

# CANBERRA ORGANIC GROWERS SOCIETY INC.

Committee Meeting - 9 June 2020

## Minutes

A meeting of the Committee of the Canberra Organic Growers Society Inc. was held on Tuesday, 9 June, 2019, commencing at 7.00 pm. The usual meeting format was suspended because of the COVID-19 pandemic and members of the Committee met via the video-conferencing platform, Zoom.

### Attendance

Michele Barson, Shirley Bolton, Minh Chu, Fiona Hemmings, Andy Hrast, Julie Gorrell, Narelle McLean, Bev McConnell, Jo McMillan, Cathy Morrison, Teresa Rose, Peter Weddell, Terry Williams

### Apologies

Patricia Georgee, Rebecca Travers

## 2. Minutes of meeting 12 May 2020.

The minutes were confirmed.

Accepted      Moved Peter Weddell      Seconded Andy Hrast

## 3. Standing Reports

### 3.1 President's Report

- Health Emergency - A thank you to our garden convenors and plot holders who have managed and implemented the safety protocols mandated by ACT Health and Commonwealth Government agencies. The restrictions have eased and gatherings of up to 20 people are permitted outdoors provided 4 sqm of personal space is adhered to, together with the other existing protocols regarding personal hygiene and wellness. So, garden meetings are now possible but have to be carefully managed. I would recommend no sharing of food, drinks etc and careful cleaning of seating and the meeting space if being used. I recommend that we maintain existing signage at all entrances etc.
- 2020 AGM - We are considering options for holding the postponed AGM possibly in July, with Sunday 26 July tentatively booked at the Northside Centre. We have been granted an extension to end October by the ACT Government. However, the meeting is dependant on the further easing of restrictions and our venue being ready to host meetings. Members will be advised by email regarding a date, time and venue.
- New garden developments - Given the number of proposed new gardens, Michele has recommended that COGS develop a set of guidelines to assist interested parties. There are a number of examples that can be drawn on, including the ACT Government's, the City of Sydney and the City of Melbourne. These would be useful commencement points, together with the knowledge of Jo McMillan.
- Throsby: early stages of community consultation and discussions with ACT Government on the role of COGS. Yarralumla: still in consultation process.
- ACT HRC - meeting postponed again and still awaiting confirmation of time.
- ACT Licence renewal - still awaiting on their response but have requested that the Government includes provisions that set out restrictions on parking, livestock etc.

Accepted      Moved Julie Gorrell      Seconded Andy Hrast

### **3.2 Treasurer's Report**

- The major items of expenditure for the month were water for Holder Garden, printing costs for the recent magazine and plumbing repairs for the O'Connor garden.
- Spreadsheets have been distributed to all Garden Convenors and Andy wants these returned by early July.

Accepted      Moved Peter Weddell      Seconded Michele Barson

### **3.3 Membership Secretary's Report**

. Total membership stood at 464, up 11.

Accepted      Moved Peter Weddell      Seconded Jo McMillan

### **3.4 Garden Coordinator Report**

- Currently reviewing all grant applications to the ACT Government Garden Grants scheme.
- Some signs still to be installed.

Accepted      Moved Michele Barson      Seconded Peter Weddell

### **3.6 Magazine Editor's Report**

- Content for the next edition of the magazine is due July.

Accepted      Moved Terry Williams      Seconded Peter Weddell

### **3.7 Web Manager's Report**

This is the first report from Cathy Morrison, who has volunteered to update the COGS website. Cathy is finalising the design and recommends that storage needs to be reviewed. It is probable that as content is migrated to the new site, that the existing site will be down for 24 hours.

Accepted      Moved Julie Gorrell      Seconded Peter Weddell

## **4. Official correspondence**

None received.

## **5. Project Reports**

Noted and updated.

## **6. Action Items**

Noted and list updated.

