

**Master Gardener Association of Bergen County  
Board Meeting Minutes – January 23, 2024**

**Present:** Hosting – Melody Corcoran, Karen Riede, Suzanne Danzig, Theresa Schneider, Miriam Taub, Arnie Friedman, Jean Friedman, Chris Kozar, Herb Arbeiter, Joseph Cooper, Keith Mazanec, Elizabeth Gil, Donna Faustini

**Absent:** Janet Schulz, Janet Stofkoper

The meeting was called to order by President Corcoran at 5:33 pm.

**Officer Reports:**

**President – Melody Corcoran**

I approved Jeff Chan's expenditure for the Fall Festival signs that he had made. However, I strongly emphasized to him that MG of BC policies must be followed and approval obtained before non-budgeted items are purchased.

As this is my last board meeting as president of the Master Gardeners, I want to thank everyone for their assistance and guidance over the past four years. Your knowledge of policies and procedures, your past experiences on the board and your guidance have been and are greatly appreciated. I could not have done this without all of you behind me. Thank you.

**Vice President – Elizabeth Gil**

No report.

**Treasurer – Jean Friedman**

For month ending Dec. 31, 2023:

December 2023 Treasurer's report filed; 2023 annual report pending.

Jean suggested we take \$10,000.00 from the checking account and invest it in a money market account, which could potentially generate \$500.00 in additional annual income. We currently have our account with Spencer Savings Bank, and Jean is recommending we move it to TD bank, providing there are no fees. The 2024 budget is not completed; however, the figures are pretty much the same as 2023. Melody felt no big changes needed to be made at this time. We should cap the Skylands budget at \$500.00 and raise the post office box fees a little. Jean suggested condensing the hospitality line items, however, Melody felt the current breakdown was appropriate and to leave it as is.

**\*Motion:** Jean motioned that we move our account from Spencer Savings Bank to TD Bank provided there were no additional fees involved. Donna seconded the motion. APPROVED. Jean will look at rates, terms, etc, for CD investment purposes and will present her findings at the next meeting.

**Recording Secretary – Keith Mazanec**

Keith stated that the final copy of the December 19, 2023 Board Meeting minutes had been sent to all Board Members for review, and that if there were no changes or questions, proposed that a motion be made to approve them.

**\*Motion:** Arnie motioned to approve the December. 2023 meeting minutes; all in attendance voted “Yes.” APPROVED.

**Corresponding Secretary – Miriam Taub**

Miriam reported that she had distributed two editions of the Potting Shed in December and two in January. The deadline to submit articles for the February Potting Shed is Saturday, January 27. In addition, two sympathy cards were sent out.

**Old Business:**

**Goals ad hoc committee**

Miriam inquired if anyone had any points they wanted to discuss on the goals that were proposed by the committee last year. Arnie suggested we table the discussion until the new president takes over next month.

**Year-end committee reports**

Melody reminded everyone to turn in their year-end reports to her with a copy to Keith.

**MG class liaison**

The class of 2024 met for the first time on January 23 on Zoom. There are 25 students from Bergen County, and six counties are participating in the training, which runs from 10 to noon on Tuesdays followed by a 30-minute, county-specific meeting. Karen appealed to the class concerning the class liaison and had a good response. All participants received a link for tonight’s meeting.

**T-shirts**

Karen reported an order of 32 T-shirts and hoodies had been placed and would be ready for pick-up by Wednesday. Those who placed orders may pick them up at the office or at the next in-person meeting in March.

**Committee Reports:**

**Community outreach liaison – Arnie Friedman**

There have been several requests for speakers for this spring.

**Hospitality – Chris Kozar**

Chris proposed that we have a “meet and greet” at the March meeting. Chris will handle the set-up and we could announce it in the February Potting Shed. Joseph mentioned we have held these in the past and they usually ran for 10-15 minutes at the beginning of the meeting. Melody referenced the “open forum” idea listed under “new business.” Theresa affirmed we should do this.

**Membership – Theresa Schneider**

For 2023 we have 126 members; two are lifetime members who have not paid dues, leaving 124 dues-paying members. To date, 80 members have paid their dues for 2024.

Janet Stofkoper and Theresa have been working together and Dineen Policano has joined the membership committee. We are sending out emails to committee heads referring members who have indicated on their Membership Renewal forms they would be interested in joining a committee. Since several of the committees need limited members, it was suggested we update the renewal form.

**Newsletter – Miriam Taub**

Report given earlier

**Garden club liaison - Janet Schulz**

– absent, no report given.

**Programs – Donna Faustini**

Tonight’s speaker is Bruce Crawford. February’s speaker will be Paul Split whose main topic will be organic seed gardening. Dr. Charles West is currently slated to speak on Paw Paw trees in March, however, he would prefer doing his presentation in either April or May. April and May’s meeting will be in the Learning Center on the fourth floor at 1 Bergen County Plaza.

**Rutgers Cooperative Extension liaison – Karen Riede**

Karen thanked Melody for her years of service as president and presented Joel’s report:

RCE Report to MG Association Board Meeting 1/23/24

Joel Flagler

1. New MG volunteering stats for 2023. Very impressive totals- 9,503.85 hours. Thank you to all the volunteers for their hard work and dedication. Their efforts in county parks, zoo, environmental center and at Earth Day events and environmental fairs allow them to reach and positively impact upon huge numbers of clientele. They provide Rutgers Best Management Practices and research-based solutions for thousands of residents in the areas of home horticulture, gardening and pest management.

