

City of High Point

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



Minutes

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

9:00 AM

Council Chambers

Prosperity and Livability Committee

Wesley Hudson - Chair

Michael Holmes

Cyril Jefferson

Monica Peters

Jay Wagner, Mayor (Alternate)

Britt Moore, Mayor Pro Tem (Alternate)

As part of the city of High Point's on-going COVID-19 mitigation efforts, in-person attendance will not be allowed at this meeting. Instead, the meeting will be live-streamed and the public can listen to the meeting as it is being live-streamed by clicking on the following link www.HighPointNC.gov/VirtualPublicMeeting.

Prosperity and Livability Committee - Council Member Wesley Hudson, Chair

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hudson called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m. (technical difficulties getting everyone connected).

Following a virtual roll call by Chairman Hudson, the following attendance by committee members was duly noted.

Physically Present (1):

Chairman Wesley Hudson

Participating Remotely (2):

Committee Member Michael Holmes

Committee Member Cyril Jefferson

Absent (1):

Committee Member Monica Peters

Staff Present:

Randy McCaslin, Interim City Manager; Greg Ferguson, Assistant City Manager; Eric Olmedo, Assistant City Manager; Jeron Hollis, Managing Director; Sarah Stephenson, Communications Specialist

Staff Participating Remotely:

Meghan Maguire, Assistant City Attorney; Mike McNair, Director of Community Development & Housing; Michelle McNair, Community Resource Manager; and Mark Taylor, Librarian

Others Participating Remotely:

Quina Weber-Shirk, Community Gardens Coordinator

Kassidy McFeeley, HPU Bonner Student

Present 3 - Council Member Cyril Jefferson, Council Member Michael Holmes, and
Chair Wesley Hudson

Absent 1 - Council Member Monica Peters

PRESENTATION OF ITEMS

[2021-90](#)**Update-Community Gardens; and Assistance Grant Report FY 2019**

Quina Weber-Shirk, Community & School Garden Agent will provide an update on Community Gardens; and the Assistance Grant Report FY 2019.

Attachments: [High Point Community Garden Assistance Grant Report FY2019](#)

Mike McNair, Director of Community Development & Housing, introduced Quina Weber-Shirk with the Guilford County Extension Services Department and serves as the City of High Point's Community Garden Coordinator who provided an update and annual report on community gardens and assistance grants.

Quina Weber-Shirk, Community Garden Coordinator, advised that two updates would be shared with the Committee:

1. Update on community gardens and urban agriculture; and
2. Update on a new website for the City of High Point that will live on the High Point Public Library's webpage, will be dedicated to urban agriculture and the various ways that the City of High Point supports and encourages urban agriculture within the city limits.

She shared that Mark Taylor, Librarian, with the High Point Public Library and Kassidy McFeeley, HPU Bonner student, would be sharing information regarding the new website that is scheduled to go live at the end of March.

Ms. Weber-Shirk thanked the City of High Point for its incredible support and she shared the following highlights regarding the community gardens and assistance grants for the reporting period between July 2019 and June 2020:

Most people are applying for material assistance grants from Ingleside Compost Facility;

City of High Point provided assistance to twelve (12) community gardens (87.12 tons of material which consisted of a combination of topsoil, compost, and mulch at a cost to the city of \$1,867.00);

The Community Garden Assistance Grant was amended in March of 2020 to include reimbursement for delivery charges due to a large number of community garden leaders that did not have access to trucks/trailers to pick up the materials at Ingleside;

Between March and June 2021, the city reimbursed delivery costs of \$435.06;

During the past fiscal year, the city spent \$2,305.05 on the Community Garden Assistance Program;

Despite the closures and limitations associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, 110 individuals were actively involved in these twelve (12) community gardens;

The groups consisted of Boy Scouts, youth from surrounding neighborhoods, additional neighbors of all ages, neighborhood associations such as Burns Hill and others, local church groups, volunteers through Growing High Point, volunteers through High Point University, etc.....

The estimated harvest for these gardens proved to be very significant; Based on the estimated yield of 1.2 pounds per square foot at a dollar value of \$3, these twelve (12) community gardens and urban farms cultivated 38,448 sq. ft. at an estimated yield of 46,137 pounds of fresh produce every year with a dollar value of \$115,344.00;

The vegetables/fruits grown were: collard greens, beets, mixed greens, lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, okra, beans, summer squash, zucchini, cucumbers, cantaloupe, carrots, micro greens, raspberries, blackberries, herbs, cut flowers, etc.....;

All community gardens and urban farms donated at least a portion of their produce;

Three community gardens donated 100% of their total harvest (Bountiful Harvest, Beeson Community Garden, and Burns Hill);

A significant portion was shared through the Growing High Point Food Hub; Fresh produce was also shared with Highland Mills neighborhood, Open Door Ministries, Burns Hill Food Pantry, and the Ward Street Food Pantry;

The community gardens also raised fresh produce for personal and household meals;

Four neighborhood allotment gardens where neighbors can grow their own food included Southside Community Garden, East Avenue Community Garden, Cedar Street Community Garden, and Howard Street;

Another significant way the produce was shared was through the farmer's markets and fresh food stands;

Five (5) urban farms received assistance through a grant and sold between 50 and 90% of their harvest donating the remaining portion to the High Point Farmer's Market or through the Growing High Point Food Hub.

