

Master Gardener Association of Bergen County Board Meeting Minutes, January 26, 2021

Present: Co-Hosting – Melody Corcoran and Arnie Friedman, Autumn O’Shea, Karen Riede, Sandi Liberti, Suzanne Danzig, Theresa Schneider, Janet Schulz, Miriam Taub, Karen Pennell, Donna Faustini, Pat Vellas, Jane Nicholson, Joseph Cooper
Absent: Patrick Lull, Terri Pegg

The Meeting was called to order by President Corcoran at 5:35PM

Executive Board Reports:

President – Melody Corcoran:

Welcome to our two new board members - Keith Mazanec, Recording Secretary and Theresa Schneider, Membership Chair.

The MG of BC website is currently experiencing technical difficulties. The public portion of the website is working but the member-only portion is not. Miriam, Karen Riede and Arnie are working on our website. Work is continuing on choosing a vendor who will redesign and implement our new website.

Passaic County MGs would like to have our annual joint meeting in April. Donna Faustini is working with them on this virtual meeting.

Karen Pennell will be resigning her position as RMGANJ delegate after a replacement has been found. She has served in this position for 11 years. Suggestions for a candidate for this position are needed, preferably someone with experience of MG of BC operations. Thank you, Karen, for all your years of service.

Following the report, Arnie stated that he may volunteer for the RMGANJ position. Arnie and Karen Pennell to discuss responsibilities of this position off-line. Karen Pennell recommended that Suzanne Danzig attend RMGANJ meetings in the future. Karen to send Suzanne an invite to the next meeting.

Vice President – Suzanne Danzig:

No Report

Treasurer – Pat Vellas:

Pat Vellas summarized the December, 2020 Treasurer's report

Month Ending – December 31st, 2020

Opening Balance as of: November 30 th , 2020		\$	12,616.61
Income:	Membership Fee:		\$ 300.00
	: Membership Donations:		\$ 135.00
	Speaker Fee Donations:		\$ 100.00
Total Income:		\$	535.00
Expenses:	Website Program:		\$ 119.76
	P.O. Box Payment:		\$ 114.00
Total Expenses:			233.76
Closing Balance as of 12/31, 2020		\$	12,917.85
Total Outstanding checks;			0.00
Bank Statement Balance:		\$	12,917.85

Following the Treasurer's report, Pat stated that she had applied for 501(c) status. Discussion followed. Pat stated that she had received a request for a donation from the Center for Hope and Safety (domestic violence). Janet mentioned that we had donated to the Center for Food Action previously. Suzanne suggested that we make a monthly donation to the Center for Food Action of \$100, and review again in 3-4 months. A discussion was initiated by Theresa Schneider regarding what the Association's process and policies are for handling donation requests from other associations or charities. There was a discussion about the history of how donation requests were handled. Karen Riede stated that the Cooperative Extension, through 4-H, may be sponsoring a food drive, and that Master Gardeners may be able to participate. Following further discussion as to the amount of the donation,

***Motion:** Donna Faustini motioned that the Association make a donation of \$250, representing a six month period, to the Center for Food Action and to re-evaluate in September. The motion was seconded by Arnie and APPROVED. Arnie also recommended that we announce this in the next Newsletter. 2021 Budget was APPROVED.

Recording Secretary – Keith Mazanec:

***Motion:** Keith Mazanec motioned to approve the November Meeting Minutes; Arnie seconded – APPROVED.

Corresponding Secretary – Miriam Taub:

Miriam updated Board on Website (see below)

Old Business

Website – The Website Committee (Arnie, Karen Riede and Miriam) met numerous times since our November meeting. We agreed that none of us had the skills to create a website with the infrastructure that we had on our current site, such as a password-protected page for each member to add/change personal information, and the administrative functions that several offices/committee chairs had (membership chair, volunteer records chair, corresponding secretary), and Joseph Cooper.

