

The Barkhamsted Garden

February 23, 2010
Barkhamsted Town Hall

MINUTES

Attendees: Evelyn Betz, Lisa Candels, Sharon Farber, Jeff Krug, Jenn McGevna, Pam Welles, Erick Wildes

1. Who we are- Name for grants- The Barkhamsted Garden captures our entire mission and purpose best in the simplest manner at this point.

2. Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives- Khea Cook still working on and will email soon.

Primarily: Barkhamsted children/youth through their participation to learn about sustainable agriculture- youth-led, adult supported

Secondarily: produce from the garden to go to Food Pantry for distribution to those in need

Thirdly: community as a whole: families, seniors, preschoolers- the greening of Barkhamsted.

3. Task Reports

- | | Task Leader to Oversee | Coordinator |
|--|-------------------------|-------------|
| a. Recruitment | <u>Lisa/Khea</u> | <u></u> |
| Youth Coordinator: Pam Welles- WELCOME Pam!
With the goal of getting youth as involved as possible, Pam will be contacting established organizations especially those working with older youth to engage them with the long-term goal of the older youth connecting with the younger youth. | | |
| b. Training | <u>Sharon</u> | |
| Following the last meeting Sharon sent us all an attachment on How To Make a Straw Bale Garden compiled from a number of websites. It is at the end of these minutes. | | |
| c. Timing | <u>Evelyn and Erick</u> | |
| Given information from Evelyn and Erick, Jenn created a one-page timeline. This will be revised following this meeting to include Installation I- 3/27/10 at 10:00 am for the actual bales and 4/10/2010 for the Poles to be installed. The Major Planting Day will be postponed one week due to Memorial Day to 6/5/2010. | | |
| d. Gathering materials | <u>Lisa</u> | |
| Khea has written and submitted a letter to the Regional District #1 (dump) regarding the materials needed- we are awaiting word. Lisa asked Don Stein regarding use of the town storage across the street to keep materials in advance of installation- this was approved. Pam will be working with the Scouts regarding the poles. Sharon has already found straw bales for \$5/bale locally. She and Jeff will get the bales and store them in their barn until they are needed. Jeff had ordered the seeds and Sharon gave them to Erick at the meeting tonight. Evelyn had already given broccoli seeds. Other materials will be posted on the blog. | | |

e. Starting Seeds and Preparing Area Erick and students

Erick's plan is to overplant and sell extra seedlings in the Regional 7 garden sale. He will work with students after school on 3/26 with wheelbarrow and tools to prepare the garden area. Lisa and Evelyn shared with Erick that the town staff said there are bittersweet vines- Erick will see about removal with the students.

f. Installation I- straw bales Evelyn

Sharon and Jeff will bring the bales. Evelyn will call CallB4UDig before 3/20/10 and will let Pam know the number of people needed for this day- 3/27/10. Once installed the bales will need to be watered daily for several weeks- Jenn and Pam will coordinate for the calendar and people needed.

g. Installation II- setting up garden Evelyn

4/17/10 is the date. Evelyn will let Pam know the number of people needed.

h. Signage Jennifer

Jenn and her family will make the big garden sign and paint it. Amy O'Toole and the 6th grade Girl Scouts will be doing the signs for the plants. (Amy is best reached by phone.)

i. Maintenance- calendar Jennifer

Jenn will revise the one-page calendar to include everything including grant deadlines and all activities. Discussion of a log similar to the Beekley Library Garden Log for all volunteers to sign in and state work completed. Discussion of on-line communication and development of a blog for youth to take over- Sharon volunteered to create the blog and keep it going until we found a youth. This will also be a way of communicating with the general public. The blog site is <http://barkhamstedgarden.blogspot.com/>

j. Harvest/Distribution Jennifer

Picking will be ongoing. Lisa and Evelyn spoke following the meeting regarding coordination and it seems that it may work best if groups sign up on a weekly basis for care of the garden including watering, fertilizing, weeding and harvesting. Each group can then determine what to do with the produce gathered- this may include delivering it to a Food Pantry, making a meal for seniors or shut-ins, or having a meal for the group themselves. Please let us know what you think of this idea!!

k. Put to Bed/Store items Erick with NWR kids

Not discussed in detail.

l. Evaluation- ongoing and final Khea

Not discussed.

