

Community Engagement Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 12, 2023, 6:30-8:00 pm
Hybrid Meeting: MCAD, 2501 Stevens Ave + Zoom Digital Meeting

Attendees: Nick Hutchinson, Kate Davis, Daniel, Jesse, Anna Befort

Staff: Meggie Sanchez-Garcia, Willow Rheault Kreibich

Presenters: Al Swintek and Jon with Centerpoint Energy; Flo Golod and Elizabeth Gorman from the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners Program

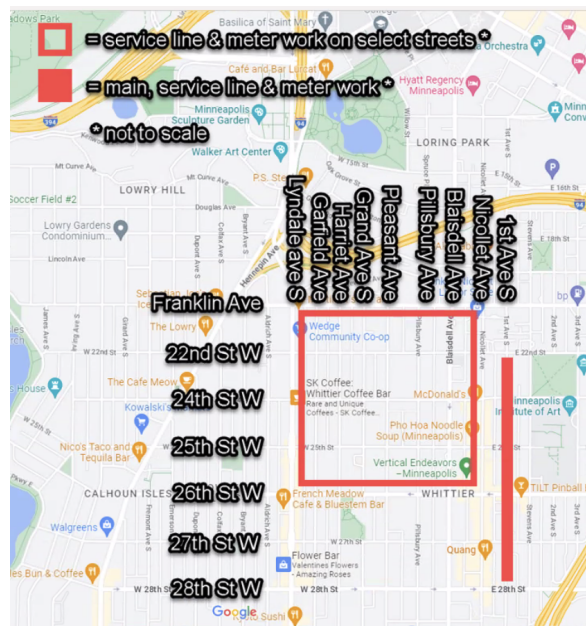
Introductions & Meeting Overview

- Welcome at 6:34 pm by Nick Hutchinson.
- A round of introductions is done.
- The Standard of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policies are reviewed.
- The agenda is reviewed.
- The minutes from January are reviewed.
 - Motion to approve the minutes from the October 2022 meeting is made, seconded, and approved.

Centerpoint on projects impacting the Whittier Neighborhood:

Al Swintek and Jon

- Aligning two natural gas infrastructure projects with City of Minneapolis road work in the neighborhood this summer.



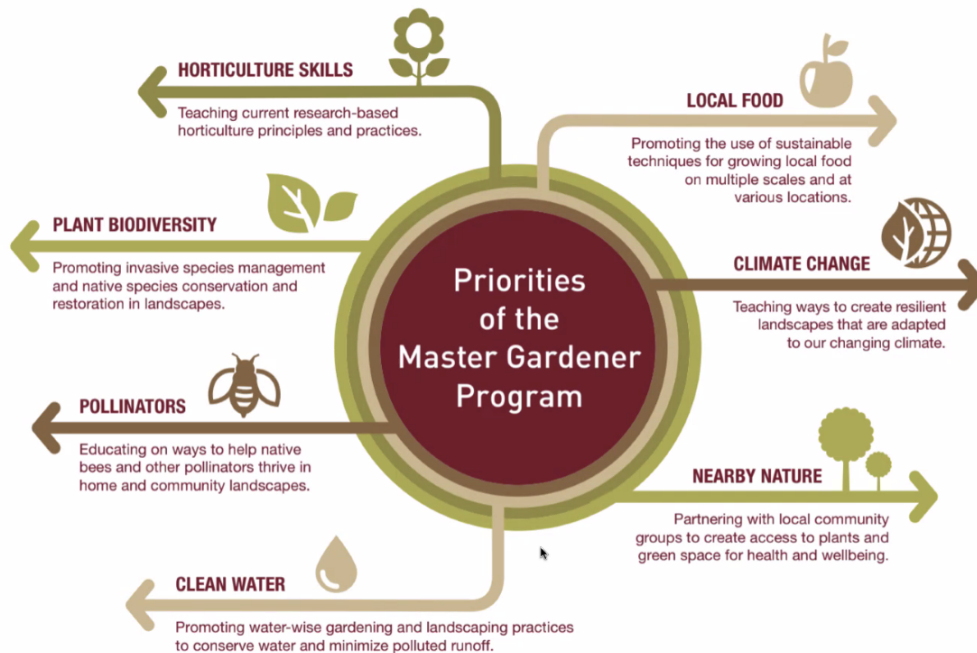
- Homes with meters in the basement will be upgraded to new meters with auto-shutoff and auto read capabilities (almost 400 services in the box on the map).
- Where the company has to dig in grass, sidewalk, or street, all will be replaced (no cost to property owners).

