

## **2024 SSOCC AGM**

**April 9, 2024 | 7:00 - 9:00 pm**

**Fort Rouge Leisure Centre, Winnipeg, MB**

**In attendance:** Eliana Hotz, Barb Ediger, Rod Kueneman, Caitlin Popoff, Alexis Bahuaud, Erik Brommell, Mat Scammell, Phyllis Toews, Diane Paull, Rylee Swiderek, Manpreet (Peeta) Singh Gill, Dianna Fast, Sarah Johnson, Ross Boland, Corinne Danard, Zach Sigurdson, Linda Olson, Ralf Sawazki, Courtney Shuert, Linda Wilson, Allyson Paton, Diane Beckett, Lynda Trono, Sonya Jante, Marlowe Brownlee, Anne Lindsey, Steve Rauch, Sean Scammell

**Commenced:** 7:08pm

### **1. President's report (Mat) - Appendix A**

- a. Land Acknowledgment
- b. Government funding supported 3 youth staff in 2023
- c. Youth jobs application status is TBD as of today for 2024 growing season, confirmation of funding to come
- d. Jenna Ferchoff family condolences, herb garden memorial to be created this year
- e. Irrigation system upgrade in 2023
- f. 2<sup>nd</sup> annual volunteer appreciation night cost less than last year
- g. Received LDRF funding for \$18,300 to be spent over the next few years
- h. Received Assiniboine Credit Union funding for strategic planning of \$3000
- i. Another harvest dinner success, thank you Ben Kramer and Jesse Oberman
- j. Not up for re-election

## 2. Vice President's report (Eliana) – Appendix B

- a. Strategic planning workshop attended by board members
- b. Multiple workshops thanks to Healthy Together Now grant from Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA)

## 3. Treasurer's report (Sean) – Appendix C

- a. Income highlights:
  - i. Strategic Planning Grant from ACU: \$3,000.00
  - ii. Total Profit from Harvest Dinner: \$7,806.01
  - iii. Healthy Together Now Grant: \$1,850.00
  - iv. Donations from Individuals and Businesses: \$2,069.00
  - v. Urban Green Team Grant: \$5965.32
  - vi. Total income 2023: \$31,753.33**
- b. Expense highlights:
  - i. Strategic Planning: \$3,715.00
  - ii. Tractor Work: \$1,158.61
  - iii. Irrigation System: \$5,429.56
  - iv. Bike Racks: \$1,243.20
  - v. Insurance: \$1,555.84
  - vi. Summer Student Wages: \$5,793.85
  - vii. Total expenses 2023: \$35,780.69**
- c. Barb moves to adopt the financial report. Mat seconds.

#### **4. Steward reports**

##### **a. River Gardens (Barb) – Appendix D**

- i. Fred Tipping, Oak Table and Agape Table were recipients of 1/3 of harvest
- ii. This year plan is to dismantle old raised beds in the North garden and rebuilt them in the South garden
- iii. Thank you to RVCC Men's shed who made us a new work table, this and the horse trough will be moved as well

##### **b. People's Garden (Mat & Sean) – Appendix E**

- i. 150lbs of apricots harvested from 3 trees
- ii. Wicking bed deconstruction in progress
- iii. Thank you Tek Tree for woodchip delivery for walkway renewal
- iv. Successful berry bush pruning over last two winters
- v. Manitoba Harvest and Fred Tipping received 1/3 of harvest (likely more)

##### **c. Food Forest/Orchard (Eliana) – Appendix F**

- i. In progress of creating better signage in the orchard to reserve fruit for stakeholders
- ii. Completed installation of irrigation system
- iii. Tree damage was combated by adding aluminum meshing layer for reinforcement. In addition, Goodland, Odyssey and Red Sparkle apples as well as Debbie's Gold and Casino apricot trees were purchased and will be planted this Spring
- iv. Planting of mulberry trees, thank you to Miles, to come this Spring

- v. Adoption of new pruning method – the Swiss Method, thank you to Carl of Futura Farms
- vi. To begin a full GIS inventory of the orchard

**d. Lord Roberts Garden (community-led)**

- i. Not much to report as no presenter
- ii. Discord pictures showed a fruitful year

**5. Harvest Dinner**

- a. Trio Bembe performed & Bike Winnipeg ran a successful valet
- b. Made around the same amount of money as previous years while increasing ticket price to \$105

**6. Director elections**

- a. Seven positions up for election
  - i. President (1 year term): Eliana Hotz
  - ii. Vice- President (1 year term): Alexis Bahaud
  - iii. Treasurer (2 year term): Sean Scammell
  - iv. Secretary (1 year term): Caitlin Popoff
  - v. 2 members at large (2 year term): Allyson Paton & Ralf Sawazki
  - vi. Member at large (1 year term): Marlowe Brownlee

**7. Additional comments and other business**

- a. Manpreet (Peeta) offered help in creation of volunteer handbook and with signage update.

