

DULUTH COMMUNITY GARDEN BOARD RETREAT
December 5, 2009 – 9am-1pm – Sarah’s Table Duluth

Present: Katie Hanson, Dan Kislinger, Stacy LaVres, Francois Medion, Kate Nicoletti, Gloria Piche, Marian Syrjamaki-Kuchta, Nicole Wilde.

Absent: Sharon Rogers

Guests: Gordy Lund, Loni Coppin, Pat Farrell, Jan Hibbs, Sarah Nelson, Paul Treuer

Introduction

Dan welcomed the board to the retreat and asked everyone to introduce themselves and how long they have been with the program

Dan introduced Gordon Lund who will be potentially working as a consultant with the board to advise on Board development and other strategic activities. This would be funded through the LSI grant for technical assistance.

Dan reviewed the agenda. Four items for discussion include:

- Review functional model
- Strategy for building board
- Committee work
- How does the committee structure work together.

1. REVIEW OF FUNCTIONAL MODEL

Dan reviewed the new organizational chart.

Dan mentioned that the board of directors must have someone to report to which in the new structure is the members, gardeners and community at large. We will need to discuss how we communicate to this group i.e. via events, website, direct mail, newsletters.

Dan asked the question of who is a member? Someone that pays to be a member, etc. Nicole mentioned this is an area that needs to be reviewed. Paul mentioned that it’s not a question if we want members it’s how we formalize membership. The board will take on the discussion and create a proposal for the rest of the planning team.

Communication

Dan recommended that we hold 2 annual events to communicate with our members. Other tools include the website, newsletters, direct mail. Katie felt that the Harvest dinner was a great place to hold an annual meeting.

Dan asked who should be the face of the organization – should it be a staff person or a board member. Loni mentioned that there needs to be a more formal process for board

correspondences versus general marketing for other activities.

Because the board reports to the membership there needs to be tools to communicate with members and also an opportunity for members to provide feedback. Suggested activities included meetings at each event, regular board update in the newsletter.

End – Action items to be conducted offline include definition of membership and how to communicate with them.

ITEM 2 - STRATEGIC PLAN FOR BUILDING THE BOARD

Dan recommended that the DCGP move to a smaller board that would be involved with strategic planning, financial oversight and fundraising. Dan mentioned that there would a lot of work to do, what type of people do we need on the board, how do we approach a potential board member, do we have a temporary.

Dan asked Gordy to introduce himself. Gordy referred board members to his bio and then provided the following observations about the board thus far (please refer to Dan's notes as well – appendix 1.)

- Mostly women at the table. Most people have gardens. The atmosphere is warm, humorous and friendly.
- Drummond Library Mission Statement: Access to educational materials in a warm and friendly environment.
- Issue of membership is important – a \$10 due is
- Treat your search for board members as a financial campaign. – The people you
- A+I+L Ability, Interest and Linkage
- Are you ready to do it. Here are the 9 or 10 items that need to be in order. Same thing for talking
- People give to people financial and they join people on the board –so
- Relational – I want to tell you about this organization that I am personality involved in - how

If you were asking me to be a board member here are the things I would ask you

- Explain the mission to me
- Whose on the board
- Who are the executive leaders
- Tell me about your budget
- Who are your key donors
- And what committee do you want me on
- DO you expect me to make a gift and how much
- Are you on the board and what do you give financially to the organization.

Duluth Flower Club – Linkage would good.

Candid is important – here's where we are – we have issues, we need your help. Bring board members

Generally bigger boards are better boards and a temporary board is not a good strategy, and most of the people in the room

Committee chairs should be on the board.

Dan thanked Gordy.

Dan mentioned that our organization does not have high operating expenses and our financial sustainability needs are not that large. Kate mentioned that we really need to have a strong staff person to manage the operations of the organization, and they do need to get paid fairly.

Paul mentioned that we do not really know what the future will be. There is a huge need for community gardens, and a need for sustainable community gardens. Consequently we just don't know.

