

**Master Gardener Association of Bergen County
Board Meeting Minutes – February 20, 2024**

President Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM (meeting was held via Zoom).

Keith Mazanec read the roll call:

Present: Hosting – Theresa Schneider, Lisa Yoler, Melody Corcoran, Karen Riede, Miriam Taub, Arnie Friedman, Jean Friedman, Janet Stofkoper, Herb Arbeiter, Joseph Cooper, Keith Mazanec, Donna Faustini, Janet Schulz, Cesar Coy

Absent: Liz Gil, Chris Kozar, Suzanne Danzig

Approval of Minutes

President Schneider announced the Recording Secretary had distributed the January, 2024 minutes electronically on Feb. 16, 2024. She inquired if there was any discussion regarding the minutes. Since there were no corrections, the minutes were approved.

Officer Reports:

President – Theresa Schneider

- 2024 budget review and adoption: Zoom meeting - date / time pending, before end of month.
- Establishing an Auditing-Ad Hoc Committee. Standard procedure per RONR (Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised) when there is a change in treasurer; bylaws require a minimum of once every three years.
- Established a Google drive for the MG of BC board (info share, knowledge management).
- Establishing a procedural guide-Ad Hoc Committee to establish standing operating procedures for specific items; example: submitting vouchers for reimbursement, finding / replacing subcommittee chairs; etc.
- March meeting - per the motion adopted by the board in February, 2020, the March 2024 meeting will include an open forum for MG of BC members to speak to the board, ask questions, etc. President moderates the open forum.

Vice President – Lisa Yoler

No report.

Treasurer – Jean Friedman

January 2024 Treasurer's report filed; 2023 annual report pending.

Jean went to TD Bank and inquired about opening an account. As long as we maintain a balance of at least \$1,500.00, there are no fees involved. She would like to move our account from Spencer Savings Bank to TD Bank. In addition, Jean inquired about opening a CD. The amount would need to be at least \$5,000.00.

Treasurer's Report cont...

***Motion** Jean motioned to change banks from Spencer Savings Bank to TD Bank. Arnie seconded the motion. All in attendance voted Yes. The motion is adopted pending coordination between the president and treasurer.

***Motion:** Should money be invested into a CD? Jean motioned that we invest \$10,000.00 in a CD with TD Bank. Miriam seconded the motion. This would still allow us to have \$6,000.00 cash on hand. Jean recommended the term of the CD be for one year. Cesar inquired if there were any penalties for early withdrawal. Jean stated that based on her experience, penalties range from 10% – 15%. Jean will confirm this and follow-up. The motion that the MG of BC will invest \$10,000.00 in a CD with TD Bank was adopted.

Recording Secretary – Keith Mazanec

Keith stated that he had nothing further to report.

Corresponding Secretary – Miriam Taub

Miriam reported that she had distributed two editions of the Potting Shed in February. In addition, Miriam sent out a reminder notice for tonight's meeting and mailed hard copies of the Potting Shed to Marianne Hanna and Pauline DuBois.

Committee Reports:

Community outreach liaison – Arnie Friedman

Arnie reported that Chris Kozar gave the first talk of 2024. There are also a couple of other speakers lined up. We put an article in the newsletter for a person to chair a sub-committee for "one day events."

Hospitality – Chris Kozar

Theresa reported in Chris's absence she is working to make the March meeting exciting and energetic. We want to engage people as they arrive and have a "meet and greet" with board members.

Membership – Janet Stofkoper

As of year ending 2023, we had 126 members. 85 members have paid their dues as of 2/7. The web directory has been updated as of 2/20/24. Theresa posted and presented graphics of "Dues Paid/Not Paid by Graduation Year," "Certified Master Gardeners as of 2/8/24" and a pie chart showing the "Percentage of MGs verses Alum." (see attached)

Newsletter – Miriam Taub

Miriam is currently working on the March newsletter. We have photos from Garretson and the Hermitage. Joel has submitted an article about horticultural therapy. Report given earlier.

Garden club liaison - Janet Schulz

No report given.

Programs – Donna Faustini

Donna requested the board increase the budget for speakers to \$350.00-\$400.00 a speaker. (Currently the budget is \$300.00 a speaker).

Tonight's speaker is Paul Split who will discuss growing micro greens from seeds.

March will be Anthony Bracco whose topic is gardening in small spaces and containers. (Note: Passaic does not wish to hold a joint meeting this year).

May's speaker will be Dr. Charles West who will discuss paw paw trees.

Site coordinator liaison – Liz Gil

The report on both long and short term goals which as compiled by the Ad Hoc Committee, (consisting of Miriam Taub, Arnie Friedman and Liz Gil) last summer was resubmitted to the new president. There will be a meeting to review the items and adjust or take possible action on them.

The Hermitage held the Maple Sugaring event on Saturday, February 17. There were at least a dozen MGs and candidates in attendance. There were about 225 people in attendance. 15 trees on the property were tapped.

MGs will participate in collecting the sap on a daily basis for the final boil which will happen at the Hermitage.