**Adjourned: 9:06pm**

## **Appendix A: President's Report – Mat Scammell**

Hello, good evening everyone and welcome to the 2024 AGM for Sustainable South Osborne Community Cooperative (SSOCC). Before we begin, I would like to acknowledge that we are gathered here on Treaty 1 Territory, that our water comes from Treaty 3 Territory on lands of Shoal Lake First Nations 39 and 40, and that the electricity we are currently consuming to light this venue is generated in Territories of Treaties 1, 3, and 5 from hydro-dams on the Winnipeg, Nelson, Saskatchewan, Burntwood, and Laurie Rivers. SSOCC respects the land that we care for and acknowledges the First Nations who lived here before us – the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples. We also recognize this area as the homeland of the Métis Nation. We understand the role we must play in upholding the promises made in the treaties and other agreements, both in the spirit of reconciliation and the pursuit of decolonization.

My second year as President of SSOCC has been highly rewarding in many ways. This is my eighth year being involved with the organization and I am confident in the positive direction it is heading. I have been involved with our Strategic Planning subcommittee and will let Eliana share more details on that process in her report, but will say now it has been encouraging hearing from current and past members of SSOCC about how far we have come over the past 15 years, and their recommendations for how we can improve. The time for consideration of year-round paid staff may be upon us, to lighten the workload from our volunteer Board of Directors, and to explore the possible sale of more of our produce. To have personally seen SSOCC grow since I first came to the orchard in 2016 has been a spectacular process, especially with the increasing relevance for an organization such as ours.

2023 was the hottest year on record globally, and we definitely noticed here in South Osborne due to the dry conditions. Luckily we were able to secure some government funding to hire 3 youth over the summer, and I would like to thank Kayl and Fraser for all the hours they spent taking care of the sites, as well as a special thank you to Clare who returned for a second year to help us in the gardens and orchard. Unfortunately we did not receive the federal funds we had become accustomed to, in addition to only half the provincial funds we requested, and so all staff were only employed on a part-time basis which did impact our operations. We have not yet heard back about the status of our applications for staff funding this summer, but hope to receive confirmation in the coming weeks.

I do have some sad news to report, and that is our former employee of 2 years, Jenna Ferchoff, unfortunately passed away in May 2023. I worked closely with her in 2022 so attended her funeral in June, and was able to send our collective condolences to the family. According to them, working with SSOCC was her dream job, and I've remained in contact to set up a medicine garden in her memory at the People Garden site.

I won't spend too much time discussing the actual growing season here, since the Stewards reports will come later, but in general we had a decent harvest year despite the hot and dry climate. We were able to upgrade our irrigation system last summer which vastly decreased the amount of time and effort required to maintain the health of our orchard - and this is likely to be very useful as we forecast another record warm year for 2024. We were able to donate a healthy portion of our produce to food security initiatives in this neighbourhood and around the city. Many volunteers helped distribute to different drop-off locations which was very

much appreciated and eased the responsibility of having Stewards doing this on their own. All sites seem to be in good hands for this upcoming season. Though the Steward of the Lord Roberts garden had to resign last Fall, several volunteers have stepped up to help manage the site in his absence. SSOCC will assist in whatever way possible to ensure another good growing year in Lord Roberts as well.

We hosted our second annual volunteer appreciation night this year again at Park Alleys. Though we had more attendees this time, we actually spent about the same amount as last year. With our current financial health, I think expenditures on this kind of social activity is money well spent. We have been discussing doing at least one more social event for volunteers, perhaps in the Fall after the big harvest instead of waiting for late winter, but details for this have not yet been decided. The bike racks we purchased last year were greatly utilized by volunteers over the summer and a big improvement to our sites.