m. Administrative Lisa

The need for a person to serve as Treasurer was raised and Sharon volunteered as a successful businessperson. She will develop a simple excel spreadsheet to track income and expenditures. We will not open an account as we are hoping to be under the umbrella of another organization- Women's Club or Town Recreation Commission. Lisa to send thank you notes to Women's Club and to Don Stein/Karen Cersoli.

n. Funding/Garnering Jennifer

Jenn created a Solicitation Letter for general donations (at end of minutes) and a request to the Women's Club which Lisa will forward to them. Lisa and Evelyn met with both the Town (2/12) and Women's Club (2/17) regarding 501(c)(3) status and from the Women's Club start-up funds in the amount of \$450. Both Don Stein of the

Town and the Women's Club are checking on liability issues. Lisa will follow up with both and let Jenn know as there are March deadlines for grants (Jenn please email Lisa upcoming deadlines.) Lisa will also check with Roger Newberry, Principal of Regional 7 regarding being a project of the school since the grants are for non-profit organizations or schools. Jenn is also working to decorate white watering cans to place them at public spots- general stores, post offices, restaurants, etc. to create interest and gather funds.

Upcoming Grant Due Dates- requirements- not discussed further.

o. Planning for next season
Not discussed.

Khea

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Lisa Candels

*Next meeting date to be determined and emailed soon- location- Town Hall

SUPPLIES

14-straw bales (extra for mulch)

? (number)- saplings 13' high.

28- metal stakes/ribar or wood to tie tomatoes & peppers- K

8 cups bloodmeal to pretreat bales

split spigot (to allow for town hall and garden hose to co-exist)

nozzle that has a shower-head like end- K

hose - K

soaker hose- K

peat pots- Erick to get from Freund's, next time perhaps paper peat pot makers of Khea and Jennifer
starter mix- to PURCHASE CERTIFIED

scissors- K (and everyone to bring on set-up day)

trowels- K (everyone to bring again)

fish emulsion (feed weekly): this is relatively expensive to buy or we can experiment with compost
tea- project for NWR#& kids

cardboard (Lisa has)

center mulch

rain barrels

broken patio stone

mulch- Khea to check with DOT

twine- Lisa and Sharon have this

POTENTIAL SUPPLIERS

Town Dump- Khea to check for stakes, nozzle, hoses, scissors, trowels

Tractor Supply

Home Depot

Winsted Feed

Greszyck Farm, New Hartford

FreeCycle

Barkhamsted citizens

Lightstat

Pleasant Valley Fence

Fedco, or other seed companies

Suggestions on how to plant a Straw Bale Garden

What kind of Bales:

1. Wheat or oat straw is best as it's the stalks left from harvesting grain with very few seed left.
2. Use what you can get locally — it may even be lucerne or pea straw bales.
3. Older hay bales that have begun to rot tend to work best.
4. Ask if they bales that have gotten wet and maybe get a discount

Placing the bales

1. Place the straw bales in their permanent site before preparing them for planting, as the bales get very heavy when waterlogged.
2. Put the bales so the string runs around the bale and not in contact with the ground. This will also orient the bale so the stems run vertically as well. (Making planting easier.)
4. Set bales with the strings wrapping horizontally and the straws set vertically which allows better root penetration
5. Keep the twine there to hold it all in place and if it does rot, bang some stakes in at both ends, or chock up the ends with something heavy, like rocks or bricks.
6. Orient the bales with strings ON the ground. Water doesn't seem to flow through the bales as fast. (Most sites recommend the other way but this guy has been doing a lot of bale gardening and has done it both ways and now prefers this.)

Watering the bales prior to planting:

1. Water the bales to the point of water running out every day for 5 days.
2. Sprinkle a cup of blood meal on each bale, and water the bale thoroughly. This helps the bale begin to decompose, and provides a more soil-like environment for plant roots.
3. Bales aged for 6 months or so are ideal. Some people leave them out for the winter.
4. Soak for at least 10 days. The bale may be too hot if it is planted in too soon.

Fertilizing suggestions:

1. Because the drainage provided by straw bale culture is excellent, gardeners may wish to fertilize frequently with weak compost or manure tea with each watering
2. Once every 1-2 weeks water in a liquid organic feed, such as compost tea or fish emulsion.
3. After the initial 5 day soak, continue to soak daily, but add fertilizer. Experts recommend blood meal or fish fertilizer to keep it organic. Add 2 lbs of blood meal the first day and then 1/2 a pound every day thereafter for 5 days. If using fish meal, dissolve 1/4 cup in some water and pour on the bale with more water.
4. Alternate with applications of liquid seaweed, fish emulsion and compost tea.
5. Weekly feeding with compost tea or a liquid fish emulsion

Planting:

A. Seeds

1. To start seed, cover the bale with 1/2 inch of fresh compost soil. Sprinkle seeds, and cover with a light layer of compost.
2. Rough up the surface with a three-tined hand fork. Top-dress with 3-" of compost. A commercial bagged potting soil will also work if you don't have compost.

