

SUSTAINABLE SOUTH OSBORNE COMMUNITY CO-OPERATIVE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

April 5, 2021, 7:00 – 8:05 p.m. CST

ZOOM (24 PARTICIPANTS)

1.0 PRESIDENT'S REPORT (APPENDIX A)

2.0 VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT (APPENDIX B)

3.0 TREASURER'S REPORT (APPENDIX C)

4.0 FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE REPORT

- Due to COVID, fundraising and monies have been tight.
- A challenge to engage the community in fundraising activities.
 - Inability to host Harvest Dinner and workshops.
 - Likely not going to happen this year.
- Decided to form a fundraising committee.
- Meeting semi-regularly to discuss potential solutions to adapt and engage with the community.
- Hosting a raffle fundraiser:
 - Waiting on approval from the LG ca for our raffle license.
 - Sell each ticket at \$10 cash, tickets will be printed.
 - Ability to e-transfer if cannot purchase hard ticket with cash.
 - Try to get cash, first. Logistics behind e-transfer may be difficult.
 - Draw set to be held on May 15.
 - Relying on board, community, and volunteers to spread the word.
 - Potential first prize includes a CSA style box full of veggies every two weeks throughout the growing season, second prize once a month. Third prize could be bedding plants and a rain chain, or a fall harvest bundle at the end of the year, as we have lots of apples and end of season veggies that need that need a home.
 - Board members will spearhead getting these tickets out to the community.
 - If other members or volunteers would like posters, please let us know via email and we can deliver them to you to post in shared spaces.
- Virtual night with a chef fundraiser:

- Three series in the event to be spread out throughout early and late summer as well as an early fall.
- Looking into getting sponsorship by Knight Archer insurance, waiting on confirmation.
- There will be food prepared with produce from the gardens delivered to the winner.
- Bottle of wine included from elements.
- Winners will connect virtually with the chef and have a one-on-one virtual cooking class for them to prepare a meal with the veggies.
- Social Media will assist in spreading the word for fundraisers in addition going forward.

5.0 COVID RESTRICTIONS IN THE GARDEN

- Rules will be enforced this year like last year and will be a little stricter than last year.
- Despite the vaccinations, variants are of concern.
- Asking volunteers to wear masks, especially if working next to another person.
- Encourage volunteers to bring their own equipment (shovel, towels, disinfectant, etc.)
- When sharing tools, use disinfectant before giving to another volunteer.
- Asking volunteers to sign in as a method of contact tracing when they come in for each shift.

6.0 APRIL 24 MEET AND GREET COMMENCING THE VOLUNTEER SEASON

- Limiting participation to 25 for a single group.
- Already had more than 25 people state that they are planning to attend.
- We will divide it into two groups, one at the orchard and one down below.
- An opportunity to talk to reacquaint each other and talk about our goals for the year.
- Rain date will be the following Sunday, May 2nd.

7.0 BOARD MEMBER ELECTIONS AND RE-ELECTIONS

- Three board members that are up for renewal (Steve, Mat and Laura):
 - All agreed to have their name stand again.
 - Donnie, our secretary has stepped down.
 - Nomination for secretarial position: Eliana, vote passed uncontested.
 - With Eliana moving into the secretarial position that leaves one vacant position to be filled.
 - Alexis has volunteered to become the next member at large, vote passed uncontested.

7.0 QUESTIONS

- Who will oversee deliveries for raffle fundraiser prizes?

- May be shared amongst board members, Eliana has volunteered with her car to make the drops.
- Is the virtual chef night a separate fundraiser? When will planning for that begin?
 - Separate fundraiser.
 - Will get the raffle up and going first, then focus on this.
- Is contact tracing something that is mandated by the province at this point, or just something that we were thinking of offering?
 - Do not believe that it is currently mandated, but other organizations keep track. President's opinion that we should be keeping track of who is volunteering in the garden.

APPENDIX A PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Barb Ediger

Hello and welcome to SSOCC's 2021 Annual General Meeting. I will keep my report brief in order that we can have more time to hear from our other Board members.

Twenty-twenty was an interesting and challenging year for everyone and SSOCC was certainly no exception. We have had to adjust and adapt to the ever-changing Covid restrictions, while at the same time, dealing with drought like conditions in the gardens and orchards.

