

JBNA Garden Advocate's Report 2019 JBNA Annual General Meeting

The Garden Advocate's role is to facilitate efforts by those living and working in James Bay to increase food and other gardening activity in our community. I'd like to thank all the volunteers – too many to list here - who have worked for many hours to make the JBNA gardening initiatives happen.

Highlights of the past year include:

The Michigan/Menzies Garden

JBNA garden volunteers continued to tend the herb, flower, and veg box by Discovery Coffee. We planted a (mostly) native plant pollinator garden on the adjoining boulevard and sheet-mulched the next section of boulevard in readiness for planting this year. The new section will feature drought-tolerant plants and extend the effort to beautify and enliven the village centre. Thanks to Discovery Coffee and The Red Barn for support.

The James Bay Food Trees

The tree stewards successfully kept our 10 neighbourhood-tended food trees watered during a dry summer, weeded and mulched in the fall, and pruned this winter. All the trees are doing well and we added some flowering spring bulbs around the trees by the tennis courts. Thanks to Sarap Brown and Nourish restaurant for providing water and to Chris Adams for expert pruning advice.

The James Bay Berry Patch

A group of JBNA volunteers has been working hard at developing a proposal for a berry patch garden on the traffic-calming features at Pendray/Quebec and Montreal/Kingston. We have looked at current uses & functional considerations, developed a concept, held an open house for residents within a block of the site in January, presented the concept to a JBNA meeting, and now the City is soliciting feedback via signs at the sites. Based on the feedback received, we will decide whether and/or what kind of a detailed proposal to submit to the City.

Field Trip

For this year's field trip, the berry patch volunteers toured community-run orchards and food gardens in Fairfield, Fernwood, and Vic West, looking at design, plantings, and maintenance issues.

The Neighbourhood Plant Swap & Sale

The spring and fall plant swaps and sales moved to Irving Park for 2018, which brought us much more walk-by traffic. The fall swap, which started out small in 2017, grew dramatically in 2018 and has become almost as large as the spring event. We will continue to hold both spring and fall swaps in 2019, and are hoping to bring a Master Gardeners' advice clinic to at least one event.

Ongoing activities

Gardening column in the Beacon each issue, land-linking, and answering general queries, mostly about getting an allotment or volunteering on a community garden project.

Kathryn Pankowski, JBNA Garden Advocate

The JBNA would like to acknowledge the financial support of the City of Victoria for this initiative.

2019 REPORT BY THE MONTREAL STREET COMMUNITY GARDEN (MSCG)

FOR THE AGM OF THE JAMES BAY NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION (JBNA)

Overall 2018 was a very busy and satisfying year in the garden. We continue to have a full membership for 54 plots with a consistent waiting list capped at 50 people. The membership continues to be drawn mainly from James Bay although we are open to anyone in the City of Victoria.

Throughout the year we've encouraged members to socialize through work parties, a new Christmas Party and occasional spontaneous Wednesday afternoon gatherings at the picnic table.

After the 2018 AGM failed to elect a President, it was agreed that the Management Committee would try to work with rotating Chairs, which over all was successful but was felt to be somewhat confusing for members, trying to be clear as to whom to contact with concerns. It worked but wasn't ideal.

Numerous tasks were accomplished during the year, including path remediation (continuing), new signage for the garden, establishment of a pollinator garden and a revision of our Terms of Use and Bylaws (now Guidelines).

Our major project has been to begin the process of fencing the East side of the garden in order to limit easy access from McDonald Park and the lane between us. We have two proposals to be presented at our AGM, one from a contractor and one from a group within the membership and we anticipate this project being completed in 2019, which will be a great relief.

Since becoming a sub-committee of the JNBA in 2017, it has been a pleasure to be part of the Neighbourhood Association and I want to thank Wayne Shillington in particular for his patience and thoughtful advice as we worked our way through a successful but at times challenging year. It was much appreciated.

Submitted by
Gail Boulger

member MSCG Management Committee
James Bay Neighbourhood Association Liaison