

Gwinnett County Master Gardener's Association
Board of Directors Meeting
August 9, 2021

Meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m.

ATTENDEES

Present: President Lynda Pollock, Vice President Margaret Molyson, Past President Virginia Schofield, Treasurer Jack Bolton, Secretary Karen McGinty, Committee Chairs: Alice Verner, Becky Wolary, Freda Steward, Jessica Miller, Shirley Bohm

Absent: Aaron Tulin, Ann Langley, Becky Panetta, Gervasio Cubenas, Lori Prosser, Martha Whitman, Robert Ayer, Susan Kosenka

Guests: Cindy Lubowicki, Kim Fritz, Lisa Klein

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORTS

Minutes of the May 10, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting were approved with no objections. Freda accepting and Jessica seconded.

EXTENSION REPORTS

Kim Fritz - Graduated 20 MGEV Teachers this summer for the state office's new online asynchronous program. Teachers had 7 weeks to complete.

Good - can attract a larger audience, especially people who work full-time.

Disadvantages – more work through discussion threads and other coursework.

Several graduates have or will be starting school projects or would like to work on existing projects.

Discussion: Online program still having issues, she is still getting calls in reference to it. Kim will send list of new students to Jack for membership. New class begins August 25 and will be face to face. In the future the state will put the program online and will give all MG's access to it for review purposes.

EC Continued:

Treasurer's Report – Jack Bolton

Membership: We currently have 164 paid members. This is better than the 150 members that we had anticipated, but less than the pre-pandemic year of 180. Renewals continue to trickle in via US Mail. Hopefully we will receive some renewals at the August meeting.

Grants: We awarded \$5012 in grants to community and school gardens. So far \$2978 has been paid out to the grant recipients.

Scholarships: We have donated \$2500 to the Gwinnett Tech Foundation for distribution to students in the Environmental Horticulture Program at Gwinnett Technical College. Students receiving scholarships must be Gwinnett County Residents.

Account Balances:

Checking Account \$3,427.00

Savings Account \$10,021.25

I would like to ask the Board's permission to move \$2000 from the Savings Account to the Checking Account.

Virginia made a motion to authorize Jack to move \$2000 from the Savings Account to the Checking Acct. Freda seconded. All present voted in favor. Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report was accepted and approved by all.

President's Report – Lynda Pollock

I have booked McDaniel Farm Park, September 20th, 4 – 6:30. We are booked at Bethesda for rest of the year's meetings, (August, October, and November). Susan Hanson will chair the Garden Tour. New MGEV class starting in a few weeks.

Discussion: McDaniel Farm Meeting, tour 4-5, dinner at 5.

No storage for Zoom meetings on the account, Lisa suggested that the meetings be uploaded to Youtube as private and give link to members only. Lisa will talk to the Social Media Committee about creating a Youtube page to post meetings. Direct link will be posted on the Members only section of the web-page.

Vice President's Report – Margaret Molyson

1. Speakers Scheduled:
 - a. August – Trecia Neal – Worms in My Kitchen – Vermiculture
Door prizes: worm farm, garden kneeler, terrarium, book on container gardening, Feeder Fresh for bird feeders, and plants.
Seed Bags as favors
 - b. September – Picnic, no speaker – Activities: MG BINGO and Plant Swap
 - c. October – Jackie Daniell – SE Gwinnett Food Co-op and Intensive Gardening
 - d. November – Holiday Party
 - e. January – Bet Sobon – Roses – Pruning and Care
 - f. February – Dr. Tim Smalley – Georgia's Heritage of Trees
2. MG BINGO – take pictures in August in-person meeting, make cards with online software, play MG BINGO at Picnic.
3. The New Member Handbook is ready for its last edit before publication to the website.
4. The recruiting brochure is ready for printing.

Discussion: Comments and likes on FB, how it works.

Jessica needs bio about Jackie and a blurb about her program for publicity by September 10th.
Field trip with Dr. Smalley, possible workshop.