So, the restrictions meant we were unable to offer any workshops over the winter and we had to cancel our annual Harvest Dinner. The Harvest Dinner has always been our main source of income to cover costs, such as insurance and supplies. Since, it is obvious that we will be unable to hold the dinner again this year, we are looking at other options. We will talk about that later in the meeting. The restrictions also meant that we needed to be mindful of our volunteers, ensuring that they could complete the necessary tasks while meeting the regulated distance requirements.

The dry conditions meant that we spent a lot of time hauling water or pumping water from the river to water our gardens and orchards. Anyone who has participated in this job knows how time consuming and exhausting that activity can be.

Despite all of this, we had a successful growing season. We harvested hundreds of pounds of vegetables and over a ton of fruits and berries. Anybody who came out to work in the gardens took home fresh, locally grown produce. We donated our excess fruits and vegetables to over 20 local charities, including the Bear Clan, Winnipeg Harvest, Agape Table and numerous neighbourhood and inner-city schools and day cares, thereby meeting our mandate of providing locally grown food to the food insecure.

We also 'donated' a good deal of fresh vegetables to garden thieves. Theft from the gardens has become a real issue – not only for SSOCC and the Riverview Garden Society, but for gardeners around the city. While nobody begrudges anyone a few carrots or beets, we are less tolerant of those people who pull up their cars and trucks and wipe out a year's worth of tomatoes or onions. It has been occurring with increased frequency and both SSOCC and RGS are looking at ways to reduce the problem.

This past year we saw a marked increase in interest in our organization with numerous requests for information and tours from other gardeners around the city. We also saw a marked increase in the number of volunteers coming out to our garden clubs each week. It is wonderful to work alongside both

seasoned gardeners and first-time gardeners. We welcome them all. The trend seems to be continuing in 2021.

SSOCC was able to secure funding from Summer Jobs Canada and the Manitoba Green team, which enabled us to hire to amazing employees for the summer. Joya and Hani were tremendous assets who worked above and beyond our expectations. We thank them for their dedication and energy. We have applied for funding from both levels of government for 2021 and anticipate a favourable response from them.

We also received a grant of \$3,800. from Trees Canada which was used to plant an additional 30 fruit trees and 50 berry bushes. Their support was most gratifying and encouraging. Thank you, Steve Newton for spearheading this endeavor.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board and our volunteers for their hard work and dedication over the past year. It may sound cliché, but we truly could not do what we do without this support and the support of the community. I also need to thank our outgoing secretary, Donnie Bowness. Donnie has been involved with SSOCC in one capacity or another from its inception. She is also one of the unsung Covid heroes of 2020. Donnie works at the National Laboratory and has basically put her life on hold for the past year working ridiculous hours. So, thank you Donnie for your work with SSOCC and at the lab.

Lastly, I need to thank our anonymous guardian angel, who last year dropped off a cashier's cheque for \$2,500 and just last week donated another \$1,000. I cannot begin to tell you how appreciated and uplifting these gifts are. Not only does the money help pay the bills, but just the knowledge that somebody out there appreciates our efforts to that extent reaffirms that we must be doing something right and that the community supports us efforts.

APPENDIX B VICE-PRESIDENTS REPORT

Rod Kueneman

I would like to welcome you to tonight's meeting. I hope you have enjoyed the mild winter and early spring. It is a mixed blessing for SSOCC as you can well imagine. We received 52% of normal precipitation in 2020 and the forecast for the next few months is for below normal precipitation. If these drought conditions continue, much of our time this growing season will need to be devoted to watering the trees and berry bushes we have already planted.

SSOCC is a visible and respected community venture. As we begin our 12th year of operations in the field, we have some measure of success in our efforts to produce local food and contribute to food growing literacy. Although we had to suspend workshops and larger work bees, we have been able to provide volunteers with supported gardening experience and the use of permaculture principles in an urban location while following COVID protocols. We have learned from our mistakes along the way and gained a better understanding of how to care for damage sites and help them restore them to sustainable, high yield sites.

As I mentioned last year, the City of Winnipeg's legal department has undertaken an initiative to transform a large number of hand-shake agreements with various kinds of groups into actual lease agreements. Two of the groups are SSOCC and the Riverview Garden Society (RGS). Both groups have been directed to suspend any projects or plans for further development until a lease has been signed. We are currently only allowed to maintain what we have already developed. We were offered a lease last May but it had so many problems for us if we signed it, we deferred signing and renewed negotiations in January. We are

awaiting a revised draft lease which takes into account our concerns and some of our suggestions. We are hopeful that it will be signed soon. Once it is signed, we can proceed with our plans to complete the River Garden site development and RGS can install the irrigation system.

