

City of High Point

*Municipal Office Building
211 S. Hamilton Street
High Point, NC 27260*



Minutes

Wednesday, February 5, 2020

9:00 AM

3rd Floor Conference Room

Prosperity and Livability Committee

Wesley Hudson - Chair

Michael Holmes

Cyril Jefferson

Monica Peters

Jay Wagner, Mayor (Alternate)

Chris Williams, Mayor Pro Tem (Alternate)

Prosperity and Livability Committee - Council Member Wesley Hudson, Chair

Present 4 - Council Member Cyril Jefferson, Council Member Michael Holmes, Chair Wesley Hudson, and Council Member Monica Peters

CALL TO ORDER

Present: Wesley Hudson, Chairman; and Committee Members Michael Holmes, Monica Peters, and Cyril Jefferson.

Staff Present:

Randy McCaslin, Deputy City Manager; Greg Ferguson, Assistant City Manager; Michael McNair, Director of Community Development & Housing; Michelle McNair, Community Resources Manager; JoAnne Carlyle, City Attorney; Kyle Teschke, High Point Police Department; Peter Abernethy, High Point Police Department; Mark McDonald, Director of Transportation; Mary S. Brooks, Deputy City Clerk; and Lisa Vierling, City Clerk

Others Present:

Quina Weber-Shirk, Community & School Garden Agent
Patrick Harman, Hayden-Harman Foundation
Carl Vierling, Executive Director- Greater High Point Food Alliance

News Media Present:

Pat Kimbrough, *High Point Enterprise*

Chairman Hudson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

The following handouts were distributed and will be attached as a permanent part of these proceedings.

- ✓ *Brochure- Community Gardens in Guilford County*
- ✓ *33 Community Gardens in High Point (Map & Locations)*
- ✓ *City of High Point Assistance to Community Gardens, Standard Operating Policies and Procedures*
- ✓ *City of High Point 2020 Community Garden*

Assistance Application

- ✓ *Information Sheet: Seeds to Share Event (February 8, 2020)*
- ✓ *Community Garden Leaders Training*
- ✓ *Revised City of High Point Community Garden Assistance Grant Report for July 2019 - June 2020 (Revised Jan 2020)- Template*

Present 4 - Council Member Cyril Jefferson, Council Member Michael Holmes, Chair Wesley Hudson, and Council Member Monica Peters

PRESENTATION OF ITEMS[2020-54](#)**Report-Community Gardens**

Staff is requested to give a report on the Community Gardens

Attachments: [Seeds to Share Event Flyer](#)
[33 Community Gardens in High Point](#)
[Community Garden Leaders Training Event Flyer](#)
[Flyer Community Gardens in Guilford County](#)

Michael McNair, Director of Community Development & Housing, introduced Quina Weber-Shirk, Community & School Garden Agent with the Guilford County Cooperative Extension. The shared position is funded jointly through an Interlocal Governmental Agreement between High Point, Greensboro, and Guilford County. The city of High Point participates in the salary for this position and offers support.

Ms. Weber-Shirk provided a list of 33 community gardens in High Point (2 teaching, 4 donation, 10 neighborhood, 15 school, 3 early child education, and 8 urban agriculture lots) and shared a map of the garden locations. She reported that the city of High Point has been supporting community gardens in a big way by providing grants for communities asking for assistance (mostly for materials from compost @ Ingleside). Since the City Council approved the Community Garden Assistance Grant in 2018, approximately 11 grants have been received and just under \$3,000 has been spent.

Ms. Weber-Shirk shared some pictures and stories of High Point events held in 2019, some of which included were:

- ✓ *Volunteers built and provided maintenance for a greenhouse @ Northwood Elementary*
- ✓ *In collaboration with the Greater High Point Food Alliance (GHPFA), gardening classes were held at the High Point Farmer's Market*
- ✓ *A celebration of community gardens was held in June*
- ✓ *Garden Summer Institute was held in July with Guilford County Schools STEM Program at Andrews High School and Fairview Elementary School*
- ✓ *Urban Farm Festival during Local Foods Week at Twin Oaks (focus on collaborations and leveraging resources)*
- ✓ *Bountiful Harvest Orchard & Garden event hosted by West End Ministries in collaboration with A & T University on what is needed to bring together a successful community garden*
- ✓ *High Tunnel, Growing High Point (new project-raised sweet potatoes in container gardens that were donated to Burns Hill Food Pantry for Thanksgiving)*
- ✓ *Burns Hill Community Garden, a thriving garden that has been embraced by the neighborhood to engage the community and grow produce for the Burns Hill Food Pantry*

Committee Member Jefferson shared that he is a huge fan of community gardens at the schools and commented about the profound effect the garden at Andrews High School has had on the students including a great impact of culture and a more instilled sense of pride.

Ms. Weber-Shirk elaborated on the Interlocal Agreement between the city of High Point, city of Greensboro, and Guilford County that was approved by the High Point City Council on November 6, 2017 and envisioned her position to continue growing gardens and garden leaders. Some of the 2020 priorities mentioned were:

- ✓ *To provide site visits and tech support to community gardeners*

- ✓ *Support community garden leaders by building a Guilford County Gardens website that will be updated on a regular basis*
- ✓ *Focusing on education*
- ✓ *Ensuring that all events in Guilford County have a presence in High Point as well*

Committee Member Jefferson asked Ms. Weber-Shirk if they do any work with the ARC in High Point. She replied that she has talked with them in the past, but has not had any recent conversations with them. Carl Vierling, Executive Director with the Greater High Point Food Alliance, mentioned the ARC does have a successful garden, but unfortunately, they have had some challenges with their chickens being stolen.