- In 2023, the 1st Ave gas mains will be replaced and everyone on 1st (between 22nd and 28th) will have to be connected to the main. Sidewalks will be impacted; encouraged to move your plants near the sidewalk before they get going and mark invisible fences, sprinkler systems, anything underground.
- Can use www.Centerpointenergy.com/construction to manage communications, get updates, and provide an outlet for residents to reach out to Centerpoint.
- Can also reach out via 612-321-5546, or to Communications Coordinator Hannah Gullickson at hannah.gullickson@centerpointenergy.com.
- Time frame: meter work done over the summer, no urgency, a block will be visited and appointments scheduled.
- How will property residents be notified: Inspectors will go door to door and leave hang tags with a number where residents can call to set up appointments.

**University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners Program Growing Vegetables in Containers:
Flo Golod and Elizabeth Gorman**

- The Master Gardener Program is free and exists to support the public: You can learn more at <https://extension.umn.edu/volunteer#master-gardener> Goals of org below:

MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM



- **Goals for tonight: Providing Whittier residents with knowledge and encouragement to promote success growing vegetables/herbs/flowers in containers, raised beds, pots.**
- [Link to slide deck!](#)
- **Core Needs to Consider as you choose plants:**

- **Location:** Available sun (consider sun strength, direct or indirect, AND duration). Can use proximity to hardscape to retain heat and give it to your plants!
 - Planting in Containers outdoors in Minneapolis: Our ground is too cold in early spring to start seedlings, but you can grow in containers with protection for young plants. Can protect with something like plastic milk jugs (reuse your recycling!) to get them going.
- **Containers:** Can support and plant plants with/in things you have around—use what you have! Planter bags are a great choice. Containers come in all shapes, sizes, and have different advantages.
 - Two requirements for success: drainage holes and enough space to allow the plant/its roots to grow.
 - Can drill a hole if you need to. Start with fresh potting soil (not last year's) and a disinfected container.
 - Can seek out seeds/plants that are bred to grow well in a small space. Heirlooms frequently require a lot of space.
 - Raised beds can take up more space, but can provide seating, have better ergonomics, some protection from animals. Can't put them on a patio, can't move them so you need to plant thoughtfully (plant height) and know your sun conditions.
- **Soil Mixes:** For containers, you need potting soil or a soilless mix.
 - Garden soil is for planting in the earth and will be too heavy and compactable.
 - Encouraging you to avoid peat because harvesting it has a negative impact on carbon sequestration.
 - Compost/manure is fertilizer.
 - Vermiculite/perlite lighten potting soil.
 - Can contain fertilizer—if not, may wish to add some. Vegetables plants are like elite athletes—you are feeding them for performance! Vegetables we eat take a lot of nutrients to grow.
 - Use enough to prevent drying out, vegetables require more space and soil to grow.
- **Fertilizer:** Follow the directions! Two formats:
 - Dissolve in water—recommend by diluting by ½ of the recommendation.
 - Granulated, mix into soil
 - Over-fertilizing can “burn” your plants, which would cause the plant to produce leaves instead of fruit
 - Should use fertilizer until you can start seeing fruiting developing.
 - Organic fertilizers are also a good option, less risk of burning plants.
- **Water:** Check containers every day in the summer. Lots of hot sun means more water needed!
 - You can't overwater a plant in a container with drainage—water until water runs out the bottom.
 - Avoid watering leaves to prevent plant diseases.
 - Fertilize every time you water until they fruit.
 - Hanging containers might need to be watered 2x per day!
- **Plants vs Seeds:**
 - Can start vegetables from seeds indoor.
 - Can seed directly into soil/pots outside around May 10 in Minneapolis.
 - Can also buy little plants! They can go outside around May 10-15. Some cold weather vegetables can be planted earlier and need less sun. Check seedling directions or seed packets.
- **Protecting from Animals:**
 - Squirrels are the biggest challenge for urban gardeners
 - You can protect seedlings with mesh, netting, wire cages.

- **Q&A:** How can you tell if a plant is not watered the right amount?
 - Can't over water in containers because water will just run out if there is good drainage
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- What kinds of things should we do to trouble shoot if a plant looks like it is not thriving?
- More plant info - www.extention.org/horticulture (guide)
- Or Call 612-301-7590
- Grow lights better for baby plants and herbs but hard to grow veggies with light

University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Program - Hennepin County

Yard & Garden Line: (612) 301-7590
www.Extension.org/horticulture

HCMG Plant Sale: May 20th, Hopkins <https://hennepinmastergardeners.org/events/annual-plant-sale/>

Date: Saturday, May 20, 2023

Time: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Location:

**Hopkins Pavilion
11000 Excelsior Blvd
Hopkins 55343**

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 pm.

Meeting minutes submitted by Kate Davis/Meggie Sanchez-Garcia.