We were also successful in applying for funds from LDRF and received confirmation that we can spend up to \$18,300 on materials and site maintenance over the next couple years. This specific fund has been foundational for our operations and we will likely apply again when we have spent this money. We also received a community grant from Assiniboine Credit Union for \$3,000 to hire a strategic planner, who facilitated a full day session last October and also helped us compile a report that we are hoping to adopt later this year as a guiding document for SSOCC. Eliana will speak more about that in her report. We have also been working to spend our remaining funds from the WRHA and the HTN program, which has enabled us to host workshops free of charge for attendees.

We again had tremendous success at the 2023 Harvest Dinner, our big annual fundraiser. Following up on the new partnership model with Ben Kramer, we maintained a healthy profit from the event with less responsibility on our own volunteers. I'd like to thank Jesse Oberman and the rest of our Board members for all their help putting the event on, and for all the volunteers that came out to ensure it ran smoothly. More details will be shared in the finance report, but we are planning to host the event using the same format this year as well.

Lastly, I regret to inform everyone that I will not be putting my name forward again this year for re-election as President, but will continue on as Steward of the People Garden and remain involved and accessible to the new President to ensure a successful transition of leadership. Having both Barb and Rod's continued involvement during my tenure was highly beneficial for the organization as a whole.

Thank you everyone for coming tonight, and I look forward to hearing from all the others.

## **Appendix B: Vice-President's report – Eliana Hotz**

*Strategic Plan 2025-2029*

Dear friends,

The SSOCC Board of Directors underwent a Strategic Planning process in Fall 2023. This work built off the Town Hall we hosted in 2021, where we solicited community feedback on what SSOCC was doing well, and where we had opportunities for growth. We received grant funding through Assiniboine Credit Union to hire a professional facilitator to take us through this process. We hosted an all-day session where we re-evaluated our current Mission Statement and Guiding Principles, and developed a list of short-to-long term organizational priorities that we intend to accomplish between now and 2029.

Throughout this process we re-committed to some key foundations of this organization I want to share with you today. We re-committed to being an organization that provides food, nutrition and land-based education. As many of you who are registered to our email newsletter list know, we have been offering several workshops throughout the off-season. We have offered workshops on jamming local berries, fermentation, seed starting, and we have another upcoming workshop on kimchi and bone broth next week. These workshops have been what we consider a tremendous success, consistently reaching capacity within 24 hours. We are grateful to have received the Healthy Together Now grant from the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, because it allowed us to not only compensate our skilled facilitators fairly for their time, but to offer these important lessons to our community for free. This feedback has shown us that SSOCC can remain relevant to the community by providing these learning opportunities, and we intend to provide as many as we can into the future, year-round.

We are also re-committing to organizational sustainability. From the inception of SSOCC, we have utilized sustainable permaculture ideals, alongside annual planting. We believe our regenerative approach has helped us grow some of the most delicious food. If you don't believe me, join us this summer and try some of our produce. But our ability to thrive as an organization is dependent on more than just healthy soil and ecologically sustainable practices. We are a volunteer-run board. All of us have responsibilities and competing priorities that we manage on top of our commitment to this community and this organization. We are proud of what we've achieved across all our sites, but the work has begun to outgrow us, and our capacity to manage the work sustainably without burning out our most committed members. To manage this, we are re-evaluating our board structure and organizational model. For now, that is all that we can share, and no decisions have been made. We have some ideas about how we can re-vitalize our operation to remain a thriving asset to this community. We will continue these conversations throughout the growing season with our volunteers, and formally ask for your feedback in Fall 2024 at a Town Hall, so stay tuned for more details on that coming soon.

These, among other important reflections that will be discussed in greater detail at the Town Hall, will become part of SSOCC's fabric in the coming years. We hope that you will join us and encourage your fellow community members to join us to collectively contribute to this vision. In this report, I hope to show you that our efforts to engage with the community have not landed on a shelf. We have and will continue to put in the work, and put in place a plan to remain relevant, and of service to this community through what we do best: providing a hyperlocal, sustainable alternative food production model, sharing our lessons along the way.

We would like to thank you for your continued support, your honest feedback, and your participation, in any way shape or form to this organization. We believe that now, and increasingly into the future, our model of food production will remain important; our knowledge of food production and preservation will remain needed; and that we must continue to be share this knowledge freely and widely and shared with the generations ahead.

If you would like to share comments or concerns, or have any questions about this process, we welcome your feedback during the Q&A. We also ask that you take time to reflect on how SSOCC could be most meaningful for the community in the years ahead. As mentioned, we will only have a brief amount of time for questions on the strategic plan today, and that a Town Hall in Fall 2024 will be hosted to formally receive community feedback on our intended vision for the next five years of our work. After that time, a full report on our 2025-2029 Strategic Plan will be publicly available, as increased transparency was noted as a key area for growth at the 2021 Town Hall, and we are listening. We thank you for your patience, your continued support, and your attention today.

