Gwinnett County Master Gardener’s Association

Board of Directors Meeting

*May 11, 2020*

Meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m.

ATTENDEES

Present: Virginia Schofield, Lynda Pollock, Jack Bolton, Ann Langley, Wes Nettleton, Gervasio Cubenas, Lori Prosser, Becky Wolary, Susan Varlamoff, Becky Panetta, Alice Verner, Aaron Tulin, Martha Whitman, Shirley Bohm, Freda Steward,

Absent: Robert Ayer, Tixie Fowler, Susan Kosenka, Jackie Kujawa, Deborah DeSalvo

Guests: Tim Daly, Lisa Klein

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Minutes of the February 10, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting were approved. (MSC)

President's Report - Virginia Schofield

The Corporate registration on hold. Paperwork is completed but needs a notary to complete. This step has been delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Vice President's Report - Lynda Pollock

We sold just enough shirts to get 10% discount. Total cost was $912 and change. Linda has received the check and put order in queue. There is an 8-day turn around and should be here in plenty of time for Garden Tour. Once shirts are delivered, we will post the code on website for members to order. We had hoped for a more energetic order, but it was low probably due to lack of meetings in light of the coronavirus shelter-in-place order.

Speakers have been postponed to later in the year. Our guest speaker for June is a member of the Audubon Society. If Bethesda Senior Center is closed for our June meeting, we will do an online meeting.

Treasurer's Report - Budget and Membership - Jack Bolton

Not much activity to report. The plant sale is our major fund raiser. Since this was cancelled, we do not have as much funds available this year. We have reserves in savings, and this is the year we will probably need it. Our total membership is 142, down about 45 from last year, probably due to lack of night meetings.

EXTENSION Report

Lisa Klein – We have lots of requests for volunteering, but the Extension Office is closed for now. All of our calendars are cleared through the end of June. We are encouraging everyone to do individual consults. Working at Vines Garden is a good option and there is a new community garden at Rhodes Jordan. Right now, these are the only opportunities the Extension has to offer.

Our annual Awards ceremony will happen maybe in the fall.

The 2020 Master Gardeners class finished online. Their last two days they met via Zoom. Even the final was held online. Everyone passed.

Lisa has planned a field trip to the Atlanta Botanical Gardens on September 23.

Gwinnett County Jail is offering a Fresh Start Garden with instructional opportunities for inmates. They would receive a Landscaping certificate after completing the course. Any MG Volunteers would need to undergo background check to participate in this opportunity.

Originally, the GCMGA Photo Exhibit was to be held at the Gwinnett Environmental and Heritage Center. It has been bumped to September due to the pandemic.

Teacher’s Master Gardener class is still going. Kim Fritz has 9-10 people who have signed up. Plans are to go ahead.

Tim Daly – The 2020 Master Gardener trainees finished the course online. The Teacher Master Gardener training will be at Gwinnett Tech in June in a room big enough to observe social distancing. Farmers Markets in May and June have been cancelled. Some may restart by July or August. Advanced Master Gardener training will be held online, including a Master Naturalist course.

COMMITTEE Reports

Hospitality - Alice Verner

The Hospitality committee will be ready whenever we are able to meet again. We were in the planning stage to be ready for the Awards Lunch, which by necessity has been postponed. We need to consider what changes need to be made for meeting in the future as far as serving dinner.

Intern Breakfast/Lunch - Robert Ayer

No report.

Field Trips - Gervasio Cubenas

On Saturday, March 7, the Gwinnett County Master Gardeners toured Gibbs Garden. About 10 members participated and enjoyed both the garden and a beautiful, cool, and sunny late winter’s day. The group also had lunch in their outside seating area for some fun conversation.

