

Hatfield Community Garden
Steering Committee Guide

Purpose

The purpose of the Steering Committee is: to promote unity among Hatfield Community Garden members through social and civic activities; to create a forum to formally communicate garden and other needs and concerns to the appropriate Town Authority/Department; to actively work in a variety of ways to ensure that as a whole the garden is well-maintained and aesthetically pleasing; to advocate for members of the garden; and to advocate for the creation and preservation of more community garden spaces, as needed.

Steering Committee Duties

The Hatfield Community Garden will be run by a volunteer Steering Committee committed to working together to address concerns affecting members. The Steering Committee will conduct itself in an open and honest manner. Duties of the Steering Committee may include but are not limited to: provide leadership for the members; prepare meeting agendas; facilitate meetings; designate someone to take minutes; make available meeting minutes, agendas, and announcements by email; provide email or hard copies (if requested); address members' concerns following the Procedure to Address Concerns; and represent the organization to the Town, outside groups and the media. In order to give all members an opportunity to share and weigh in on issues, the Steering Committee may use the Group Processes below.

Group Processes

Thumbs and Circle Process are two group processes that can be introduced at the first meeting to help set respectful group norms.

Thumbs: For a quick pulse of where the interests of the group lie, you can ask for a show of thumbs. This can help to quickly determine how many people feel the same way about any issue that is brought before the group, which helps if you have several issues, and you need to quickly figure out where to focus more time and discussion. It is a simple thumbs up for yes, I share the same concern; thumbs down for no, I don't share the same concern; and thumbs sideways, for no strong opinion either way.

Circle Process: Circle process can be used to evenly distribute the conversation in a group to prevent any one personality from dominating the discussion. Let's say the group leader decides to use a time limit for speakers to share. This can be determined based on how many people are present. For example, if you've allocated 30 min for a topic discussion and there are 8 people present, each person would have a 3-minute time limit, that would use up 24 minutes for each person to have an opportunity to share. For this to work, someone needs to volunteer to be the timekeeper. This process prevents any one person from dominating the conversation and gives the quieter, more introverted folks an opportunity to share their opinions. A person can always pass if they don't have anything to add. After you've made it around the circle once, you can speak popcorn-style.

Procedure for Addressing Concerns

The Steering Committee will address concerns of members to the best of their ability when residents utilize the proper procedure, which requires submitting a concern in writing. Be sure to include the following: name, address, phone number and/or email of person making the request. State the concern/problem and how you would like it addressed. This gives the Steering Committee the opportunity to

prepare for the discussion, which may include contacting you for more information. The Steering Committee will go over each request at the next (or the current meeting, if time allows) and ask members how they feel the concern should be handled. The group will decide whether or not to take follow-up action on the item. The Steering Committee will take action on issues of collective concern. The Steering Committee may also advocate for individual residents, if requested.

Temporary Committees

Temporary Committees may be formed on an as needed basis determined by the members. Temporary Committees will be run by volunteers and they will be asked to give an update of the committee's findings/progress at the next meeting.

Meetings

Meetings shall be held on an as needed basis. Notice of the meeting date, time and location will be shared via email at least one week before each meeting. If the Steering Committee finds it necessary to meet on an emergency basis, advance notice will be given, if possible.

Decision Making

Each member of the Hatfield Community Garden shall be entitled to one vote. All elections and decisions shall be decided by a majority of members present by a show of hands. If a paper ballot is found necessary by the Steering Committee it shall be allowed to take place on an absentee basis with 48 hour notice, if possible.

Amendments

These by-laws may be altered, amended, or repealed at any meeting by a majority vote. Notice of any proposed alterations, amendments, or repeal of these by-laws

shall be given to all members at least seven days before the meeting at which such a vote will be taken.

Non-Discrimination

We the members believe that no person should be discriminated against because of race, sex, age, marital status, religious creed, color, national origin, sexual preference, sexual identity, ability or disability status or because they receive public assistance. The organization shall be operated in an open and democratic fashion, respecting the worth and dignity of all.

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