Ms. Weber-Shirk encouraged the Committee to review the challenges and successes of the various neighborhood community gardens included in the report, and shared that they all expressed their deep gratitude for the assistance received from the city.

At this time, Ms. Weber-Shirk turned the floor over to Mark Taylor to provide some background on the urban agriculture website and to share some insight and inspiration for it.

Mark Taylor shared that he works at the High Point Public Library as an adult librarian in programming and he also heads the teaching garden at the Library. He reported that five years ago, the Library applied for and received a grant for "Local Foods, Local Places" and one of the objectives was to create a list serve that could be shared in the community about gardening and information, but it was determined that it was not a practical objective for them to design, build, and maintain the list serve on the Library's webpage. He shared an idea he got while attending a sustainability conference in Iowa in 2018 and realized a webpage would be more beneficial than a list serve. He advised that once COVID hit last

year, this idea became a priority and at that point discussions ensued with Ms. Weber-Shirk and several other community members such as the Greater High Point Food Alliance, Michelle McNair, Community Resource Manager, etc.... and they proceeded to come up with a way to build a webpage. This was made possible with the assistance of HPU Bonner Student, Kassidy McFeeley, who has been building and designing the structure for the webpage for the last four months. They hope to roll the webpage out and go live by the end of March; however, Mr. Taylor hoped it would be sooner because growing season is upon us. Mr. Taylor then introduced Kassidy McFeeley and turned the presentation over to her.

Ms. McFeeley shared some information that will be incorporated into the webpage that is currently under construction.

Pictures of community volunteers;
Map identifying all the community gardens in Guilford County and High Point;
"About Us" page which will include the mission statement as well as a proclamation that was issued for the purpose;
"Resources" page;
"Community Resources" to include programs that will be displayed on the website as resources for community leaders such as the NC Cooperative Extension, Growing High Point, Greater High Point Food Alliance, Second Harvest Food Bank, Ingleside, food pantries, Library, Farmer's Market, etc....;
Each of these will have tabs that will direct people to external sites;
"City Resources";
"Gardens" tab with community garden guidelines, High Point's support of agriculture such as the assistance program and the adopt-a-lot program;
Ordinance page;
Information on how to build a garden;
"Find Your Garden" feature;
Map of community gardens;
High Point School gardens information;
Bee-keeping and backyard chicken information page;
"Support Our Gardens" page which allows people to donate produce, tools, and materials.

At the conclusion of her presentation, Ms. McFeeley shared that the webpage would mostly serve as a collection of resources, would be user-friendly and would serve as a useful resource for people who want to start gardens and also for those who have been doing community gardens and urban agriculture for a while.

Chairman Hudson asked if there were any questions and/or comments.

Michelle McNair, Community Resource Manager, applauded Ms. McFeeley for doing a great job and wanted to also recognize other departments within the city offering assistance in this collaborative effort: Community Development &

Housing; Legal; Library; PIO; and Planning.

Chairman Hudson shared that he loves seeing how the community gardens progress every year and that he sees the Burns Hill community and Oakview community doing incredible work with the gardens in their neighborhood. Mr. McNair added that the community gardens are very impactful in the sense of creating community continuity and they have a positive impact on strengthening the neighborhood.

Chairman Hudson thanked everyone for providing the updates and presenting during the meeting and entertained any additional comments.

Committee Member Jefferson echoed a sentiment of appreciation to all those who presented and acknowledged the incredible work that is being done. He felt the website would be very helpful to help fight food insecurity in the community. He spoke to how great it was to have this presentation after hearing an annual update from the Greater High Point Food Alliance during the Community Development Committee meeting held yesterday and applauded everyone for being proactive and coming together to combat food insecurity in High Point and for diverting the potential crisis that it could have been.

Committee Member Holmes also shared appreciation to everyone on the efforts going forward and applauded Ms. McFeeley on the excellent job designing the website. He stressed that food insecurity is a real issue that the community faces but that he is encouraged by the solutions that are coming forth through the community efforts. He spoke to how the city comes together and solves problems is a huge draw.

For Information Only

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Hudson asked if there were any additional comments/questions. Hearing none, he asked if there were any objections for adjourning the meeting. There being none, the meeting adjourned at 9:34 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Wesley Hudson, Chairman

Attest:

Lisa B. Vierling, City Clerk