## **7. Dispute Resolution Procedure**

A draft had been widely circulated for comment and many of these are reflected in the revised draft. It was agreed that the current draft be adopted and posted on our website. It was further agreed that like all procedural documents, it could be amended in future to reflect actual practice.

Accepted      Moved Peter Weddell      Seconded Andry Hrast

## **8. Other business**

### **8.1 ACT community garden grants program**

As reported in 3.4.

### **8.2 Budget considerations 2020-2021**

The Treasurer presented a paper outlining the current and projected expenditure and income for the Society, detailing the issues that will impact on next year's budget. The major issue is the impact of water charges in those gardens that COGS does not currently incur costs. Further, as the expenditure of water increased during 2019/20 because of extreme heat conditions, it is likely that this will not abate in future years despite the rainfall forecasts for the remainder of 2020.

COGS currently has a operating surplus that has been carried forward from previous years; this surplus has been reduced because income has not kept pace with expenditure. It had been previously agreed by the Committee that this surplus would be utilised to ameliorate any significant increase in membership and plot fees. However, given the uncertainty of the future water billing arrangements, together with the likely increase in water consumption, the current surplus may not be sufficient to cover these future costs. Indeed, if there were no increases in fees, it is projected that this would not be a sustainable financial position for COGS.

The Treasurer provided four options for the Committee to consider and recommended the following

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Membership fees - no change to existing \$35 annual fee (noting that this fee increased for 2020).  
Plot fees - an increase of \$0.75 to \$4.20 per sq..

If accepted, projected income would result in a small annual operating deficit. Assuming no significant and un-budgeted expenditure, this would ensure that income will cover the majority of the costs for the upcoming financial year.

The Committee discussed the various options presented and it was unanimously agreed to accept the Treasurer's recommendation. It was further agreed that the President would write to all members in the next edition of the magazine to explain the reason for the increase in fees.

Accepted      Moved Michele Barson      Seconded Narelle McLean

### **8.3**      Charnwood Garden request for funding of security cage

The Committee noted the request presented by the Charnwood Garden to fund various measures designed to secure the Garden's common use tools. It was further noted that COGS had already provided \$1,000 to reinforce the shed door and had funded replacement of stolen equipment.

The following points were raised -

Charnwood are requesting a total of \$7,000 to secure their tools;

The previous theft of tools was to the value of \$500;

The ACT Government has not formally approved the siting of a shipping container in the Charnwood Garden.

In the absence of the Charnwood Garden Convenor to talk to the proposal, it was agreed that the President, Treasurer and Garden Co-ordinator would discuss the request further with the Convenor.

### **8.4**      Request for suspension of current COGS policy on keeping of livestock (chickens) in the O'Connor Garden

The President and Secretary updated the Committee on the current status of this matter. It was noted that this had been discussed at the May meeting and subsequently agreed that COGS would not agree to the request by a member of the O'Connor Garden to allow chickens in his garden to assist with the eradication of insects.

Members agreed that if there was to be any further discussion of the matter then this would need to be done by members of the O'Connor Garden prior to any referral back to the COGS Committee.

Meeting closed at 8.40 pm

## **Decisions/Actions**

### **7. Dispute Resolution Procedure:**

A draft procedure had been widely circulated among the committee and convenors for comment and many of these are reflected in the revised draft. It was agreed that the current draft be adopted and posted on our website. It was further agreed that like all procedural documents, it could be amended in future to reflect actual practice.

### **8.2 Budget considerations:** The Committee unanimously agreed with Treasurer's recommendation:

Membership fees - no change to existing \$35 annual fee (noting that this fee increased for 2020). Plot fees - an increase of \$0.75 to \$4.20 per sq.

### **8.3 Charnwood funding request for security items**

Committee agreed that if there was to be any further discussion of the matter then this would need to be done by members of the Charnwood Garden prior to any referral back to the COGS Committee.

### **8.4 Livestock and Poultry**

Maintain current COGS policy of banning livestock and poultry in COGS gardens.