

**Master Gardener Association of Bergen County  
Board Meeting Minutes, February 23, 2021**

Present: Co-Hosting – Melody Corcoran and Arnie Friedman, Karen Riede, Sandi Liberti, Suzanne Danzig, Theresa Schneider, Miriam Taub, Karen Pennell, Donna Faustini, Pat Vellas, Joseph Cooper, Herb Arbeiter

Absent: Patrick Lull, Autumn O’Shea, Janet Schulz

The Meeting was called to order by President Corcoran at 5:35PM

**Executive Board Reports:**

**President – Melody Corcoran:**

President’s Report February 23, 2021

Melody welcomed Herb Arbeiter as the new Delegate for the RMGANJ.

Our updated bylaws went into effect in January 2020. Several changes were made to reduce the number of voting positions on the board. Several committees (community/school gardens, one-day events, fall festival, publicity, speakers bureau) were consolidated into one, Community Outreach. The Community Outreach Liaison chairs the committee and is the only voting position on the committee. The subcommittee chairs report to the committee chair, do not usually attend the board meetings unless invited, and are non-voting positions. The chair delivers any subcommittee reports at the board meeting.

We have not been following the proper voting protocol; several board members should not have been voting. As a reminder to everyone of correct voting protocol, I have redone the board meeting agenda to note which positions are non-voting.

Thank you to Karen Pennell, bylaw and proper protocol guru, for helping us to get back to following proper procedure.

Thank you to Arnie Friedman for accepting the Community Outreach Liaison position.

**Treasurer – Pat Vellas:**

Pat summarized the January, 2021 Treasurer's report

Month Ending – January 31, 2021

Opening Balance as of: December 31, 2020		\$	12,917.85
Income:	Membership Fee:	\$	480.00
:	Membership Donations:	\$	85.00
	Speaker Fee Donations:	\$	50.00
Total Income:		\$	615.00
Expenses:	501(c) Application Fee	\$	275.00
	Center for Food Action	\$	250.00
	Gayle Clayton – Website deposit	\$	1,475.00
Total Expenses:		\$	2,000.00
Closing Balance as of January 31, 2021		\$	11,532.85
Total Outstanding checks:			
	Center for Food Action	\$	250.00
	Gayle Clayton – Website deposit	\$	1,475.00
Bank Statement Balance:		\$	13,257.85

Following the Treasurer's report, Pat stated that she had received a thank-you letter from the Center for Food Action, thanking us for our donation and also a thank-you letter from the Garden Club of Metuchen, NJ. Pat read both of the thank-you letters.

**\*Motion:** Melody asked if there is a motion to approve the January, 2021 Treasurer's Report. Arnie motioned to approve and Donna seconded the motion – APPROVED.

**Recording Secretary – Keith Mazanec:**

I stated that the final copy of the January 26, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes had been sent out to all Board Members for review, and that if there were no changes or questions, propose that they approved.

**\*Motion:** Donna motioned to approve the January, 2021 Meeting Minutes; Arnie seconded the motion – APPROVED.

**Corresponding Secretary – Miriam Taub:**

I mailed a thank-you card to Edith Wallace for her years of service with the Speakers Bureau. I distributed the February Potting Shed and February mid-month update. I mailed the Potting Shed to member Marianne Hanna who does not have a computer.

Miriam also mentioned she sent out an email concerning the notice of a potential scam.

**Vice President – Suzanne Danzig:**

No report.

**Old Business**

**Website redesign report – Miriam Taub**

Designer Gayle Clayton has created the beginnings of a new website, which Arnie, Karen, and I reviewed. We made some changes and suggestions to the menu items and content. Gayle is now working on the “members” section. The searchable directory will be based on the Membership chair’s Excel spreadsheet. Gayle and I reviewed the spreadsheet and made suggestions to Terri. The data in the spreadsheet will be used to populate and update the directory periodically so it needs to be entered consistently. I’m waiting for Terri to provide another update of the Excel file. Most of the website content will be based on what’s on the current website – to the extent we can extract it. Several years of minutes of MG of BC meetings are missing. We should have something to show the board shortly.

Theresa will reach out to Terri on accessing website data. Miriam and Teresa to discuss other issues off-line.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Community Outreach Liaison – Arnie Friedman**

The Speakers Bureau has been very active. Passaic County is in the process of setting up their own Speakers Bureau. Linda Flynn is now available to give talks. We are always looking for new people to speak.

Other sub-committees have been in-active.

### **Hospitality – Sandi Liberti**

No report.

### **Membership – Theresa Schneider**

Terri Pegg has been providing updates. Theresa will continue to reach out to Terri regarding the Membership list.

### **Newsletter – Miriam Taub**

Miriam stated that she has lots of material for the March edition of the Potting Shed. As Garden Club liaison, Janet Schulz forwarded March meeting information from the Bergen-Passaic Chapter of the Native Plant Society.

We welcome any ideas for consideration for future newsletters. Please provide any requested information by stated deadlines.

#### **Garden Club Liaison – Janet Schulz**

No report.

### **MG Class Liaison – n/a**

### **Programs – Donna Faustini:**

Tonight, Dr. Lyons will be doing a presentation on “Coloring the Landscape.” In March, Bill Kolvek will be giving a talk on grasses. April: Tovah Martin will speak about houseplants and how to arrange them in your home. May: will be a joint meeting with Passaic County, and the presentation will be by Bruce Crawford, who will be discussing trees.

