

EVCG Board Meeting Minutes – January 11, 2024

Time: 5:00 to 6:23

Place: Virtual via ZOOM

Attendees: Ren Gobris, Leslie Alexander, Deb Bruce, Jim Bruce, Jessica Beychok-Boyer, Clara Logue

ZOOM: All

Absent: None

Special Guests: Dave Boon, Board Member of Estes Park Learning Place

Meeting Purpose: To conduct our regularly scheduled January board meeting. In preparation for the meeting, an agenda was sent out as well as the following documents for board meeting approval. Special Guest, Dave Boon, attended the meeting. Dave presented a proposal for EVCG to coordinate the construction of raised bed garden plots at a site as chosen by Scout Moulton, EP Housing Authority Executive Director.

- December 2023 Board Meeting minutes
- Draft Garden Manager Job Description
- Draft Finance Committee Responsibilities
- Draft VTS 2023 Grant Completion Form
- 2024 Community Garden Calendar
- Dave Boon's Presentation

Dave Boon's Presentation: Dave is a board member of Estes Park Learning Place. He gave a short 15–20-minute presentation outlining how a past project that he championed to build raised garden plots for Teaching Tree in Fort Collins, a non-profit day care center, could be used as a model to build raised beds at an affordable housing unit in Estes Park. Dave had already done a great deal of investigative work prior to his presentation by meeting with Scott Moulton, EP Housing Authority Executive Director, several local rotary clubs, and Ruby Bode, Superintendent of Estes Park Schools. All of these are reported to have had great interest in conducting a pilot project of building raised beds at an affordable housing unit in Estes Park.

The general outline of the proposal is as follows: EVCG would be a central figure in coordinating the project while providing technical support. A local Rotary Club would finance it. The local high schools would build the frames and potentially begin to grow plants for the beds. And the homeowners themselves would help with site construction. Dave will prepare a budget over the next month, with partnerships being firmed up shortly thereafter. That will be followed by the construction of the wooden frames. If all works as planned, the development of the site would occur in the April-May timeframe.

The benefits of this proposal to EVCG are many including: better recognition in the community; helping low-income families reduce food costs and obtain fresh vegetable; engagement of students (middle school and high school) in Shop and Horticulture; real projects for EP students to give back to their community (shop, horticulture, Interact, Youth in Action); a successful pilot project could lead to expansion to other EP Housing Authority sites; better community recognition often results in increase

funding (donations and grants); and, this project represents a great potential to attract and retain new board members.

The EVCG Board unanimously voted to accept Dave's proposal which would begin in earnest sometime in February after Dave (and his wife June) return from an overseas trip.

Approval of 2023 December Board Meeting Minutes: The December 2023 Board Meeting minutes were approved. Leslie made the motion. Deb seconded it.

VTS Project Update: Thanks to the stellar work of Doyle Baker and Jim Bruce, a draft VTS Grant Completion Form is nearly complete. The team is currently reconciling a minor difference between the budgeted expenses and actual results as prepared by Doyle with the bank balances and monthly Statements of Cashflows as prepared by Jim. **The board unanimously agreed** that, in the spirit in which the grant was issued and received, the anticipated balance of funds will be returned versus asking VTS if EVCG could use the funds to build a few additional raised beds. The money is expected to be returned in the coming weeks and well in advance of the February 28th deadline.

Garden Manager Job Description: The board unanimously approved a new Garden Manager Job Description. The newly approved job description is a compilation of duties that were prepared and approved by a previous EVCG board with those that were proposed by Doyle Baker himself. It was agreed that Doyle would be immediately notified of the board's decision and that he be provided a copy of the job description for his acceptance and better understanding.

Committee Discussions: The Board reaffirmed its commitment to relieve itself of certain routine duties while simultaneously (hopefully) improving volunteerism with the introduction of various committees. The following committees were discussed.

- **Finance Committee: The Board unanimously approved** the new Finance Committee Responsibilities. Like the garden manager's job description described above, the newly approved Finance Committee responsibilities are a combination of responsibilities that were approved by a previous EVCG Board and new responsibilities as established by this Board. **It was further agreed** that Jim Redman, a faithful EVCG volunteer with broad accounting and auditing experience earned through a career with Earnst and Young, should not only be asked if he would consider becoming a committee member but becoming the committee chair due to his vast experience.
- **Garden Operations Committee:** It was unanimously agreed that our email to Doyle Baker about the approval of the Garden Manager role would also inform Doyle that the Board hopes to establish a Garden Operations Committee. Over the past several seasons, the Board tried to establish distinct volunteer groups (rodent control, irrigation, common plots, mowing and trimming) to meet Garden needs. Invariably these groups failed to form a cohesive structure and volunteerism suffered. It is hoped that formation of a "Garden Operations Committee" will provide a better framework for identifying needs and sharing responsibilities. Ren Gobris agreed to coordinate the writing of Garden Operations Responsibilities for purposes of future board approval.

- **Grants and Gifts Committee:** Deb Bruce volunteered to head a “Grants and Gifts” Committee. It was agreed that Deb should take the lead in writing up these job responsibilities using the newly approved Finance Committee Job Responsibilities as a model for future board approval.

El Pomar Discussion: Deb informed us that the EL Pomar grant application must be submitted 8-10 weeks before their March meeting. In other words, the grant application is essentially due TODAY! To apply for a grant to build or buy a prefabricated sun shelter, an engineer’s report is needed for permitting purposes.