In addition to the meetings that we mentioned at the November meeting (with Go Daddy and MorWeb), we interviewed two other designers via Zoom: Gail Scanlan, owner of 3w-presence (she created the Wyckoff Area Garden Club website) and Gayle Clayton, owner of Gayle Clayton Design. We received proposals from each. We recommend going with Gayle Clayton, who gave us a very detailed proposal to redesign a website with a public and a members-only section at a cost of \$2,950. The work includes making the site so that we can update most of the site without needed paid help.

Gayle invested several hours researching our project. She spoke with Joseph for technical information, investigated what happened to the left navigation bars on mgofbc.org, and reinstalled them on her own. She and I also exchanged numerous emails as she had questions and suggestions. She has requested 50% payment upfront and 50% upon completion of the project. She estimates it will take 30 days to create the site after we approve the design.

The team has decided the proposal they are recommending is from Gayle Clayton. Miriam reviewed Gayle's fee structure and said that the website could be up and running within 30 days after we give Gayle the go ahead. There was discussion concerning the reasonableness of Gayle's fees. Both Joe and Arnie felt that Gayle's proposal was reasonable. There was further discussion about reviewing Gayle's work prior to making a final decision. Janet felt that based on the committee's research, we should move forward. Joe concurred, and asked if anyone else had concerns about the committee's recommendation.

***Motion:** Joe made a motion to approve Miriam's team's recommendation to go with Gayle Clayton as the designer for our new website. Suzanne seconded. A roll call was taken with 13 voting yes with one abstention. The motion was PASSED.

Melody mentioned the Rutgers identification on the website's home page. Karen Riede said the Master Gardeners are trained by Rutgers.

AV Equipment – Melody tabled for future discussion.

Better Impact – Autumn stated that any Education hours should continue to be tracked.

Committee Reports

MG Class Liaison

No Report

Community Outreach – Karen Riede

No Report

Garden Club Liaison – Miriam Taub

Miriam announced that Janet will be the new Garden Club Liaison. Arnie stated that he has received approximately a dozen requests for Speaker Bureau talks. Pat Vellas asked if the P.O. Box be given out to people sending in Speaker Bureau donations. Arnie stated that Edith Wallace will no longer be doing speaking engagements. Arnie also reviewed some of the topics the Speaker's Bureau covers

Hospitality – Sandi Liberti

No Report

Membership – Theresa Schneider

No Report

From Terri Pegg: There are currently only 75 people who have paid their 2021 dues. I believe by this time last year we were well over 100.

Newsletter – Miriam Taub

Asked members for ideas and any contributions for upcoming newsletters.

Programs – Donna Faustini:

Tonight, Arnie will be doing a presentation entitled "Water in the Garden." February will be a talk by Dr. Lyons; March – a presentation by Bill Kolvek; April – OPEN; May – joint meeting with Passaic County.

Publicity:

No Report

Rutgers Cooperative Extension Liaison – Karen Riede

Karen Riede submitted the following written report:

RCE Report to MG Association Board 1/26/21
By Joel Flagler

A pilot on-line MG Program will start on 2/2/21 with the following counties participating: Bergen, Union and Passaic.

First, the two problems Rutgers MG programming has faced:

- 1) No statewide standardization of hours trained, hours volunteered, curricula—despite some working on this over the last 20 yrs. There are MG programs all over the state; each looks somewhat different.
- 2) Counties have backlog of volunteer hours since activities have been suspended. How to handle that backlog without compounding the problem with hundreds more hours that cannot be channeled. Should MG programs just stay suspended?

The solution is two-fold:

- A. Several counties (8) have chosen to deliver a “Home Horticulture” training series that is not called MG—though the parallels are obvious. There is no volunteering component for the evening online training. It costs \$200. It is coordinated out of the RCE Sussex office and involves 7 other counties.
- B. The 2nd part of the solution is a new RMG “Pilot Program” that bears the MG name and is the only official MG program operating in 2021. A core curriculum developed by Rutgers NJAES will be the template for the training. Other topics are also included to reflect local needs/activities. Hort Therapy is an example.