**Rutgers Cooperative Extension Liaison – Karen Riede**

Karen Riede submitted the following written report:

**RCE Report to MG Assoc. Board Mtg. 2/23/21**  
Joel Flagler

- A heartfelt thank you to Karen Pennell for her decades of leadership and service to the MG of BC. She has given generously of her time and energy to build a better MG association—while welcoming each successive new classes of MG volunteers. Karen’s kindness and friendly manner will always be remembered and appreciated. Best wishes to Karen and family.
- Rutgers University and the NJAES are still in suspended mode—with no in-person activity allowed. The current suspension goes till 3/31 and is expected to be extended. This impacts MG activities as well as in class teaching. Volunteer and educational hour requirements for MGs are suspended for 2021.
- The new online MG pilot program is going well thanks to all the good planning the MG statewide team invested in it. Karen has done a fine job of welcoming and orienting the new students; she and I will offer a Q&A special online session this Friday 2/26.
- RCE Bergen is moving to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor at 1 Bergen Plaza in Hackensack. We are sad to leave the wonderful suite that was built for us by former Freeholder Maura DeNicola. The Director of Parks—Jim Koth—says he wants us closer to the rest of the Parks Dept and that is OK with us. The new offices are really the old offices from 5 years ago—with some major renovation to meet our needs better. We will be in the space across the side hall from the Learning Center. There are no windows. So there will not be a lot of photosynthesis going on unless we get grow lights. The move should be complete in the next month or two.

Good health and wishes for safety and happiness to all of you.

Joel

**RMGANJ Report – Karen Pennell**

Karen welcomed Herb to his new position and submitted the following written report: Rutgers University Policy continues with the prohibition of non-essential, in-person events by Rutgers faculty and volunteers through winter 2021.

**RMGANJ Report cont...**

Jan Zientek report:

Unofficially, the suspension of activities is expected to be lifted by May 14th (after the spring semester is over). A return to campus is expected by the fall semester.

Raising tomato plants from seed for donation to local food pantries: The Rutgers 250 tomato seeds are being distributed by participating coordinators for MGs to grow plants. Raising tomato plants for this purpose is considered as volunteer hours.

Two online MG training programs have begun.

Hours may be reported but all will maintain MG status until 2022.

President's report:

By laws revisions were approved by unanimous vote

2021 Conference: A webinar format that will be highlighting MG projects.

New Exploratory/Communications Committee was formed.

**Site Coordinator Liaison – Melody Corcoran:**

Melody submitted the following written report:

I contacted all the site coordinators again this month asking for updated site information or confirmation of existing information. All but three sites have now responded confirming their information. Since in-person activities are currently suspended by Rutgers through at least the end of March, I now plan on posting the site list in the April Potting Shed.

**Volunteer Records - Autumn O'Shea**

No report.

**Website – Joseph Cooper**

Updated the Homepage of the website, per Miriam's request.

**New Business**

Scamming Event: Melody discussed the recent scamming event where donations were being asked for. She asked how we can prevent these types of things from happening in the future. Karen Riede recommended changing your passwords and staying vigilant.

**New Business cont...**

Speakers Bureau addition: There was a request made to add Ms. Elaine Silverstein as a new person to the list of speakers. Ms. Silverstein is not a Master Gardener, however, and Arnie suggested that maybe she be referred to as a “Friend of the Master Gardeners” for the purpose of listing her as a speaker. It was also stated that Ms. Silverstein has given talks for the NJ Native Plants Society and is a member of that group. She would not receive any compensation from the MG of BC, and any donations received would be directed to the MG of BC and not to the NJ Native Plants Society. Joseph recommended she be listed as an “affiliate” speaker. Donna suggested that Elaine be added as a speaker for September’s meeting. Arnie motioned that Elaine be listed as an “affiliate” and that her talks be listed on our website. Joseph proposed titling her a “Master Gardener Affiliate.” There was discussion relating to the definition of “affiliate” and the possible consequences which could arise using that designation. Discussion continued as to how to title Elaine and promote her talks. Arnie amended his proposal that Elaine’s title be “Friend of the Association.” Melody suggested “guest speaker.” Joseph proposed “Guest Speaker of the Master Gardeners.”

**\*Motion:** Arnie proposed that Elaine Silverstein be added to the Speakers Bureau as a “Guest Speaker of the Master Gardeners of Bergen County.” Suzanne seconded the motion. – PASSED.

Webmaster Committee: Melody asked for comments regarding the duties of the Webmaster, as outlined in tonight’s agenda. There was a discussion of the duties in the bylaws of the Webmaster. Following that, was a discussion about posting past Board Meeting minutes on the MG of BC website. Suzanne stated that the minutes she took as Recording Secretary were turned over to Jane Nicholson along with the binders of past minutes. Suzanne said that Jane has the binders, however, cannot locate the “stick” containing the past several years of minutes.

Suzanne to check to see if she has anything else pertaining to past minutes.

Arnie suggested tabling further discussion of the Webmaster’s duties until the website is set up. Melody agreed and will bring up any issues at our next meeting.

Melody asked if there was any other new business to discuss. Miriam stated that she received an email from Mary Lombardi, wife of Ralph Lombardi, indicating her husband had passed away. Karen Riede inquired as if anyone knew what happened to the Beekeeper, Liz Bisaccio. There was a brief discussion as to whether she may have moved. Melody asked if there were any other comments.

**Adjournment**

**\*Motion:** Motion made by Arnie to adjourn the meeting at 6:42PM. Seconded by Miriam.  
MEETING ADJOURNED.