Handbook discussion: Jack will send handbook with new member information. Handbook will be on the web-page. Board members are still making edits. Concerns about duplicate information on the web-site and in document. Concerns about keeping information up to date. Keep chair names in the document. The handbook will be kept in the members only section Great appreciation for Margaret for taking this on.

Reminder to Board that the Board is the governing body.

EXTENSION REPORTS

Lisa Klein – Cindy Lubowicki is the new support ANR personnel, she is also a previous recipient of the MG scholarship.

New MGEV Class begins August 25th, it is in person with the first half of the program in Cobb County and the second half at Gwinnett Tech. Each county is limited to 15 trainees. Discussion among counties on splitting with Cobb, leaving class Dekalb and Gwinnett, also possibility of leaving class in the fall for the future. And discussing possible alternate plans for this session, if need be. Lisa and Kim trying to come up with different ways of teaching the class that would encompass more students, thorough in person, zoom, recorded zoom, and supplementing with labs.

Tim is planning a Naturalist Program that will begin in September, sign ups have been extended to August 13. Classes will be held on Tuesdays at various locations around Gwinnett County through the beginning of November.

Field Crop exhibit at the county fair, Kathy Parent is reaching out to typical volunteers for crop intake September 18th in the morning.

Risk Management, now available, with updated video. Incentive for the meeting on August 16, Early Bird get the Worm, anyone who gets it done by the meeting, name goes into a drawing for worms! And incentive by September meeting, will go into drawing for a T-shirt.

Hours into MG Log, every hour count, to help funding.

Cindy Lubowicki – Happy to be here.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education/Workshops – Jessica Miller

A Hypertufa workshop is being planned for later in September. Carole Teja will demonstrate the fundamentals in a 2-hour (90 min) workshop at either the Extension Office 2nd floor conference room or in a class room at Bethesda Senior Center. A hands-on workshop will follow approximately 2 weeks later in the garage of a volunteer. The cost of the hands-on portion will be determined by Carole. I will have a WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FORM ready to hand out at the first workshop.

Publicity Report – Jessica Miller

Publicity was distributed to the GCMGA Publicity Contact list for our August 16, 2021 meeting in mid-July. Out of 25 contacts, I was delighted to only have 1 bounce back!

Adding District Director Marlesa Sayer(sp) to her contacts as well as Connie Cottingham. She needs October meeting publicity by September 10th.

Facebook/Digital Information – Ann Langley

Our team members include Lynda Pollock, Margaret Molyson, Lisa Klein, Dolores Romero-Stewart, and our newest member, Krystal Lowell. Dolores is taking MG training this year and Krystal oversees our new Instagram account. We've had two meetings since our last BOD meeting in May.

In the last 28 days we've reached 2,776 people (up 280%), Post Engagements are up 55% (825 reactions, comments, and shares) and Page Likes are up 350% (18 likes).

If you have not visited the GCMGA Facebook page lately, you are missing a real treat. Team members Dolores Romero-Stewart and Margaret Molyson have posted some great articles. The post regarding the SE Gwinnett Food Co-op on July 22 reached the most people (1,526) and had the most clicks (101) and most reactions, comments, and shares (143). The post on the Berkely Lake Elementary pollinator garden on July 17 was our second most popular reaching 595 people with 41 clicks and 54 engagements. Generally, community gardens posts get the most interactions although the vole post was quite popular.

We attempted to create interest in the FB account by offering a #FunkyVeggie photo contest. Anyone who had a picture of a weird-looking vegetable was invited to post the picture to the GCMGA Facebook wall. The funkier veggie would be our cover photo for the following month. We had no responses. The Committee will discuss the future of the photo contest.

I am happy to report that my cut flower business is beginning to pay off. I am sad to report that because of the success I will have to step down as Social Media Chair at the end of this year.

As always if you hear of any GCMGA member who would like to participate on the Social Media Committee, please tell them to contact me at ann.langlely@comcast.net.