So—both of the programs are operating this spring; ours starts in early Feb. In the pilot program each of the 3 counties can have up to 15 students—who file applications and are then approved.

We are excited and nervous and lots of other emotions—as we embark on a new delivery mode for one of the most popular and important Extension programs in the state.

MG’s are recognized as a hugely important resource for the University and the NJAES/Extension Service. More? Let us not forget that the Chair of the Bergen County Commissioners (aka Freeholders) is a RMG grad from my class of 1989—Mary Amoroso. Perhaps the Association can include her in the mailings and continue to cultivate the excellent relationships we have with Mary and the rest of the Commissioners on the Board in Bergen County.

Following the report, Karen stated that as of now, three counties are interested. The classes will be live through Zoom. This will be the first on-line Master Gardeners course being offered. As of now, volunteer hours are suspended through March 31st, 2021.

RMGANJ report – Karen Pennell

Karen Pennell submitted the following written report:

Rutgers University Policy continues with the prohibition of non-essential, in person events by Rutgers faculty, and volunteers through winter 2021.

Nick Polanin reported that it is expected that Master Gardeners will be able to meet in person and with the public starting in the fall 2021.

Camden County has defunded the Master Gardener program due to a disagreement on program mission and goals. As a result, Camden no longer has a Master Gardener program and current Camden Master Gardeners will no longer be Rutgers Master Gardeners effective year end (2020). Nick reported that he wanted to make it clear that the Camden coordinator was not let go by Rutgers; her position was eliminated by the county.

Jan Zientek reported that the coordinators are moving forward with the common Master Gardener New Class Curriculum development, which should be ready for the late winter/spring. Currently, fall of 2021 will be the next opportunity for in person training.

Nick gave a shout out to all the counties who quickly pivoted and have been doing a great job offering online programs for the public and for Master Gardeners.

Elections: The election slate for Vice President and for Recording Secretary were approved unanimously.

Conference Planning: We have direction from Nick Polanin that we can plan on meeting in person in the fall.

Bylaws Committee: The Bylaws committee has proceeded with updating the Bylaws. They will be sending out a draft in January for comments and discussion at the February meeting.

Site Coordinator Liaison – Melody Corcoran:

Melody submitted the following written report:

An updated list of Master Gardener Volunteer Sites is usually posted in the March Potting Shed. I have contacted all site coordinators requesting confirmation or updating of their volunteer site's information. Only three coordinators have responded. Since we don't know when Rutgers will approve the resumption of in-person activities, I understand why so few have gotten back to me. I will contact the site coordinators again in February.

Volunteer Records – Autumn O’Shea

January 2021 Volunteer Records Chair:

* Until 3/31/2021 volunteer hours and on-site volunteer projects and programs are suspended. More info to come as we get closer to March 2021 and Rutgers make a discussion on the future and Covid 19.

* Volunteers can still input Administrative hours only to count as life-time hours all others hours will not be recorded until sometime/date in the future.

* Looking forward to getting out there and meeting each of you face to face; until then if anyone has a question about volunteer hours or Better Impact record system please reach out to me at email: autumnjoshea@gmail.com or cell phone (973)271-6434. Please keep track and write down any education hours.

Karen Riede stated that all new Master Gardener applicants have applied through “Better Impact.” There is a limit of 15 people per class.

Website – Joseph Cooper

Updated webpage.

New Business

Year End Committee Reports have been turned in.

Discussed earlier the donation request from the Center for Hope and Safety

Discussed earlier the status for 501(c) designation

Zoom – discussion about putting in names of zoom participants at meetings.

Melody asked if there was any new business to discuss. Suzanne asked if Rutgers is considering any CDC guidelines for governing outdoor sites. Karen Riede stated that nothing now, however there is encouragement for the fall.

Adjournment

***Motion:** Motion made by Suzanne to adjourn the meeting at 6:45PM. Seconded. MEETING ADJOURNED.