Deputy City Manager Randy McCaslin asked if the number of gardens in High Point has decreased from the 33 on the list. Ms. Weber-Shirk believed the numbers are steady and advised that the emphasis is not to increase the number of gardens but to focus on building capacity of community garden leaders. Mr. McCaslin mentioned that from time-to-time, the city of High Point ends up with properties that could be used for additional garden space.

Committee Member Jefferson posed the following questions:

- 1. Have we had a way to survey or poll the community to gauge what the overall positive impact is on the community with the gardens?***

Mr. Vierling replied that they have looked at how much has been produced and mentioned how the neighborhoods are really investing and taking pride in the community gardens.

- 2. Have any local studies been conducted?***

Patrick Harman with the Hayden-Harman Foundation replied that there have been no local studies, but mentioned

a random experiment that was conducted in Baltimore that found positive impacts on health and crime reduction. Committee Member Jefferson asked if this is something that could be researched and applauded the significant work and the progress made thus far for food insecurity in High Point, pointing out that High Point has gone from #1 in the country to #14 for food hardship. He believed that raising the pride in the neighborhoods could lead to being strategic with the community gardens in helping to leverage crime as well.

For Information Only

[2020-55](#)

Request-Hayden-Harman Foundation for continued City-Owned property leases

The Hayden-Harman Foundation is requested to present a request for continued City-Owned property leases

Patrick Harman with the Hayden-Harman Foundation explained that in the fall of 2014, the focus was on food because of High Point's #1 ranking in the nation at that time for food insecurity. In the spring of 2015, they started container gardens and mentioned the challenge it brought because the city was asking for liability insurance for use of the lots for the community garden spaces. He explained how this proved to be very difficult for the neighborhoods that were participating in community gardens, so the Hayden-Harman Foundation stepped in in the Fall of 2015 to lease 21 of the lots on the list (only 9 are currently being used). He reported that the cost of insurance is about \$1,000 a year.

He proceeded to share some pictures of gardens at the following locations:

- ✓ Cedar Street*
- ✓ Howard Street*
- ✓ Burns Hill*

He explained how Growing High Point evolved out of the community garden movement and shared a map of Growing High Point gardening lots, most of which are owned by the

Hayden-Harman Foundation. He spoke to how the children in the neighborhoods are always eager to stop by and learn about gardening. Community events are held throughout the year and he explained how community engagement is a critical component of all this work and spoke to the importance of healthy eating and the correct way to successfully grow produce.

Mr. Harman publicly thanked the Greater High Point Food Alliance for providing funding through their Food Security Fund that allowed them to build a Micro Food Hub that will allow them to wash, prep, and store food that are harvested. It also allows them to store the vegetables that are produced until they can be distributed. Committee Member Peters felt the Micro Food Hub would make a huge difference and commended them for a job well done in bringing it to fruition.

Committee Member Hudson asked Mr. Harman to expound on the hops that he has been producing because of its phenomenal asset to the community. Mr. Harman explained that he grows hops and sells it to the Brown Truck, a craft brewery in High Point, to be used in some of their craft beers.

Mr. McCaslin asked if there were any necessary modifications for the renewal of the lease and advised that action would be needed by the Committee in the form of a recommendation to the City Council.

Committee Member Jefferson moved to forward the three-year lease renewal with the Hayden-Harman Foundation to the City Council with a favorable recommendation for approval. Committee Member Holmes made a second to the motion, which carried by the following unanimous 4-0 vote:

Aye (4): Chairman Hudson; Committee Member Holmes; Committee Member Jefferson, and Committee Member Peters

A motion was made by Committee Member Jefferson, seconded by Committee Member Holmes, that this matter be forwarded to the City Council with a favorable recommendation for approval of renewal of the lease with the Hayden-Harman Foundation. The motion carried by the following unanimous 4-0 vote:

Aye: 4 - Council Member Jefferson, Council Member Holmes, Chair Hudson, and Peters

2020-56

Discussion-Possible revisions to the Community Gardens Assistance Policy

Staff is requested to discuss possible revisions to the Community Gardens Assistance Policy

Attachments: [Form for Assistance Grant Report for July 2019 to July 2020](#)
[High Point Assistance to Community Gardens Standard Operating Policies a](#)
[Community Gardens Assistance Application](#)

Ms. Weber-Shirk distributed an updated application, procedures, and a draft of the annual report for grant recipients. She advised the main thing proposed to change in the policy is the language. She explained that originally the language only included “community gardens” and they are proposing that “urban farms” also be added because of the economic impact and influence that urban farms have in High Point.

She explained the qualifications for nonprofits and clarified that the grant funds can cover delivery costs for the mulch and soil, as they have

found that many of the gardens struggle to find a vehicle to transport the mulch and soil that is needed for their gardens.

She also spoke to how they will be adding an online application process; addition of resource links; and how the application has been simplified and clarified that now everyone reports on units.

Committee Member Jefferson inquired about the turnaround time to get an application approved. Ms. Weber-Shirk replied that it is usually within a week and explained that the pickup time really depends on whether or not the community garden volunteers have access to a vehicle for transportation of the compost.

Mr. McNair explained that the community garden volunteers are not actually charged for the compost, but they do have an

account at Ingleside. For budget and reporting purposes, there is no exchange and a journal entry is used.

Chairman Hudson asked if there were any further comments. Mr. Vierling spoke to how High Point is doing some innovative things and spoke to the value of High Point's reputation because the work being done in High Point is respected and looked at by many other municipalities across the state who are seeking to find ways to address these issues in their communities as well. He thanked the city of High Point for its continued support.

The Committee voiced its full support for these updates to the Community Garden Assistance Program as recommended by Ms. Weber-Shirk.

Committee Recommended Approval

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:53 a.m. upon motion duly made and seconded.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa B. Vierling, City Clerk

Wesley Hudson, Chairman
Prosperity & Livability Committee