Both SSOCC and RGS were awarded Land Dedication Reserve Fund grants in 2018 which we can access as soon as we have signed leases. SSOCC was awarded \$30,803 for soil, plants, 4 picnic tables, and a pergola structure. The picnic tables are in place. We have decided not to proceed with the pergola idea and those funds will be reallocated for use on other needs. RGS applied for funding to install an irrigation system for their riverside plots and was awarded \$16,000 for this project. Part of that system will also supply water to the River Garden. That project will be installed in early October after the gardening season is finished.

Our sites are becoming increasingly productive. Food is shared with volunteers who help grow it and with people who are food insecure. In past years we have tried to sell food to local restaurants and participate in local markets, but these efforts did not provide the kind of revenue we need to cover our overhead (insurance, bookkeeping, etc.) and they were difficult to achieve. A proposed zoning By-Law change would help us considerably. City Council will soon vote on a proposed by-law which will allow people to grow food on private and public land and to be able to sell it on site. In the event that this passes, SSOCC will seek permission from the City to run our orchard as a "You Pick" operation and to sell fruit as well as produce from our gardens. This kind of operation will solve the labour, shipping, and storage problems that otherwise occur. It will allow us to organize community orchard events where we can celebrate the local harvest, build community ties, and provide educational opportunities. With permission to sell garden produce at the roadside, we will be able to sell surplus when it is available. This revenue stream will help us cover our operational and overhead costs when the Harvest Dinner or other food events are not possible.

We increased the teaching/learning potential of our sites and had much stronger participation in our garden clubs. There is a lot to teach and learn in the gardens and the orchard and the increased numbers of volunteers were crucial in our efforts to eliminate weeds in the old orchard and to replace them with a polyculture of grasses and flowering plants. When completed, this cover crop will help this site sustainably produce increased bounty while also increasing soil health. Stop by the orchard when we have our orchard club meetings and learn more. Part of the orchard transformation also includes the introduction of more woodchips on the terraces to help build soil health, retain moisture and increase the yield of the berry bushes. Your assistance in installing cardboard and then covering it with woodchips, is an important part of the process. There are piles of woodchips already on site for this purpose.

We are also reinstalling the butterfly garden at the People Garden after it was tarp last season to kill off the weeds and quack grass which had invaded it. We are looking for perennial plants for this purpose. Let us know if you would like to be involved.

We have made some progress toward our goal of dividing the management of the sites among more people. Garden stewards are taking on increased supervision of their sites, Sean McLachlan has begun to take over the responsibility of managing the orchard, Steve Newton has taken the lead on caring for the berry patch in the River Garden, and Ken Everatt is taking increased responsibility for the propagation of seedlings for our gardens. The knowledge, experience and decision-making is being placed in the hands of more people in order to transition away from our current management which relies too heavily on one person.

Once again, it has been my pleasure to help care for the network of places that are developing in complexity, beauty, and productivity under our watchful eyes. I enjoy working with such an energetic and

imaginative group of people as we continue our efforts to care for damaged sites until they can take better care of themselves.

As we enter our twelfth season in the field, we invite you to join us; there is lots going on and much to learn to appreciate. The web of life is complex, and nature is full of surprises. We hope you can join us for some good work, great company, and useful information. Come nurture your spirit. One of the best stress reduction programs available is at a SSO site near you!

APPENDIX C TREASURER'S REPORT

Laura Reimer

Overall, SSOCC had a loss for the period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 of approximately \$6,500. This was due to much lower income this past year. We were not able to have our annual fundraising Harvest Dinner in 2020 or run any workshops. The Harvest Dinner specifically is our main source of income each year.

We were very fortunate to receive some donations during the year - \$500 from Parkline Café and \$1,000 from an anonymous donor, in addition to the wire walls we were able to sell for donations. We also received 3 grants - Tree Canada gave us \$3,500 towards new fruit trees and bushes, and Canada Summer Jobs & Urban Green Team both gave us funding to hire students for the summer.

Expenses overall year over year were very similar, even with the insurance costs significantly increasing due to new requirements from the City of Winnipeg for our insurance coverages.