

I have an issue that I was told would be addressed today, and I would like to address it. Last season I put in 19 credits, far above the total of 10 credits required to be in good standing. However, I made an honest mistake, and did not realize there was a rule in the bylaws that only one BQLT meeting OR workshop qualifies for credit.

I attended 4 BQLT meetings and one BQLT rat workshop, and was happy to share everything that I learned with the group. I thought I was going above and beyond.

When I submitted my request to claim these credits, I did not receive a response from membership for a month. By then, there were not enough meetings remaining to attend. I was told that I would be losing my plot.

It's true that the bylaws say that only one BQLT meeting or workshop can be claimed. I know that now, and I'll never make the mistake again. But the bylaws also state that membership should work with people to some degree when they are putting in a good faith effort.

"Work with" doesn't mean that people who are never around should be allowed to keep claiming land that other people, who have done the work, are waiting in line for. But I am not one of those people who de facto abandoned my plot and left it empty. I'm an active gardener and community member who really thought I was doing a service to Hollenback by connecting so deeply with the BQLT, which I love.

I am requesting grace to keep my plot this year. If this rule was so important to the steering committee, they had opportunities to emphasize it in emails sent out offering BQLT credits as acceptable garden credits. But they never did. If they cared about this rule enough to take a plot from someone who accrued 19 credits—someone who sat outside for four hours in the cold waiting for the exterminator—they could have mentioned it in time to at least try to correct my error.

I am requesting a warning instead of a plot loss. I don't want anyone who actually goes AWOL to hold onto their plot at the expense of a new member who is waiting in line, but I think this is a good example of the kind of "working with people" that our bylaws require. I hope you agree.

I love this garden and have put in a lot of hard work for years, to make this a welcoming atmosphere that is connected to the greater community. I did not feel welcomed or respected by the communication style of last year's steering committee. Instead I felt intimidated. I hope that whatever decisions the incoming steering committee makes, that they will communicate them less coldly. Whatever is decided, I am still here to help move the garden in a positive and welcoming community direction.