With the current lockdown and limited access to many attractions, everything remains on hold until there is more clarity on what can and cannot be accomplished for future field trips. The ideas remain the same as planned but no action or commitments have been finalized. We are still waiting to hear from Mr. Scott from the ABG, but I have not followed up with him or Linda due to the Coronavirus impact. I made contact with Mr. Landes who made the mushroom presentation last year but have not heard back from him on finalizing this outing. Again, due to the current situation I have not reached out to him again. I will wait until there is a clear way forward and we can feel confident on establishing a date for the event. I did not contact the Anderson’s Sunflower Farm for our field trip but will do so when we feel confident about establishing a firm date for the visit. So, after a successful first event, not much else has taken place unfortunately and everything remains on hold until the virus threat is over, and we return to some form of normalcy.

Seed Library and Weed 'n' Feed - Jackie Kujawa

No report. As Jackie Kujawa is moving out of the county, we need recommendations for this chair.

Website - Aaron Tulin or Becky Wolary

Aaron – We still have a website. There are some internal issues which should be solved earlier this week, including the ability to upload larger files. Pay Pal has worked well for online plant sales.

Becky – We had six plant orders. Membership directory not been updated. Jack will send directory to Becky. Linda Bolton is to send final blurb on the updated Garden Tour.

GCMGA members can use the donation button on Paypal to pay their dues but adding a “Pay Dues” button would be ideal. Members would have to pay an extra $1 if paying online. We will reconsider this proposal at our next meeting.

Garden Tour – Susan Varlamoff

The Garden Tour will be held Saturday, June 13, from 9 AM to 4 PM in spite of the pandemic. As long as participants observe social distancing, there should be low risk of communicating the virus. Our hosts are supportive for June 13 date. There will be no touchpoints in gardens. Gates will be left open and we will offer plenty of sanitizing wipes. Docents will regulate number people in each garden and docents and signs will remind them to observe social distancing.

Docent tour will be held Friday, June 12 from 1-5 PM. They will need to purchase a ticket and are on their own to visit each garden. We need 44 docents and as of today 31 have signed up.

Tickets are on sale via the website and at Antiques in Old Town Lilburn. The day of the tour tickets can be purchased at the Rivermist Club House parking lot.

Hosts have received engraved garden stone. Also, we have given Plant ID stakes to hosts use.

We have marketed the even via neighborhood websites. Linda Bolton talked to UpClose editor and they printed an article regarding the tour and our flyer as well.

We have decided not to sell plants during the tour. It was too complicated to organize.

Grants - Martha Whitman

Nine grants were funded for 2020. They include all of the grant proposals submitted in February:

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| Community Garden@Snellville Greenhouse | community garden | Wes Nettleton |
| Creative Enterprises Perennial and Native Plant Garden | non profit | Beth Arechiga |
| Ferguson Elementary School Garden Expansion and Beautification | school | Victor Ruiz |
| Georgia Piedmont Land Trust: Mary Kistner Nature Center | land trust | Carol Hassell |
| Grace New Hope Perennial and Native Plant Garden | church | Tonya Delozier |
| McDaniel Farm | park | Joyce Melvin Teel |
| Minor Elementary "The Good Earth Year 2" | school | Kathryn Hartman, Abby Lockhart |
| SE Gwinnett Co op Garden | food co-op | Jacquelyn McDaniell |
| Vines Gardens | park | Shirley Bohm |

In April, an email was sent to all the Grant Project Managers assuring them that funding for 2020 is in the bank and they may continue with their projects as they feel safe doing so and with safety their first concern.

As of May 9, three projects have submitted receipts for all or part of their grants: Wes Nettleton - $349.81, Victor Ruiz - $496.97, and Tonya DeLozier -$66

A total of $4500 is committed to grants. A total of $912.78 has been spent.

As for progress on the projects,

* Wes Nettleton had a very successful growing season and great plant sale. He is able to do most of his activities in the Snellville Community Garden. Wes has reached out to other projects to offer bedding plants.
* Beth Arechiga has gotten some of her plants, is looking for others and trying to use curbside. She suggested a GCMGA Plant Sale be organized as online ordering and curbside pickup.
* Victor Ruiz has gathered materials but does not currently have student help.
* Carol Hassell has had some workdays at Piedmont’s Kistner Center. She reports that Volunteer participation has been very low and ordering the plants anticipated for this project has not been possible to date.
* Tonya DeLozier purchased some of the fruiting plants for Grace New Hope Church
* Joyce Teel has had challenges getting some of the seed needed for McDaniel Farm but is having workdays.
* Kathryn Hartman has done some work in the Minor Elementary Garden but does not always have access to it.
* Jackie Daniell is full steam ahead at SE Gwinnett Food Coop.
* Shirley Bohm able to purchase plants for the pollinator garden, plant them and make progress on the informational sign and the insect hotel.