Sincerely yours,

**Eliana Hotz (she/they)**

Vice-President, Sustainable South Osborne Community Co-operative  
southosbornecommons@gmail.com



## Appendix C: Treasurer's report – Sean Scammell

January - December 2023

	TOTAL
<b>INCOME</b>	
Discounts given	292.99
Donations	2,317.00
Grants	
ACU	3,000.00
Healthy Together Now	1,850.00
LDR	5,786.75
Urban Green Team	5,965.32
<b>Total Grants</b>	<b>16,602.07</b>
Interest	5.27
Other Revenue	
Harvest Dinne	13,436.00
<b>Total Other Revenue</b>	<b>13,436.00</b>
Services	-900.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$31,753.33</b>
<b>GROSS PROFIT</b>	<b>\$31,753.33</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Administration Fees	250.34
Strategic Planning	3,715.00
<b>Total Administration Fees</b>	<b>3,965.34</b>
Bank charges	56.25
Contract Labour	1,158.61
Equipment rental	181.52
Harvest Dinner	5,321.12
Infrastructure	6,358.71
Insurance	1,555.84
Land Rental	200.00
Materials	2,286.38
Meals and entertainment	637.93
Operating Other	2,854.36
Salaries and Benefits	
Wages	5,793.85
<b>Total Salaries and Benefits</b>	<b>5,793.85</b>
Seeds and Supplies	1,837.36
Space Rental	107.85
Tools	1,021.60
Uncategorized Expense	2,022.59
Workers Compensation	100.00
Workshop Expenses	321.38
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$35,780.69</b>

## **Appendix D: River Gardens report - Barbara Ediger**

This past garden season was another one for the books - exhilarating, exhausting, frustrating, productive - a typical gardening year. Yet, it was not exactly typical. More and more climate change is starting to affect how we garden. The weather this year was quite unpredictable - a frost free May, and a cold July affected our growing season. In the end, however, we were able to meet our mandate and provide volunteers, the food insecure and the harvest dinner with delicious, healthy fresh vegetables - everything from acorn squash to zucchini. Well over one-third of what we produced was shared with a number of organizations helping to feed those in need - Fred Tipping Place, Oak Table and Agape Table were the main recipients.

For those of you who may not know, the River Gardens are situated on the east side of Churchill Drive. The gardens are divided into two areas. River Garden North is basically at the bottom of the access road and is situated on Riverview Garden Society leased land. It contains 8 covered raised garden boxes and two 30'x40' RGS plots. River Garden South is at the far end of the RGS plots and is part of the land leased by SSOCC. It was developed in the fall of 2022 and contains 6 raised beds and four 5'x25' in ground beds. This is also where you will find the giant hugel bed. The South garden is a favourite hangout for the local deer population, as we quickly realized this summer. We had mixed success with these beds and learned a few things along the way. The number one thing we learned is that deer like to nibble on young tender corn, but raccoons prefer to wait until the cobs are fully formed. We won't make the mistake of growing corn again this year.

This fall, we also took on the responsibility of the asparagus and strawberry beds in the North Orchard. After many nights of weeding and adding compost, the beds are in great shape for this spring. We hope to get back to them and start moving the strawberry plants further up and away from the pathways, as they are getting trampled on when the nearby trees are being watered, pruned and harvested.

We are looking at some big changes for this year. As soon as the ground allows, we will be dismantling the old raised beds in the north beds and rebuilding them in the south garden. The beds are old and drastically listing to one side and since they need to be rebuilt anyway, it was decided that we should move them onto land leased by SSOCC. This will free up that area so that RGS can add 8 half sized plots for the ever increasing demand for garden space. We will also be moving the kiosk, horse trough and new garden table. All this needs to be done before we can start planting, so we will be looking for many volunteers to assist us.

Thank you to Keith and the members of the RVCC Men's Shed for donating the garden table. The table is a great addition to our work space and is very much appreciated.

As always, SSOCC could not possibly accomplish all of this work without the faithful, energetic and dedicated volunteers that come out week after week to help. We started at the beginning of May and continued right through until the first week in December. Thank you to each and every person who came out to work, laugh and share their knowledge with each other.

