Gwinnett County Master Gardener’s Association

Board of Directors Meeting

*August 10, 2020*

Meeting was called to order at 10:05 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, Martha Whitman, Shirley Bohm, Freda Steward, Deborah DeSalvo, Linda Bolton

Absent: Robert Ayer, Aaron Tulin, Tixie Fowler, Susan Kosenka

Guests: Tim Daly, Lisa Klein

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Minutes of the May 11, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting were approved as amended. (MSC)

Correction: Newsletter. September 30 submission deadline, not the 31st.

Treasurer’s Report – Jack Bolton

Despite a burst of renewals this month, our membership is still trailing. Last year at this time we had 191 members; so far this year we have 155.

Finances doing very well considering the pandemic. There is $300 less in our bank account this year vs. last year. We have not had to touch savings so far this year. One of the major expenses for this year is the picnic if we decide to have it. Otherwise, it has been a quiet month. The checks for Gwinnett Tech scholarships will go out today.

Vice President's Report - Lynda Pollock

Crystal Force is our August speaker. She is a Cobb County Master Gardener. She will talk about their no-till trial garden.

I am not sure about speakers for September and October. I am also setting up speakers for January and February to help our future vice-president.

Ann Langley agreed to remain as secretary. Jack Bolton will continue as Treasurer working with a co-treasurer in 2021. The Nominating Committee is still looking for Vice President candidates.

There is nothing new to report on the plant sale or shirt sales.

President's Report - Virginia Schofield

The paperwork to register the Association with the state as a non-profit corporation is done but the process is not yet completed as the State offices closed for a while. It will be completed by our BOD November meeting.

It is important to the Association’s future for members to take responsibility. I know it is difficult to do since we are not meeting in person, but I encourage all committee chairs to have someone working with you and bring new members onto your committees.

On behalf of Association the Executive Committee gave Jackie Kujawa a gift card as thank you for her service. She is off on a new adventure in Oconee County. Virginia and Shirley Bohm have her address.

Our finances and membership are fantastic considering no in-person meetings. We have not needed to touch savings as we first thought. Great efforts by Garden Tour Committee and Plant Sale Committees to complete their tasks despite COVID-19 restrictions.

Past-President’s Report – Wes Nettleton

I did facilitate the connection with Gwinnett Tech for this year’s scholarships. Also, the

Snellville Community Garden is now planting for our mid-November sale.

EXTENSION REPORTS

Tim Daly

2020 has been rough due to COVID-19 and there are no easy solutions. We will probably have to deal with it for some time. I encourage everyone to stay safe.

It is time to take the annual Risk Management Training. It is a necessary evil. You can include this task on the MGLog.

Next year the 2021 MGEV’s training will take place late summer and fall due to the pandemic. We will solicit potential candidates next year.

If any MGEVs want to participate in face-to-face activities, please let Extension know. They have created guidelines that should be observed. Outdoor activities are fine as long as attendees practice social distancing.

UGA is interviewing new potential candidates for their agricultural school.

Lisa Klein

Due to COVID-19, everything is fluid.

I encourage everyone to participate in the pollinator census. If you meet with a crowd, you must follow CDC guidelines. Via Zoom, I will discuss how to do an event during pandemic.

We took a survey regarding the awards ceremony and 68% responded they not comfortable attending in person. It may become a virtual event. The Extension will mail name tags, sleeves, etc.

Scott McMahan will speak at the September 23 celebration for the 2020 MGEV trainees. It will be a box lunch.

Four-five garden clubs are interested in virtual meetings. UGA has a Zoom account and I would co-host. I will host “how to lead a Zoom presentation” on the following times, August 21 at 2 PM, August 31 at 10 AM, September 8 at 3 PM. The Extension has created a Master Gardener-only YouTube channel where recorded Zoom presentations can be posted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Garden Tour – Susan Varlamoff

The Garden Tour was set for May 30, 2020. Unfortunately, an unprecedented pandemic occurred in March requiring the Governor to extend the Shelter-In-Place order for seniors until June 12. Since so many of the committee members and attendees qualify as seniors, it was decided to hold the tour the day after the order was lifted, June 13. The garden hosts were flexible and agreed to the change of date. Committee meetings were held via Zoom. The committee following the advice of an outbreak specialist decided to hold the tour despite the pandemic since it would be outside in the open air and would follow social distancing guidelines. Attendees and docents were requested to wear masks. Linda Bolton, a nurse, made sure the event complied with CDC guidelines and required as few touch points as possible in the registration process and within the gardens themselves. Due to the virus, it was not possible to hold a brunch for the garden hosts and training for the docents. So, fifty dollars or the equivalent in gift cards was given to each of seven garden hosts.

The day dawned perfect. The weather was cooler than normal. 258 people from North to Middle Georgia attended the tour of seven gardens. Everyone seemed happy to get out after months of quarantine. Most other garden tours were canceled. It was a great success by all accounts. The event netted approximately $3,550.

We would like to acknowledge the Tour Committee Members who made this possible.

Linda Bolton – Co-chair

Susan Varlamoff – Co-chair

Virginia Scofield – President of GCMGA

Jessica Miller – Docent recruitment and training

Kathy Hartman – Ticket sales

Ivan Varlamoff – design ticket and flyers

Jack Bolton – Accounting

Plant Sale - Lynda Pollock

Despite what was reported in our May minutes … the plant sale did happen … online! Susan Kosenka got an online order form up and running. There were very few glitches with orders. Orders were put together the night before pick-up day and used Snellville Community Garden as pick-up site. Gene Wallis sold plants to folks in his neighborhood.