2. Parks Director Jim Koth is out to become the new mayor of Oradell and the new Acting Director for the Parks Dept. is Craig Dorsett, who is also the Chief of Staff for County Executive Jim Tedesco. We look forward to working with Craig, who is also a councilman in the Borough of Ridgefield and serves on the Hackensack Riverkeeper Executive Board. Karen knows him and his family very well.
3. New Rutgers hires: Julia Peirmatteo is the new MG Coordinator, Program Associate II for RCE Passaic. Plus the RCE/Essex County MG Coordinator search reviewed 15 applications and has identified 6 semi-final candidates. Joel is on the search committee, which is now reviewing the videotaped pre-interviews and will select 2 or 3 to come in for an in-person interview in the next month. Jessica Shick has been hired as the Environmental Program Coordinator, Agriculture and Natural Resources, for RCE Somerset. Both new MG coordinators will be participating in the 2024 MG online program that started today. The 2024 MG online program includes the following counties: Bergen, Burlington, Essex, Passaic, Somerset, and Union.
4. The North Jersey Ornamental Horticulture Symposia held its 3 days of conferences last week for professionals in the green industries. Turf Day, Tree Day and Landscape Day attracted over 560 participants and they include arborists and tree experts, turf and ball field managers, and landscape contractors. The evaluations indicate that attendees place a high value on the training and they adopt new and improved practices based on what they learn from our expert speakers. Joel has been on the team that delivers this program since 1987. It is the oldest and continually offered program in all of RCE. This year marked its 63rd year!

#### **RMGANJ report – Herb Arbeiter**

Herb reported that there are no RMGANJ meetings scheduled for January or February. 310 people registered for the fall conference; 120 in-person and 190 on line. A new person was hired to replace Nick Polanin. Nick Hendershot has also stepped down. The next meeting will be in March.

#### **Site coordinator liaison – Liz Gil**

The Hermitage has its maple syrup event. Most other sites are quiet.

#### **Volunteer Records – Suzanne Danzig**

To date six Outreach sites have recorded hours this year for a total of 128 hours. In addition, we have recorded 40 administrative hours and 33 CE hours. A total of 28 MGs have recorded hours so far this year. Our Outreach hours for 2023 were up over 2000 hours from 2022, admin hours were up slightly by about 60 hours, teaching hours were down slightly and CE hours were up about 100 hours from 2022.

### **Volunteer Records report cont...**

We have added another 7 or 8 MGs to the inactive list either for health reasons or for lack of recording hours for 2023. In addition we have lost 2 MGs, Pat Vellas and Fred Levitan in 2023, bringing us to a total of 93 accepted/active members, 13 inactive, 54 in process and finally 316 who are archived. We continue to review and monitor our member hours, especially those who are site coordinators, committee chairs and board members. It is imperative that we set a good example and it would be most helpful if Karen and I did not have to nag our most valuable members, please. Joanne Holmberg should be removed from Davies Arboretum as site coordinator as she has logged only 7 outreach hours and 4 CE hours despite several requests to do so.

### **Website – Joseph Cooper**

Completed his year-end report.

### **New Business:**

#### **2024 annual budget**

Discussed during Treasurer's report.

#### **Membership directory**

There approximately six members with no contact information listed in the directory. Members are not obligated to list their personal information if they choose not to. Certain members have specifically requested their information not be publically posted on the website directory.

#### **Open forum**

Karen Riede proposed we consider having a Fall Festival chairperson (a point person in charge of coordinating the event). There followed a discussion of how events were handled in the past. Arnie suggested we have a person in charge of one-day events. He will draft a request for this position for Miriam to post in the Potting Shed and will work with Karen and Miriam in filing this position.

Karen mentioned there was one member who complained that she did not receive her pin and was very upset. We have no volunteer records for hours prior to 2010, and upon checking, learned the member was from the class of 2006. After a brief discussion as to whether we want to present pins at monthly meetings or mail them, there was agreement that presenting them in person would be preferable.

**Open forum cont...**

Melody asked if anyone had anything else.

Suzanne mentioned that the RCE liaison has not been required to report any volunteer or continuing education hours. Joseph replied only the RCE was exempt from reporting hours due to the amount of work they contribute. Suzanne then suggested crediting 25 volunteer hours plus 10 continuing education hours automatically. Joseph asked that we pick this up at the next meeting.

**Adjournment**

**\*Motion:** A motion was made by Joseph to adjourn the meeting. Arnie seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**Election of Officers**

The following was read at the beginning of tonight’s General Membership meeting:

“Good evening everyone. My name is Keith Mazanec, the Recording Secretary for the Master Gardeners of Bergen County. Tonight, as the Recording Secretary, I will present to you the slate of officers for a vote. Because this meeting is being held virtually, I ask that you vote in “chat”. The voting for officers is open to certified Master Gardeners. You need only vote if you abstain or are opposed to a nominee. If you are in agreement, there is no need to vote yes. Each officer is elected for a two-year term starting in January and may serve no more than two consecutive terms in the same office. In accordance with Article III, Section 4 of the MG of BC bylaws, I cast a ballot for the 2024 slate of officers as follows:

For President: Theresa Schneider and for Vice President: Lisa Yoler.

Please respond in chat with your vote.

Thank you.”

**Note:** At the beginning of the vote there were 60 people in attendance. 29 people voted yes in chat. There were no abstentions and no one voted no. The slate of officers has been adopted.