

Minutes--NC Community Gardening Partners Meeting
Wednesday, March 11, 2009 – 2-4 p.m.
J.C. Ralston Arboretum, N.C. State University--Raleigh, NC

The meeting began with introductions. Those attending included:

Maria Hitt Growing Healthy Kids'	Erin Moody Center for Excellence in
Kevin Dowling Guilford Co. Master	Curricular Engagement NCSU
Gardeners	Jeana Myers NCDA&CS Soil Testing Lab
Jeanne Aller Guilford Co. Master	Mary Bea Kolbe NCDPH PAN Branch
Gardeners	Michelle Futrell NCDPH CY Branch
Karen Neill Guilford Co. Cooperative	Diane Beth NCDPH PAN Branch
Extension	Lucy Bradley NC Cooperative Extension
Mike Lanier Orange Co. Cooperative	Don Boekelheide (by internet)—
Extension	Charlotte Community Gardens
Nancy Easterling N.C. Botanical Garden	Keith Baldwin NCA&T Cooperative
	Extension Program

Keith agreed to take meeting notes. Diane chaired the meeting and Lucy facilitated the A/V needs related to using Elluminate.

The meeting began with reports of new activities by NCGC partners:

- Maria spoke of two garden sites (church sites, 15 people each) returning this year plus one new site in cooperation with Duke Power. She is also working on a school at Carrboro Elementary and getting parents involved to cover the summer. Her funding covers activities through June, and maybe some additional funds available from the Wellness Trust Fund to continue her work at that time. Chapel Hill High 'Green Tigers' are revitalizing a school greenhouse and starting a garden.
- Karen spoke of growing pains for the community garden program in Guilford. There are three gardens in place. Two are available to the general public. Eight churches have come forward requesting information about and interest in starting new gardens. She has prepared a questionnaire to glean info from beginners, and after completion of that form, she follows-up with "how to set up a garden." She is also getting requests from many gardeners who want to join gardens and is trying to place them.
- Mike Lanier reported that Anathoth Garden has a 'how to' workshop 3/21 for \$50 all day. He is interested in using the 4H model and working through schools to have gardens associated with other life skills activities. This would primarily be through an after-school program.
- Nancy reported that the Bot Garden will be the 'hub' for a model school garden communication program (funding likely). The National Gardening Association will build a communication system that will link two school community gardens per county across the country. In three years will be talking to gardens across the world.

- Diane reported that Johanna Chase (DPI) is interested in integrating school gardens into senior projects. Farm Bureau also seems to be interested in community gardens.
- Erin is currently working in Partnership with Food Shuttle to start two gardens. They hope to start 6 eventually.
- Don reported a former National CG coordinator is now involved in community gardening in Winston. There are currently 13 gardens in Charlotte.

NC Community Garden Survey

There followed a discussion led by Diane of the recently released NC Community Garden Survey. There have only been five responses to date. The question arose about whether the survey should be sent out separately. The possibility exists that it might have gotten lost in the shuffle of paper. It looks like the national community garden association (NCGA) survey. Karen suggested sending it to a key person per county, who could get it to key players. But Nancy asked, "Shouldn't Extension be the hub?" The group was in general agreement that this was not necessarily the case, but, indeed, a hub is needed. In any event, the survey should be returned to Diane and Lucy. At the present pace, we will probably keep the survey open past the original closing date of 4/3/09 (probably to 5/3/09). As a follow-up to the survey, we need a volunteer to compile the data and put it in a presentable form. **Action Item: Don knows a potential volunteer at UNCC in Sociology who might do it.**

Action Items: Lucy will ensure the CG survey is sent to all cooperative extension agents ASAP.

Diane will send it out again to the local foods action plan listserv and will also send it out to the NC Community Garden partners listserv (once Lucy creates that new list). Each CG partner will be sure to send it out to their respective contacts.

Work of UNC Students for NC GC partners regarding a primer and grant

Diane described to those attending the work her students are doing on a community garden primer in consultation with Lucy, Keith, Susan. They have also written a 'mock' grant focusing on cg, in particular on the hiring of a full-time coordinator. Unfortunately it's a mock grant, but the skeleton/boiler plate will be there for further work and possible submission for real money. Diane asked if there would be any who would serve on a committee looking for possible funding sources for the work of the Partners and to assist with fund development. Staffing and technical support for website development are opportunities for moving the effort forward. Maria wondered what staffing would look like for a statewide effort. Melissa and Nilam (the students) have outlined that according to Diane. She indicated that we are trying to figure out where we are going with the Partners group. Our first project was the survey. We will use it to identify needs. But as a component of moving the effort forward, do we want to identify funding as a key mission?