B. Plants

1. "Pull apart or use a trowel and depending on the state of the straw, put a handful of compost soil in too, then let the straw go back into place."

2. "Dig a small hole into the bale with a pointed garden spade or other pointed instrument. Place a little compost in the bottom of the hole, and add the plant start. Cover the base of the starts with a layer of compost."
3. Place the plant down to its first leaf, and gently close the crack back together

How many plants per bale:

1. The number of plants per bale depends on the mature size of the plant. Plant up to four small vegetables, such as peppers, per bale. Limit large plants like tomatoes to two per bale.
2. Each bale should take up to half a dozen cucumbers, trailing down. Squash, zucchini, melons — maybe 3 plants, or a couple of tomato plants per bale with one or two herbs and leafy veggies in between. Four pepper plants will fit or 12-15 bean or pea plants.

Watering:

1. You really need to water once/day in the beginning, especially. As the bales decompose over time, the straw holds more moisture for a longer period.
2. The orientation of the straw stems (vertical) means that much of the water simply runs out the bottom of the bale.
3. A soaker hose placed over the tops of the bales is a great way to gently deliver water to your plants.

Trimming the bales

1. The wheat/oat/whatever seeds will sprout. Trim with knife or scissors. Don't try to pull.

Mushrooms:

1. Mushrooms often grow out of the bales. Do not panic.
2. This is a good sign that your bales are providing a nice environment for your veggies. Knock them off if you don't like them.

The above suggestions were compiled from the following web sites:

http://organic-vegetable-gardens.suite101.com/article.cfm/organic_straw_bale_gardening
<http://www.no-dig-vegetablegarden.com/straw-bale-gardening.html>
http://container-gardens.suite101.com/article.cfm/straw_bale_planting_an_instant_garden
<http://www.nicholsgardennursery.com/store/strawbales.php?CZSESSID=4f0993a30d155da8dcd840c32bacc78d>
<http://www.co.clay.mn.us/Depts/Extensio/ExAPHydr.htm>
<http://www.beginner-gardening.com/straw-bale-gardening.html>
http://www.growandmake.com/straw_bale_garden/
<http://www.4042.com/4042forums/showthread.php?t=12405> This site has great photos!

To whom it may concern:

We have formed a small group to create a garden in our town, located behind the Town Hall. This garden will not only provide food for the Food Pantry here in town, it will also bring members of our community together for a worthy cause. It is our hope that this garden will teach the children in our community about sustainable produce, provide a place of beauty for all Barkhamsted residents, and provide our town with an avenue to explore “green” living!

We are exploring many avenues for financing this wonderful project. Our small group is full of determination, and we are ready to work hard to make this garden a success. There are many organizations that offer small grants for creating and supporting community gardens. We are looking at several grant opportunities, and are ready to write several grant proposals. However, we are currently trying to obtain a tax-exempt 501(c)3 status through an existing organization or school—and we cannot apply for most grants without this.

In addition, we are planning to create community fund-raisers to raise money to purchase items needed for our garden, and we are contacting many organizations that donate materials to assist with creating community projects. That is where you may be able to help us. We are in need of certain materials to make this garden a success. Our *Wish List* is as follows:

- ✿ 15 oat / wheat straw bales
- ✿ Blood meal
- ✿ Organic starter mix
- ✿ Fish emulsion
- ✿ Left-over / broken brick or patio stones
- ✿ Rain barrels (not a necessity—it would help our garden be self-sustained)
- ✿ Composting Bin & Tea-maker (not a necessity—it would help our garden be self-sustained)

We thank you for your time in reading this proposal, and for exploring how you may be able to help this project come to fruition. It is our hope that we may join together to create this project for the benefit of our community. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Members of the Barkhamsted Garden Group

Evelyn Betz, Lisa Candels, Khea Cook, Sharon Farber, Jennifer McGevna, Pam Welles, Erick Wildes

Please visit our blog at <http://barkhamstedgarden.blogspot.com/>

Our meeting minutes may be found on the Barkhamsted Town website under the Recreation Commission.