Gordy mentioned we need a dream and then start answering the question of what do we need to do to fulfill a dream? Donors want to be a part of a dream. For example, Gordy mentioned that he worked with the Center of Urban Health – not an exciting proposition. They needed a dream and they got one through planning. The dream became to make MSP the healthiest Urban community in the nation. Donors want to be part of a dream.

Dan views the program as spiritual grandfather of the local food movement in the Twin Ports. DCGP manages 2 acres, 144 families.

The board decided to talk about what each member considers their personal dream for the organization.

- Gloria – I want to see families learn to garden to feed themselves
- Stacy – I w Duluth to be the most sustainable community in the US and the garden program a part of this vision.
- Nicole – Ditto Stacy and turn the Poor Farm back into a working farm.
- Sarah – A healthy diet that can be grown regionally – DCGP is a well known part of the regional food production.
- Marian – I want to get my hands in some soil with enough sun light that I can grow and learn how to food in the area – to bring back the wisdom and knowledge to grow food.
- Kate – Education to help people realize they an grow things in Duluth – remove education deficit.
- Paul – Stewardship for gardening in the area for land, education and knowledge – victory gardens disappeared because no stewardship – and even expand on it. Can we build soil in Duluth.
- Sarah – Help people till – community outreach.
- François – Like to see taking back the city – flowers, herbs, fruit trees take over the concrete and asphalt – people learn about things they can eat – reconnect with food in our environment.
- Pat – Every single person has easy access to food
- Dan – a welfare neighbor Katie – regional self sufficiency, individual self sufficiency – empowerment – get people to learn these tasks
- Dan – equally with the dream people understand how to preserve food – sauerkraut

....Back to Strategy Plan for Building the Board

Dan asked that people refer to the timeline he had prepared for board development. He is looking somewhere between Feb and March to have a “new” board in place as well as replacement staff hired, and approved 2010 program budget.

Marian asked Gordy if he has advice. Gordy said a large board is good, and a temporary board is a waste of time. Marian agreed and thought we need to get people on the board with the ability to raise money.

Dan mentioned that he wants a smaller board due to agility. Gordy’s response was to get agility through an executive committee.

Paul suggested that we be conservative on the restructuring. The committee formation is very good, but keep the board in place and then seek consultation and examine expanding the board conservatively. Marian essentially agreed.

Gloria asked Gordy how long it would take to recruit 6 member board. The short answer – it takes a long time.

General agreement that we retain the board but the board meets quarterly, that we form an executive committee, the quarterly meetings would have some structure where the committees will report out, but not conduct committee work. An executive committee can meet whenever they want.

Loni asked about board recruitment. This will be discussed.

ITEM 3 – REPORTS FROM DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMITTEES

The Idea is to be good to ourselves and don’t take on more then we can handle.

1. Operations Committee – need direction on which way to go.

a. Committee Members: Sarah, Jan, Katie and Gloria

b. The Committee has met 3-4 times and met with Katie to determine what the jobs are in the office.

Right now meeting once a week.

i. Sarah – Oversees Email – thinking of creating emails for each folder and putting emails to various committees

ii. Jan – Working on newsletter and database

iii. Calendar is set in the office – overall year calendar – would like to make this web based – have a public calendar and a members calendar.

iv. Need to figure out who is responsible for planning

v. Try to take on some office hours a couple days a week in the winter

vi. Organize the physical space of the office – continue the cleaning process

vii. Katie has been doing a good job with phone and mail.

viii. We need another check signer – Gloria.

ACTION ITEM: Paul made a motion and Dan seconded that Gloria can be a check signer. Gloria will be an interim treasurer as well.

ix. NEED – Database Manager – Terri Guggenell

c. Katies Transition

i. 1st scenario – the operations committee runs the office while Katie has her baby, she comes back after having a baby, hire someone in summer

ii. 2nd scenario – hire someone soon to fill her position – so that person will be on board.

1. Main point is we probably don’t have enough money to hire two people.

2. Katie says we have an intern lined up during the spring. Hannah – 120 hours for spring semester. She will need a supervisor.