## **Appendix E: Peoples' Garden report - Mat Scammell & Sean Scammell**

Stewarding the People Garden again this year was a lot of fun. We had quite a few returning and regular volunteers, and this was a big help for us having a successful year.

We had an amazing apricot harvest - around 150 lbs from the 3 trees. Volunteers took what they could, lots were donated, and I was also able to get some apricot jelly made as well.

Wicking bed deconstruction is ongoing but progressing nicely, we have moved around our picnic tables but still need to decide on whether to build more raised beds in their place.

The quackgrass war continues! We were fortunate to get woodchips from the TekTree company in late summer, which are essential for our walkway renewal project.

Sean and I have pruned the berry bushes over the past two winters, and now all bushes have been trimmed down to a healthy size.

We donated a good portion of our produce to places like MB Harvest and Fred Tipping, since we grew much more food than could be used by all the volunteers. Our garlic harvest primarily went to the Harvest dinner, and hopefully we get a good crop again next year.

## **Appendix F: SSOCC Orchard Report – Eliana Hotz, with help from Rod Kueneman and Mat Scammell**

### *2023 Growing Season*

Dear friends,

The 2023 growing season in the orchard, with its warmer June weather, brought with it many early fruits. We experienced bumper years with haskaps, raspberries, and currants. Despite harvesting up to three days a week, it took us several weeks to reap the rewards from these generous plants. Our trees were also plentiful. We saw fruit from all our trees including plums, apricots, pears and of course our several varieties of apples. This attracted many visitors, two- and four-legged, as well as winged. It showed us that, while overall, our volunteers and the community respect and appreciate this space by providing their time through sweat equity work or grazing through on a summer's day walk. But it also showed us that we need to be clearer about the intent of this space, and whether we are leaving the fruits of our labour open to the public, or whether we want to reserve the fruit for those involved with the organization. On this matter, we are hoping to receive community input so please, if you have a perspective on the matter, we encourage you to complete the survey we will be sending out after today's meeting to share your thoughts.

Another way to be clearer is to create better signage in the orchard. We are in the early stages of this process. Thus far, we have created an inventory of all signage, identifying what needs replacing. The next step is to identify shortfalls and unique opportunities to communicate more effectively with the community through our messaging on-site. Stay tuned throughout the growing season and into the fall for updates on this progress.

We are pleased to report that our installation of the new irrigation system last season was a success. With the help of some eager volunteers, we spent a few Saturdays replacing underground piping to allow for increased water flow. This may not sound groundbreaking, but what it means to us is significantly less time required to ensure our trees are hydrated – a matter of three to four *hours* less. This will be especially important in the coming years that see drought.

Some challenges we experienced were the voles that call our ecosystem home. At least six trees were fully stripped at the base of the trunk, requiring us to cut our losses and remove them from the stock. We will be replacing those trees this summer with more Goodlands, Odyssey and Red Sparkle apples, as well as Debbie's Gold and Casino apricot trees. There was damage to other trees, but they stopped short of stripping 100% of the bark, so we left as many trees as possible, and will allow them to thrive for as many seasons as they will continue to provide. To counteract the vole damage and save our remaining trees, we undertook a fortification project last year before the snowfall. We added an aluminum meshing layer beneath the existing plastic tree bands for extra reinforcement. Upon a quick review this spring, we have not spotted

signs of the voles breaking through and it looks like we may have found a successful intervention to prevent further damage.

In addition to the new apples and apricots, we are excited to support a volunteer-led proposal to plant mulberry trees. The details of which will be finalized in the coming weeks. We greatly look forward to a tree-planting be in May or June and welcome these new additions to our stock.

More news on our trees is that we have decided to adopt a new pruning method, the Swiss method. We brought Carl from Futura Farms to our orchard for a hands-on workshop on April 6 so the community (and us) could learn about this method for pruning apple trees. We hope to continue our learning with Carl and plan to keep this relationship budding for years to come.

Lastly, we are planning to conduct an in-depth inventory of the tree and bush stock we currently have. Our big dream for the next two years is to bring on a student or good Samaritan with the capacity to use GIS software to plot out our orchard, tree by tree, bush by bush. This will help us understand the needs of our space better and measure our growth to ensure it remains sustainable.

We are elated to get back into the orchard and watch another season of growth, rejuvenation, generosity, and reciprocation. I hope to see you there.

With sincerest gratitude,

**Eliana Hotz (she/they)**

Vice-President, Sustainable South Osborne Community Co-operative  
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