We have plans for a plant sale at Vines Botanical Garden in October chaired by Shirley Bohm. Vines has offered use of the big lawn beside the mansion. Date TBD.

Photo Contest – Lori Prosser

We had great participation this year with 12 first-time participants. Although we did not have our typical in-person meeting, we met the challenge, and the Association hosted its first online meeting. Our judge Eric Bowles had a challenge determining winners from 110 great photos.

The 2021 Photo Contest will take place at our May meeting. The deadline for submitting photos will be March 31, 2021. We have changed up the categories for 2021. The new rules will be out soon.

The Photo Exhibit has been indefinitely postponed due to the pandemic.

Grants - Martha Whitman

Three projects have turned in receipts and we are $.77 short of $1,500. We are waiting on receipts from other projects.

Historian - Freda Steward

**Pandemic Gardening Stories:** The solicitation for pictures and a brief statement from members about their gardening activities during the pandemic went out and I received three very interesting submissions which have been posted to our website. If you would like to share your story, it's not too late! Surely, we've either been busy in your own gardens and/or at one of the garden sites you have adopted. Please consider sending me a brief story and no more than three photos.

**Photo Coverage of Garden Tour:** Visited and photographed each garden on tour day. Photos of the gardens and volunteers have been posted to our web site.

**Volunteering During a Pandemic:** Worked in collaboration with Becky Wolary to salute our MGs who volunteered during the garden tour. The article and photos of volunteers taken during the tour are posted on our website.

Newsletter - Shirley Bohm

Two issues of the GCMGA newsletter *Bit of Dirt,* Spring and Summer 2020, have been successfully published and mailed out to 305 subscribers each issue.

One of my objectives for the newsletter is to provide a status report every year from each of the standing and any temporary GCMGA committees so members can remain up-to-date with activities in the organization even if they are not on that committee.  I still have the following committees to include in the fall and winter issues:  Historian, Field Trips, Work Shops, Website and Publicity.

A second objective is to provide a little light-hearted reading for our members.  A new section was added to the latest summer addition of the newsletter, "*A Bit of Sunshine."* This section contains a small hands-on project, Helpful hints, “Did You Know?”, Keep us laughing and a scavenger hunt or questions game.  Any contributions (tips, techniques, garden jokes, etc.) are very welcome.

The winners of the 1st scavenger hunt were Winnie White, Joyce Teel, and Jane Trentin with an honorable mention for Diane Krish (no prize).  I bought nice potted succulents for them.

The Fall issue of *Bit of Dirt* will be mailed out October 15.  Contributions will be accepted until September 30.

Send Shirley any events from 10/15 to end of year.

Field Trips - Gervasio Cubenas

We are unable to schedule field trips due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Several Board members suggested virtual tours such as The Gardener, documentary of Frank Cabot’s garden which is available via Amazon Prime. Also, a garden documentary BBC Gardener’s World on Britbox and Monty Don’s French Gardens on Netflix.

Workshops - Deborah DeSalvo

We are unable to schedule workshops during the pandemic.

Board members also recommended using social media for online workshops.

Website - Becky Wolary

The members directory access still broken. Aaron, provides a free server for our website, changed servers. Everything transitioned fine except members directory.

Freda can work together with Becky with photo gallery.

Executive Committee needs to review all the responsibilities of Committee chairs. They are posted on the website. Becky has original pdfs as well.

Hospitality - Alice Verner

The Hospitality Committee is not comfortable hosting a picnic this year as we cannot properly socially distance. Motion to cancel the annual September picnic this year. (MSC)

Seed Library and Weed 'n' Feed – Becky Panetta

As the Extension office is closed at this time, we should consider selling donated seeds at Vines October Plant Sale. Becky Panetta will handle existing seed donations.

Publicity - Tixie Fowler

Trainee Breakfast/Lunch - Robert Ayer

The Trainee Breakfast/Lunch Committee, as always  appreciates the GCMGA's  consistent and unwavering willingness to support us in bringing good spirit, good food and warm smiles to our awesome MG Trainees. Total sales (3/4 and 3/11) $485. Member donations $109.

NEW BUSINESS

Two new committees proposed: A Membership Committee to keep up with existing members and encourage new members and a Social Media/Communication Committee.

Virginia has been in touch with Soil3 considering a fundraiser the end of this year.

The Hydrangea Society has an incentive to get their members to renew in a timely fashion: if you renew, you can buy a 3-gallon hydrangea from Dr. Michael Dirr for $15. Perhaps we could also consider a renewal incentive: If you renew membership by Jan. 30, you will receive a $5 or $10 voucher for our plant sale.

Master Gardeners vs. Friends in Association. The UGA Extension defines who is a Master Gardener. There are five 5 categories: trainee, active, inactive, alumni, honorary. However, by the Extension’s definition only the active MGs should represent themselves as UGA MGEV’s.

Friends in the Association cannot vote or be committee chairs. Board members should reread Constitution and Bylaws and the program policies for Master Gardener program. (Send links.)

OLD BUSINESS

Motion made to not raise the dues this year. (MSC)

Next BOD meeting November 9, 2020. 10 AM via Zoom.

Meeting adjourned 12:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Langley