3. Katie wants to do what is best for the program.
4. Katie described her job and duties
5. Stacy's intergeted and noted that we underpay staff and we need to change that and we also need to put on staff for 12 months basis.
6. We should discuss options today
7. Need to developed a job description and proposal
8. Gordy mentioned that we should not overlook seniors
9. Gloria 's team will develop a job description before board meeting. Database – Wendy Caveny
10. Kids gardening program – the kids gardening program is important to the program but the Katie is recommending that maybe a volunteer could work with that program.
11. Also get the new computer up and running. Needs to be networked and also get the internet up and running.

2. Events Committee

- a. Comitttee Members: Pat, Loni, Kate and Jane Baxter
- b. First meeting was last Tues.
- c. March 20th – Spring Fling at the Peace Church – 10-3PM – a social event to get people to sign up for garden plots, meet with site coordinators, sign up for their contract. Will also have a list of different site needs. Gardeners can sign up for task teams, and gardeners can be responsible for a task at their site. Plan to have seed sales, also Suzie from WLLSD to have a compost station.
- d. Pat is working on a computer program to develop a map of the community garden program with bio of who the community gardeners and their location so people can go to the website and see who is gardening next to them. So maybe add this bio piece to the contract.
- e. Loni said she had some questions. For instance we will need to know who the site coordinators are. Information about tilling and other services. Also need a list of assigned plots - demonstration sites.
- f. Site coordinator would reiview the policy and procedures and other person to station site tables.
- g. Need 25 volunteers.

Income verification for garden contracts was asked about; though we really don't need to do it formally because we no longer receive the CDBG money which was the initial reason we began requesting income info. Someone mentioned that it still needs to be done, especially fro grant purposes, but we need to iron-out this procedure.

Gloria, who is now co-coordinator with Katie of the Operations Committee, is no longer volunteer coordinator. She will send the volunteer list to all the committees and meet with the committee coordinator to go over volunteer information.

3. Communications Committee:

- a. Stacy is coordinator. Other members are Marian and Jennifer Gordon.
- b. The next newsletter will be out in January. The newsletter is now seasonal (4 issues a year). There is still confusion about the advertising/publicity piece. We need to figure out who can do publicity strategy and where that person would fit? Communications? It would be good if that person was in marketing. We decided to nominate Nicole since she had to leave early. Or she could at least advise the communications Committee.
- c. For email communications, Marion would prefer to build a Yahoo group as a database. This way we could ask people to sign-up for Yahoo email marketing instead of always sending out a mass email. We agreed with Marian's suggestion. Marian will send out a message asking those presently on the email list informing

them that they will need to sign-up for the Yahoo group if they want to continue receiving emails. Marian would help someone build the Yahoo list and someone would need to manage it.

d. The website is working well with the exception of some of the drop-down menus. Someone Paul knows has offered to help with this.

4. Seeds, Plants, Trees & Bulbs Committee:

a. Marian is coordinator. Other members are Sharon, Jane and Kate. Katie H. helps with the seeds component.

b. Copies of Johnny's 2010 Seed Catalog were circulated among the committee members. Members were asked to study the catalog to decide what to buy and to make sure enough amounts are purchased so we don't run out of some seeds as we did last year. Seed packing party needs to be scheduled. There will be no bulbs. What will be available will be really cut-back because the order didn't go through. There will be no fruit trees. The only shrubs ordered from Bailey's are blackberries and black raspberries. These smaller items can be sold at the seed/transplant sale in the spring.

c. Truffles are now considered a project for the Events Committee. If Jennifer is still willing to do the truffles, we will continue. Gloria offered to help.