Here are some stats for the Instagram account:

of posts: 8

of followers: 26

Average # of likes per post: 6 (rounded up)

Field Trips – Gervasio Cubenas

Carole and I discussed options for initiating our first Field Trip for 2021 and decided to try to co-promote with the Extension Office's trip to the Georgia Botanical Garden. Unfortunately, we were not able to make this happen so we are now weighing our options for a late September – early October trip. Carole and we should have options identified within the next two weeks.

One concern is the rapid rise of infections due to the Delta variant. Infections now mirror the high rates experienced earlier this year. We will proceed but will use both interest in the Field Trip as well as CDC Guidelines to determine if we proceed with the event.

When possible, Carole and I continue to provide individual and web based opportunities for events in the surrounding area, virtual tours and seminars. We will continue to provide these opportunities.

Garden Tour – No Report

Grants – Martha Whitman

- Grants are being reimbursed – half have submitted receipts – Jack will know numbers.
- Becky W has created and ordered signs for projects to post
- Piedmont Land Trust group made Bluebird houses for their own location and also some for other grant sites. Locations may request one. Committee has started a list

Becky will bring a grant sign to the general meeting and Lisa will bring an MG sign from the extension office.

Historian – Freda Steward

Nothing to report.

Hospitality – Alice Verner

August meeting – will offer bottled water and soft drinks. No food.

Picnic – Blue Rooster, Lynda will pick-up. \$9.95, sandwich, chips, side, and brownie. They will need a week's notice. Members are free, guests are \$10. 3 sandwich options: Pimento Cheese, Turkey and Ham, or Chicken salad. Must RSVP!

Newsletter/Bit of Dirt – Shirley Bohm

- Summer BOD edition was issued July 15. With a 55-65 % “open rate”.
- Gave notice that this was the last issue the current 362 subscribers would receive if they were not paid members.
- Would you like to write a short article for the newsletter? (Native plants, your MG volunteer site)
- Will ask committee Report for Fall October 15th issue: Alice Verner Hospitality, Robert Ayer, Trainee Breakfast, and Ann Langley, Social Media.

Shirley needs membership list by September 30, and will delete those not paid.

Next issue is October 15th, articles due by September 30th.

Photo Contest – Lori Prosser

The photo contest took place at the May 17th Monthly Meeting via Zoom.

28 members submitted photos. There were 9 categories and a total of 129 photos submitted.

As always, it was wonderful to see the beautiful and creative photos. Our judge Jenny Burdette had the tough job of choosing winners.

The 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners received certificates with their photos printed on it. They were mailed to them.

The list of winners was given to Shirley Bohm and Becky Wolary for the newsletter and website. Becky also received the photos and PowerPoint presentation.

I also sent the photos to Krystal Lowell for the Association's Instagram account.

I spoke with Margaret Molyson and told her I won't be able to chair the photo contest next year.

I reached out to a few people who are not able to do it. We'll have to get the word out that we are looking for a chair. It will be nice to hold the contest with a live audience in 2022!

Plant Sale – Lynda Pollock,

Nothing to report

Jack reported that Gene Wallace turned in 2 checks from his own personal plant sale!

Webmaster – Becky Wolary

Will be working on the membership form. Will talk to Aaron about updating the calendar. Will update membership list from Jack. She will move Bit of Dirt to the members only section. Adding things that

Margaret has written to the web-site to keep it fresh. Will ask Aaron for counts of views for the web-page.

Weed and Feed/Seed Exchange – Becky Panetta

Nothing to report for Weed & Feed.

We have a lot of seed packets left in the seed exchange. It's time now for fall planting and for planning winter sowing, etc. I will be bringing the seeds to the meeting on 8/16 for anyone who wants them. I will also bring some seed envelopes for those who need them to collect seeds this fall. If anyone would like a list of what is available, please email me at rpanetta@gmail.com.

The next Board of Directors meeting will be Monday, November 8th at 10, at the 2nd floor conference room, followed by the November meeting of the Executive Committee.

The next Executive Committee will be Thursday September 16th on Zoom.

Without any more business, Lynda adjourned the meeting at 12:02pm

Respectfully submitted,
Karen McGinty,
August 12, 2021