Deb has been in contact with Kinley Built. Nathan agreed to help but Deb hasn’t heard back from him for 10 days. Kim gave Jessica the name of a contractor and Jessica is currently working with another contractor. Jessica has agreed to ask them both if they will work with us pro bono. Ren agreed to contact Dave Boon about a contractor. Given these time constraints, we may have to postpone applying for the El Pomar grant until next season.

Treasurer Resignation. Jim Bruce notified the Board that he would be resigning his role as Treasurer due to various circumstances beyond his control. Jim was a valuable member of the Board. He will be missed.

Satisfaction Survey: It was agreed to put the satisfaction survey, in its current form, and as has been issued in the past, on hold. The survey is viewed as too general and not helpful to the board. It was agreed that a more detailed survey will be developed and sent. It was further agreed the board would be better served by perhaps sending a letter informing gardeners of changes to the board, and challenges the Garden is facing. The letter would include a new survey that seeks to find members for various committees and/or board positions, the possibility of a likely 2024 rate increase, and other more important and current matters.

Last Month’s (Between December 13th and Jan 11th) Accomplishments:

Item	Responsible Person	Action	Due Date	Status
1	Leslie/Ren	Meet with the Boons and/or Scott Moulton to finalize the board presentation on piloting a raised plot garden in affordable housing units.	Jan 10 th	Done
2	All	Review satisfaction survey that was recently sent out by Leslie. Suggest changes as deemed appropriate by emailing back to Leslie. Please strive to have these sent back and tabulated by Jan 10th to be available for discussion at the next board meeting. If you have nothing to add, please reply as such, so we know you have weighed in.	Jan 10 th	Done. It was decided that the survey in its current form would not be sent this year.

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3	Deb	Prepare a grant application for El Pomar for the construction of a sun shelter perhaps to work in conjunction with EVICS.	ASAP	Progressing but probably not possible this year due to time constraints.
4	All	Search Google Drive and the Corporate Book to locate past committee functions and descriptions and to be prepared to discuss them at the January meeting.	ASAP	Done.
5	All	Review the job description for Garden Manager and update as needed.	ASAP	Done. Approved.
6	All	Formally approve/disregard the "Finance Committee"	ASAP	Done. Approved
7	Ren	Prepare a preliminary report for the usage of what may be leftover or surplus VTS funding	ASAP	Done
8	All	Submit individual Conflict of Interest statements to Leslie.	ASAP	Done

This Month's (Between Jan 11th and Feb 8th) Priorities:

Item	Responsible Person	Action	Due Date	Status
1	All	Find a temporary solution to filling the role of Treasurer that has recently been vacated.	ASAP	
2	Ren	Finalize and approve the preliminary December financial reports to close out the year 2023.	ASAP	
3	Ren	Prepare financial reports for January		
4	All	Meet with the Boons (the Boons are out of the country until Feb) to continue the strategy of building raised beds at an EP Housing Authority property.	ASAP	
5	All	Develop a new and more meaningful survey for gardeners	ASAP	
6	All	Find an engineer or contractor who can advise us on permitting requirements for a standalone or prefabricated sun shelter.	ASAP	
7	Ren & Doyle	Finalize the VTS report and return all refundable money.	ASAP	

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8	Ren	Notify Doyle Baker of his anticipated role as Garden Manager.	ASAP	
9	All	Ask Jim Redman to join and possibly lead the "Finance Committee"	ASAP	
10	Deb	Write up the Job Responsibilities of the "Gifts and Grants" committee	ASAP	
11	Ren	Write up the Job Responsibilities of the Garden Operations Committee	ASAP	
12	All	Begin preparing the 2024 annual budget by using 2023 as a base. Please send all comments and ideas (wants, needs, desires) to Ren and copy all.	ASAP	
13	Ren & Jessica	Finalize the first draft strategy for issuing VTS tall plots. The following have been identified as having at least some relevance to the development of a strategy: Age; physical disabilities; sponsors; past volunteerism; and cost structure.	ASAP	
14	All	Finalize the 2024 Fee Structure.	ASAP	
15	All	Develop a draft questionnaire or census to determine how age impacts volunteerism AND more specifically how to use age as a determining factor when awarding the new VTS tall plots.	ASAP	
16	All	Review our Sponsor Policies and make any changes as may be appropriate in conjunction with creating the 2024 annual budget.	ASAP	
17	All	Update the Garden Contracts once the 2024 Fee Structure is finalized.	ASAP	

Longer Term Goals

These goals were not discussed at the board meeting but are included in these notes simply as a reminder to keep our eyes on the long-term objectives. Please add to this list, as ideas may be generated, no matter how seemingly insignificant the idea may be. There are no bad ideas because often even bad ideas turn good after further discussion. Only some of these goals have been assigned as was previously agreed.

Item	Responsible Person	Action	Due Date	Status
1	All	Investigate the need to develop non-traditional approaches to funding such		

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		as crowd funding, drawings, and direct pleas to gardeners themselves.		
2	All	Prepare a short biography of each board member and arrange that a photo be taken for future communication purposes.		
3	All	Develop a Spring 2024 Orientation Program		
4	Clara/Jim	Establish closer relationships to local hardware companies to obtain discounts on much needed garden tools.		
5	Clara	Develop a list of tools needed at the garden		
6	All	Determine how to best manage Kim's departure as it relates to Publicity, Events, Partnerships, and Volunteerism.		
7	All	Form a committee to update Bylaws		
8	Clara	Do some research into the life cycle, management, and control of voles AND to prepare an initial plan of action to better control them in the community garden		