

Report from Kathryn Pankowski, James Bay Garden Advocate June and July, 2020

Projects

The Michigan/Menzies Garden

- We have continued to maintain the garden on a “one gardener per week” basis, with a once-a-month distanced coordination meeting. Would like to go back to working in a group, as the garden is suffering a bit under this system, but the area is too congested to have four people working at the same time.
- Next projects for this area: get a cigarette disposal unit installed, plant the area around the seed box this fall.

The Seed Box

- The seed box opened on July 5. I estimate that about 500 seed packets went out from it in July.
- We are getting community donations: there have been packed seeds put in by Beckley Farm Manor, the NDP (carrots, appropriately), and some unknown individuals. We have also received some unpacked seed gathered from neighbourhood gardens.
- The demand was very high the first week - 15 seed packs would go in 2 hours - but is now tapering off to a more manageable rate. We now put between 10 and 20 packets in per day and about 2 days out of 7 there are one or two left the next day. We expect that during fall and winter we will only need to put out seeds twice a week or so.
- The seed box, although it hasn't had a formal opening or any press, is attracting a lot of attention on social media and from various community groups.
- Next: do the grant final report, set up a bigger network of seed savers, and grow the seed packing group

The Food Trees

- Tree watering is now covered, with two volunteers doing the tennis court trees and three doing the ones by Laurel Point. Two new vols live at Laurel Point and have gained permission from the strata council to use their outside water tap, so we no longer have to carry water across a busy road.
- The circles around the trees at Laurel Point have been recut and will be mulched this week; still need to do the ones at the tennis courts.

Huntingdon Manor allotments

- Huntingdon Manor allotments are now operating and have been named the Dr. Bonnie Henry Garden (with her permission). All plots are in use by James Bay residents.
- There has been a fair bit of press coverage including the JBNA's role.

Fisherman's Wharf Herb Garden

- Alex Harned, the Urban Food Coordinator at the City, has suggested that we apply to have the Herb Garden designated as a community garden with the JBNA holding the licence of occupation. Essentially, this is a way for the neighbourhood to take over

management, as Parks clearly doesn't have the resources to look after it. I am strongly in favour of the idea, and have some volunteers who are ready and willing to take it on as soon as we can get this change through. Am currently in discussions with Alex about what applications need to be made to do this.

Berry Patch and Lewis St

- Have been on hold due to opening a new allotment and a seed box.

Fall Plant Swap

- I recommend we cancel the fall plant swap. The City is accepting requests for Park Permits again, but, quite frankly, I don't want the responsibility of enforcing proper distancing in such a public setting with random members of the public wandering around and through the site.

Ongoing Activities

- I wrote one column for the Beacon
- I have been participating in online Urban Food Table meetings and helping with the identification and development of local educational resources for food growing.