Action Items: Diane came back to main point, trying to get someone to volunteer to do this work (grant-writing). Karen knows a Farm Bureau person (Julie Elmore) who

has volunteered to provide some help with respect to funding as we move forward. Maria suggested Heifer Project. She also “volunteers” to help a committee look at funding opportunities. Maria and Keith volunteered to help look as well. Lucy suggests getting research, talking points, etc. to her so she could put it on the website. Then you could go there to write a proposal or get information for presentations to city council, etc.

Farm To Fork Summit (FTF) and Interaction of CG WIT and NC CG Partners

The discussion turned to the Farm To Fork Summit (FTF), a community-based food systems effort, which was recently cancelled due to bad weather. Working Issues Teams (WIT) have been formed to parcel the effort into component parts and identify “game changers.” CG has a WIT team, led by Lucy among others. The team formed after we started our Partners work. Some of the CG Partners were also part of the FTF CG WIT (Lucy, Diane, Karen, Jeana, Katherine, Don). Keith reported that he had talked to Nancy Creamer, who is heading up the FTF effort in NC. Our group is welcome to continue the work of that WIT moving forward. Diane said that there is a ‘search’ on for a statewide FTF coordinator. Diane is co-chairing a public health and food access disparities WIT team. Questions remain about how WIT teams look going forward.

Lucy prepared a powerpoint for the FTF Summit describing the work of the cg WIT team. That ppt is attached and contains useful information. Some ideas generated by the WIT include:

- Branding/Certification a la Bountiful Cities (which would include gardening)
- Job stimulus initiative
- Heritage garden campaign.
- Social gardening campaign

Game Changers generated included:

- A cg in every community
- Educational hubs/model gardens in every region across NC that function as “feeder gardens”

Potential Tool Kits for cg activists:

- Profiles of successful gardens
- A cg presentation ppt. **Action Item (Kevin will tweak the ppt he has on Community Gardens and that can be posted on the CG website that Lucy maintains)**
- Local policy resource package (language for securing govt. support of gardens;
- e.g. hoops to jump in Chapel Hill such as planning, town board, etc.) (Mike)
- Model business plan for a cg
- A community gardening guide (how to kit) including the handicapped access issue (brought up by Nancy)

Mike wants to know about including urban farming, e.g. backyard chickens on the Partners agenda. The general sense was that we have enough on our plate right now.

BREAK

Additional Needs for NCGC

The discussion continued about the work of the Partners going forward. Diane commented that we've started on the networking aspects, but we need to move forward with the "super branding" part. She suggested that with respect to going forward we work with the WIT game changers for now and the WIT comments we discussed while reviewing the ppt that Lucy presented. Diane asked whether or not everyone is comfortable that for the present, and there was general agreement.

Karen suggested that we need promotional information explaining what's going on with both the Partners and in the state. The fact sheets would give "Who, what, when, where" info Nancy thought that this would be very helpful.

Jeana, stated that the take home message is branding; that is, the bountiful city model. We need to do this for this group.

Action Item: We need someone to volunteer to work on this for the NC GC Partners

Action Item: Once completed, Keith will send out announcement to whole FTF group about Partners activities.

Action Item: Lucy will start up an NC State list serve for this group. She asked if it would be OK with everyone to add all names. Lucy also noted that anyone can post to the Partners website.

Karen suggested another possibility: tours of various types of community gardens. Jeana added that maybe we could supplement those with something too on website for those who can't tour.

Karen reported that Guilford and Forsyth Co. Extension were planning a regional conference, possibly in August. They are currently recruiting knowledgeable people to speak. **Action Item: Karen will share registration information with the NCGC listserve when available.**

Regular Meetings Schedule

Diane suggested a regular meeting schedule, rather than meeting wizard each time we planned to meet. There was discussion about quarterly meets with more frequent meetings for work teams. Maria suggested a regular day on quarterly basis. There was a lot of date conflict. **Action Item: The Executive committee will confer and report back but in general will try to find a date in June and gear it towards either 9-11 or 2-4. Meetings will be moved around (Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill) and phone or internet capabilities will be arranged.**

The meeting was adjourned.