Full reports are attached.

Publicity - Tixie Fowler

No report.

Historian - Freda Steward

**Proposal:** Solicit pictures from members of their personal gardening activities during the pandemic for posting to our website since the number of projects has been limited. Photos should be accompanied by a brief statement.

**Photo Coverage of Garden Tour:** Freda is willing to visit each garden on tour day to take pictures. Since this is no small undertaking for the hosts, it is only right for each garden to receive photo coverage. Because Freda is volunteering to complete this task which not only includes photography, but also transportation expenses, she is requesting that her ticket purchase requirement be waived.

Workshops - Deborah DeSalvo

No report.

Plant Sale - Susan Kosenka or Lynda Pollock

Not going to happen this year. Putting energies into next year.

Many plants slated for GCMGA Plant sale were sold through the Snellville Community Garden. The Garden is issuing a check for $1,250 to GCMGA.

Shirley Bohm says Vines Garden will have a plant sale in October and can help sell orphaned plants then. Also, it would be good to look into online sales and curbside pickup.

Newsletter - Shirley Bohm

After Virginia Schofield asked me to resurrect the GCMGA newsletter, *Bit of Dirt,*in February, Ann Langley the previous Editor gave me a short tutorial in the Mail Chimp on-line publisher program.  The Spring 2020 issue was mailed April 15th. (305 recipients, including new MGEVs).

The publishing schedule will be as follows:

* Spring 2020 - deadline to submit articles March 30, issued April 15
* Summer 2020 - deadline to submit articles June 30, issued July 15
* Fall 2020 - deadline to submit articles September 30, issued October 15
* Winter 2021 - deadline to submit articles December 31, issued January 15

General content for each issue will be:

* From the Editor's Desk
* Message from the President
* 2-3 Committee Reports
* Project(s) for the Garden
* Articles of Interest
* What are our Master Gardeners doing?
* Coming Events
* NEW next issue:  "*Bit of Sunshine"* section including
* Recipes, Garden jokes, Did you know? and Helpful hints
* Scavenger Hunt (answers found in *Bit of Dirt* articles)
* Photography Contest - Ann Langley or Lori Prosser
* Garden Tour - Susan Varlamoff or Linda Bolton

Photo Contest – Lori Prosser

We are ready for new adventure. The Photo Contest scheduled for our May meeting will be held online May 18 at 7 PM. Members can register and participate with a simple click of link. Virginia will send email invitation to join the GotoWebinar. Reminder emails will be auto generated.

To begin the presentation Virginia will welcome everyone. Lori will introduce the speaker. Eric Bowles, our judge and presenter will take us through all 110 submitted photos, commenting on the qualities of the winning photos . Everyone else can sit back and enjoy the show in the comfort of their own homes. Afterwards, we can send out a link so everyone can watch the presentation again.

OLD BUSINESS

We are still operating with last year’s password. We have delayed implementing the new one due to pandemic. There was a motion to maintain the current password through May 31 and implement the new password June 1. (MSC)

The decision to raise dues will be made by August.

The 30-year anniversary of the GCMGA is the year 2024.

NEW BUSINESS

Meetings for rest of year. The decision to meet will be made from month-to-month. We have purchased Zoom pro for Board and Executive Committee meetings, and we do have capacity for online meetings. When Bethesda Senior Center reopens, we will need to discuss how to restart. Should we serve meals? Perhaps Bethesda can open up other rooms to allow for social distancing.

The new trainees need mentors. Most gardening projects have been shut down. How can they get in their hours?

Meeting adjourned 11:45 AM

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Langley