be closed.

Conclusions:

This was agreed and the meeting closed at 12:15.

Observers:

N/A

Special notes:

N/A