5. Education Committee:

a. Members are Marian and Francois. The coordinator position is presently open.

b. There was a question as to whether we ought to continue this committee. We decided we will. The Education Committee is a good way to get the word out about our program for those who aren't involved in any other way. It is a good marketing strategy. The classes can be a good way for bringing in income. There are those who come to a class and end-up making a sizeable donation. There is potential here for reaching possible donators and this could be part of a conceptual purpose of the Education Committee.

c. Criteria for classes could be established, such as: What kind of connections do we make? Do we make any money? Could prioritize which classes could be income-making and which are more peripheral to the program itself.

d. Even though instructors are offered payment, most decline to be paid.

e. Ideas for classes in April/May:

i. 1) What vegetables grow well here with Joe Rosen.

ii. 2) Marian could do classes on the hoop-house and season extension.

iii. 3) Chicken class with plans on how to build a coop. The chicken classes have been well attended.

6. Land Stewardship Committee:

a. Members are Loni, Katie, Kerry, Paul with Dan as coordinator.

b. Because we were going over-time, the Land Stewardship Committee passed on reporting. They have a strong committee and are presently working on new procedures and policies for the garden sites and site coordinators.

4. GENERAL COMMITTEE WORK:

A schedule will be set-up between the board and the committees for reporting. A deadline would be established for each committee to submit event timelines for the calendar for publicity, etc. For now, any scheduled event or class needs to be made available to the operations committee one month prior to the event, beginning now.

A yearly calendar will be compiled for those events which happen regularly every year. Other seasonal events could be targeted for the website and perhaps a calendar on the office wall.

Next Board Meeting will be Monday, December 14th, 5:00 p.m. at the garden office. The meeting will focus on Katie's position.

We decided we need to have another retreat to continue our discussion. We will meet on Saturday, January 9th, from 9:00 a.m. – noon at Sara's Table.

Appendix 1

Meeting Minutes with Gordy Lund

Date December 5, 2009

- Gordy started off the discussion with this statement:
- His observations are that this is a warm and friendly board.
- Asked if we had a strategic plan. Our plan is several years old and needs to be reviewed.
- Gordy stated that the organization needs a dream.

Group flow of ideas:

- Families learn how to garden and provide some food for themselves.
- Healthy diet raised here in the locality and region.
- Program more well know in the region and connected into other food growing organization by strategic partnerships.
- A well fed neighbor is a good neighbor
- Get the kids involved with growing.
- Taking back the city with plants and flowers in every available place. Conquer the asphalt.
- Good food is a human right.
- Like to see the Cook Home poor farm developed into producing farm again.

Gordy Lund Comment:

Board Mechanics:

- Like to see a bigger board rather than a smaller one. Agility would be gained by the executive committee.
- Large board would meet on a quarterly basis and provide the conduit for committee communication to the executive committee.
- The executive committee would meet on a monthly basis and be responsible for the strategic planning, financial oversight, and fund raising relationships.

Board recruit statements:

Are you ready?

- Make a list of skills you want in the board. Ability, Interest, Linkage.
- Assign mentor to new board member. All board members graded annually.
- Timing of campaigns is critical. Develop strategy, protocol and a point person.
- How long does it take to build a good board? Gordy states that it takes ten years.
- Fundraising and building a board have things in common.
- Instill a dream, build a relationship, and most important ask the question of expectations from the potential board member before launching into the presentation.
- Before this organization can recruit board members and funding must be unified in direction.
- Top level leadership in the campaign-one person responsible and accountable to the board.
- “Look for interest not money”.
- “If you want money ask for advice”.

Possible Board and potential strategic interests

- Urban edge future regional food production.

- Continue to introduce disenfranchised to soil and gardening.
- Discover and recover historic farming patterns in and around the city of Duluth.

Bigger gifts protocol:

A board member calls and asks why the gift was made. Opportunity to develop a relationship.

Procedure comments:

- Each committee shall prioritize their needs, and when they have to do them.
- It is important to instill a sense of responsibility when assigning tasks: Who, What, Deadline to achieve task.

Gordy requests the following information:

- Copy of strategic plan-KH
- Financial statements for last two years-DJK
- List of board members with station in life-DJK

Board was introduced to Carla Bloomberg one of the owners of the Chester Creek Café.

Notes taken by Dan Kislinger

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