Harriet Steiner, who is the current coordinator for the Mary Topolsky Garden, inquired about the site-coordinator liaison role. I'm not sure how serious she is but the role could be divided or shared in some way.

Volunteer Records – Suzanne Danzig

The following report was prepared and filed by Suzanne:

Volunteer Records Monthly Report Feb. 20, 2024 Prepared by Suzanne Danzig: YTD 336 outreach hours were recorded by 25 volunteers; 142 administrative hours recorded by 14 volunteers; four teaching hours by one volunteer; and 122 continuing ed hours recorded by 38 MGs. The sites that have recorded hours to date are BNBMC, Garretson, Hackensack River Greenway, Hermitage, Skylands HOH, Thielke, Teaneck Creek Conservancy. We have 51 interns in the process of obtaining their certification, which consists of new students and several who have not yet fulfilled their certification obligations. Karen and I continue to monitor those who have not yet fulfilled their requirements as they will be notified and marked as not complete. 92 of our members are "active," 13 are "inactive" due to health or family issues, and finally 320 have been "archived."

Website – Joseph Cooper

Nothing to report.

RMGANJ report – Herb Arbeiter

Herb reported that there were no RMGANJ meetings scheduled during January or February.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension liaison – Karen Riede

RCE Report to MG Association Board Mtg. 2/20/24

Joel Flagler

1. The new MG state coordinator Ruth Carli came to meet with me and Karen on Jan. 29. She is off to a busy start and is meeting with MG coordinators and Ag agents all around the state. The intent is to bring greater homogeneity so that the program looks similar in each county. Right now, there are some counties that do not require volunteering, so they cannot call themselves MGs. By definition the MG program is and always has been about training volunteers. Ruth really appreciated the tight organization and oversight we have in Bergen County and that is thanks to the focus given by Karen Riede. Bergen is way ahead of other counties in our use of volunteer agreements and attention to the core curriculum and values established over the years. Please cooperate with Ruth as she requests financial accountability (e.g., tax filing for the MG association) since Rutgers wants to be sure that money is being handled and reported in a legal manner.
2. The former Director of Parks in Bergen County, Jim Koth, has stepped away from that position and is the new mayor of Oradell. He is maintaining some county responsibilities (e.g., capital improvements) but is no longer our liaison to county government and the point person for our annual budget allocation. In the "acting Parks Director" position is Craig Dorsett, who is also chief of staff for the County Executive Jim Tedesco. He knows Karen Riede well, and they have worked together on environmental issues for the borough of Ridgely. I met with him on 1-29-24 and educated him about Rutgers Cooperative Extension and the MG program. He is kind and appreciative of all we do, and I am hopeful he will approve the Rutgers budget for 2024 with level-funding or even with a slight increase, as I have requested.
3. Bergen County has asked us to deliver special horticultural therapy sessions for the county senior centers as we did for over 10 years prior to the pandemic. I want to invite seasoned MG's who worked with me in the past to consider joining me again and working alongside some of the new students who have no experience in HT. Please reach out to me to indicate your interest. I will have more details about dates, days, and schedules in the coming weeks. All I know now is that it will start in the second half of April.
4. Joel is on the Rutgers search committee for a new faculty position in Essex County. Like the new position (recently filled by Julia Piermatteo) in Passaic County, the MG coordinator will be faculty, tenure-track and will start this year. We held interviews and seminars this past Wednesday at the RCE office in Roseland.

The Fall Festival will be the weekend of 9/21 – 9/22/24 at Overpeck Park.

MG Class Liaison – Cesar Coy

Thanked the board for inviting him. Nothing to report.

Unfinished Business

- Motion to pay outstanding invoices – Jeff Chan, PAID.
Miriam Taub
- Motion to pay Miriam Taub \$127.94 for expenses incurred – Adopted.
- 2024 Budget – Will hold an ad hoc budget meeting prior to the end of February.
- Motion to have a person in charge of one-day events. We need to have a process in place for filling key positions.
- Motion to remove site coordinator at Davies Arboretum as she no longer meets liaison qualifications. Discussion postponed until Suzanne Danzig returns.
- Motion to credit RCE liaison 25 volunteer hours and 10 continuing education hours each year for the work done on behalf of the county and the association. Discussion postponed until Suzanne Danzig returns.
- Motion to present membership service pins at monthly meetings vs. mailing pins to members. No vote needed. The subject is covered in 2021 Appendix to the Bylaws.
- Motion to table discussion of Goals Ad Hoc Committee report until installation of new president. Discussed earlier. Ideally, we should try to get this done in the next 30-60 days.

New Business

Miriam asked about announcements at tonight’s general membership meeting via Zoom.

The following announcements will be made:

- Theresa will introduce herself and thank everyone for coming.
- Will remind membership to pay dues for 2024.
- Our first in-person meeting in 2024 will be March 19 (spring equinox).
- Hermitage could use help collecting sap.
- Joel is looking for MGs to assist him in horticultural therapy classes he conducts.
- Outreach – looking for an individual to handle one-day events, for example, the fall festival – need people to move equipment, set it up and break it down.

Adjournment

***Motion to adjourn:** Joseph motioned to adjourn the meeting. Donna seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM.