Gwinnett County Master Gardener’s Association

Board of Directors Meeting

*February 8,2021*

Meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m.

**ATTENDEES**

Present: Lynda Pollock, Margaret Molyson, Virginia Schofield, Jack Bolton, Karen McGinty, Alice Verner, Ann Langley, Becky Panetta, Becky Wolary, Freda Steward, Gervasio Cubenas, Jessica Miller, Lori Prosser, Martha Whitman, Shirley Bohm, Susan Kosenka.

Absent: Aaron Tulin, Robert Ayer

Guests: Tim Daly, Kim Fritz, Mary Ann Maher, Beth Arechiga

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Minutes of the November 8, 2020 Board of Directors Meeting were approved. Martha motioned, Susan seconded, and the minutes were accepted.

**EXTENSION REPORTS**

**Kim Fritz** – School Programming with part year Covid: In 2020, saw 989 volunteer school hours and reaching 1070 students and teachers, compared to 2019 which had 1200 volunteer hours and reaching 4600 students. It has been very challenging for teachers to have class time being used beyond the AKS. I gave several sustainable classes with Brookwood HS, hoping to increase this once testing is done in the spring. I had 13 school site visits in 2020 and 5 new school projects.

Volunteers are needed at Paul Duke Stem School in Norcross in their garden. Mill Creek HS Special Ed. Department has 2 beds that need volunteer help.

Thank you, Margaret Molyson for donating native pollinator seeds to the schools. New badge orders are being place on Feb 17, if anyone needs a replacement. A new MG training class will be held in the summer for teachers, it will be a hybrid program, online and 4 lab classes. Possible work days on the weekends at schools’ gardens.

Thank you for all do.

**Tim Daly** – As Kim said there is a Teacher MG Class to be held in June. The standard MG Class is tentatively set for the fall. There is a planning meeting with Cobb and Dekalb to talk about the specifics, information will be forthcoming,

I am doing Homeowner’s Evening Classes, registration is needed to get zoom link. Farmer’s markets this summer may not happen. The Home Show will be June 4-6.

Discussion: Forward any possible names for MG class applications to Tim. GCMGA plant sale should be held the same way as last year. The County Extension plant sale has been cancelled.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Grant Committee** – Martha Whitman

The Grant Committee reviewed 12 applications. One was ineligible. We voted to approve all remaining 11 applications which would require $5276.09 in funds.  In order to stay within the $5000 budget, we reduced every grant by 5%.

That would bring the total needed to fund them to $5012.29.  We request the Board consider an additional $12.29 be added to the 2021 Grant Budget.

They are all deserving projects and are listed below. Berkeley Lake ES, Ferguson ES, GA Piedmont Land Trust, Ladybug Garden Club Camp Creek, McDaniel Farm Park, Peachtree ES, Riverside ES, St. John Neumann, SE Gwinnett Co. Co-op, Snellville Community Garden, Vines.

Discussion: Ann Langley motioned to give 100% of what is needed, Becky W., seconded it. After a discussion about the budget, it was decided to table the motion of increasing the budget until the Budget was discussed.

**Field Trip** – Gervasio Cubenas

With Covid threat continuing, all activities are on hold until things improve. In the meantime, Carole and I have been able to provide individual opportunities for events in the surrounding area, virtual tours and seminars. We will continue to provide such opportunities when possible until things return to normal. Carole is a member of a number of organizations and shares them with our group.

If anyone knows of any virtual tours that are about 3 months out, Shirley would like to add them to Bit of Dirt.

**Garden Tour** – Looking for a Chair.

**Historian** – Freda Steward

Suggesting that GCMGA continue to solicit pandemic stories for posting to the web in light of the current situation. Stories should be one paragraph in length with no more than three accompanying photos (include photo descriptions). Stories and photos should be sent to my attention at the following address: fsteward1121@comcast.net.

Attempted to post the 2020 End-of-Year PowerPoint on the GCMGA website; however, site parameters would not accept the file.

Possible solutions, add a link to the web-site for a youtube video or jpeg of each picture.

**Hospitality** – Alice Verner

Nothing to report.

**Photo Contest** – Lori Prosser

The annual contest is scheduled to take place at the May 17th monthly meeting. Working on reminding people to submit photos. There was a nice write up about the contest in the Winter Bit of Dirt.  People need to submit photos by March 31st.  The rules and regulations are on the website and were also attached to the last group email from Lynda.

So far, only one person has submitted photos. I think we should consider and alternate program for May if we don’t get enough entries.

Discussion: Promote, entries will come in, judges are TBD.

**Plant Sale** – Susan Kosenka and Lynda Pollock

Waiting to hear from the library for availability and are meeting to discuss plans.

**Publicity** – Jessica Miller

New chair, will work on Soil3 fundraiser publicity.

**Trainee Breakfast** – Robert Ayer(absent). No report.

**Webmaster** – Becky Wolary

The directory is working and the latest membership list should be uploaded over the weekend.

The homepage is updated with the information on our next two meetings with a leading plug regarding our Zoom meetings and membership.

Freda Steward is willing to learn more about the website and I have changed her rights to better participate.  Unfortunately, I’ve hit some glitches in what she can and cannot do.  As WordPress is a free site, we are not eligible for tech support so I’m still trying to work through this using other avenues. I will follow up with Aaron for adding powerpoint to web-site.

I would ask the EC when they plan to change the password and establish a new password for 2021.

Password will be changed at the end of March.

**Weed and Feed/Seed Exchange –** Becky Panetta

Weed and Feed is on hold for now. With the online spreadsheet for the seed exchange.  There were 14 orders for 98 packets of edibles and 14 orders for 240 packets of other plant seeds (annuals and perennials).  There are 114 packets of edibles and 335 packets of other seeds left. Having the seeds picked up at the Extension office worked out well. Thanks so much to all who donated seeds and to those who will plant them.

The spreadsheet has been taken down. I will remove the items no longer available and do a complete inventory. I will repost with a new link in a couple of weeks.  There are still a lot of vegetable, flower and pollinator plant seeds available.  If people are hesitant about using the online spreadsheet to order, I can make a list of what's available to send them.

**Newsletter/Bit of Dirt –** Shirley Bohm

The Winter 2021 issue of the GCMGA newsletter "Bit of Dirt", was published Jan. 15th and mailed by mailchimp.com to 312 subscribers.  Articles in the issue included:

From the Editor's Desk.

Let's Keep Our Connection.

Garden Science?  The Seed Float or Sink Test.

Omission in Extension Service Awards.

Get to Know Our New Executive Committee.

2021 GCMGA Committees and Chairs.

Seeds. Seeds. Seeds.

Photo Contest Rules.

Growing Food for the Hungry.

The Frugal Gardener.

Soil3 Fundraiser for 2021.

Bit of Sunshine.

The Spring 2021 Issue of Bit of Dirt will come out on April 15th.  Deadline for submitting articles or information for that issue will be March 31st.  Any ideas for articles, content, etc. are very welcome.

Questions:

The scavenger hunt/puzzle/game in the last two issues of the Bit of Sunshine section have only had one respondent each time.  Is there enough interest to continue these games?  Should there be prizes?  If so, it is possible to budget a small amount ($20-25 for prizes each issue)?  I have been covering expenses for the prizes to date.

Question:   As a follow-up to a question that was raised last year, I would like to know if the Executive Committee has considered this issue yet.  Susan Varlamoff submitted a published book review of a book she and asked me to put it in the newsletter.  Virginia responded that Master Gardeners are not to profit from their Master Gardener status and this question should be reviewed by the Executive Committee or Board

This issue was also reviewed by Pam Bloch UGA Extension, Gwinnett County Extension Agent, acting for Mary Black when she was on sick leave, who responded:  "After reading the review, I don't think it's something you guys should include, unless you want to offer the members and public an opportunity to put advertisements in the newsletter.  You could offer this as an open call (would have to be open to anyone that wants to do it master gardener member or not) and could be considered a sponsorship.  They could give $25.00 as a sponsorship for your scholarships in order to put an "ad" in the newsletter like on the last page or something.  Besides that idea, you need to keep it to just spot lighting the members with things that are happening."

The question relating to advertising MG’s outside interest or self-promotion: Bit of Dirt will only spotlight MG’s and their volunteer projects.

The question relating to the Bit of Sunshine: continue the puzzle with the winner getting a gift certificate to the GCMGA plant sale. Plant sale information will be placed in the next issue.

**Social Media –** Ann Langley

I regret to report that we cannot gain access to the existing GCMGA page on Facebook. We cannot find the correct email address and password. We have exhausted all leads, so I have created a new Facebook business account (Maggie Gardener). From that account I plan to create the Association’s new Facebook page. Also, we can create an Association Group which might be the best place for GCMGA members to communicate with each other.

I have spent a few hours reviewing Facebook’s Blueprints. Blueprints are a step-by-step training course on how to promote a page.

I look forward to building a team to plan strategies and oversee the Facebook account. Once we have sufficient experience, then we can look at other kinds of social media.

I would like to have both a public and private group page, to be informative for our area. Looking for several tech savvy MG’s to sign up to help.

**EC COMMITTEE**

**Treasurer’s Report** – Jack Bolton

We started of the year with $3317 in our Checking Account and $10,021 in our Savings Account. This is about $800 more that we started out 2020 with, so it turns out we have a better year than anticipated in 2020. This was due to a better than expected income from the Plant Sale and Garden Tour and less than normal expenses due to scaled back activities due to the pandemic.

We still feel that caution is advised due to the uncertainty caused by the pandemic. The proposed budget for 2021 reflected that caution.

We currently have 109 members who have joined or renewed their membership for 2021. This is 16 more members that we had at the same time last year, but we are still off substantially from our membership before 2020. Historically, most of our memberships are renewed at our monthly meetings, but without in-person meetings, the renewals are down from a normal year. We are working harder to encourage our members to mail in their renewals.

Jack Bolton presented the Budget for 2021. The budget reflects changes due to caution. As it is, we will need to borrow $7,275 from reserves to meet all proposed expenses for 2021.

There was discussion on increasing the Grants budget and decreasing scholarships to Gwinnett Tech. At this time, it was decided to keep both line items the same as it was last year.

A motion was made to approve the budget by Ann, and Shirley seconded. The budget was approved as presented.

**Past President’s Report** – Virginia Schofield

We received from the Georgia Secretary of State our CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION PERMIT.

Effective: 01/22/2021, Expiration: 01/22/2023, Registration # CH015518

Soil3 Fund Raiser will run from March 16 - March 30. Our discount code, valid for those two weeks will secure $20 off a Big Yellow Bag. During the same period orders submitted to GCMGA for Mini-cubes and Garden Kits will also receive discounts of $3 on mini-cube (reg. 14.99) and $8 on Garden Kit. Mini cube (reg. 24.99) and Garden Kits will be ordered from GCMGA and picked up at Snellville Community Garden. Date to be determined at Board Meeting.

The last day to order the Garden Kits and the Mini-cubes will be Saturday, April 3rd, 2021. Becky will set up online ordering on the web-site with Paypal.

(Update from Virginia on 2/10/2021 regarding pricing. I have clarification on the mini cubes and garden kits. I misunderstood the arrangement. We must pay Soil3 $16.99 for the Garden kits and $11.99 for the mini-cubes. They assumed we would sell them at their retail price (24.99 and 14.99) and keep $8 and $3 for ourselves. They are fine if we discount the prices and make a lower profit. For example: we could sell Garden kits for 20.99 and make $4 on each sale. Similar on mini cubes. It’s our call. They do want us to declare the retail price in our publicity.
I would like feedback from the EC and then we can present plan via email to Board.
Also, FYI - they are donating a mini cube for Lynda to ‘display’ at our Zoom meeting next week.)

**Vice President's Report** – Margaret Molyson

The Feb 15 meeting Speaker will be Fred Conrad, Senior Manager of Community Gardens for the Food Well Alliance in Atlanta. He will speak on the Community Garden movement.

The March 15th meeting speaker will be Carol Hassell. Her talk is “Protecting Land for Today and Tomorrow”

The April 19th meeting will be Shirly Bohm she will speak on Vines.

The May 17th meeting is the Photo Contest.

We have yet to schedule Jun, July, August, and October. I would like to find a speaker with some expertise on winter sowing.

Suggestions for future speakers, Joe Lampl was suggested for Seed Propagation.

**President's Report** – Lynda Pollock

I am looking for Chairs for Education/Workshops and Garden Tours. I am really excited for the SoilCube fundraiser.

Thank you everyone for continuing with us!

Meeting adjourned 12:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen McGinty