

**Master Gardener Association of Bergen County
Board Meeting Minutes – November 14, 2023**

Present: Hosting – Melody Corcoran, Karen Riede, Suzanne Danzig, Theresa Schneider, Janet Stofkoper, Miriam Taub, Arnie Friedman, Jean Friedman, Chris Kozar, Herb Arbeiter, Joseph Cooper, Keith Mazanec, Elizabeth Gil, Donna Faustini

Absent: Janet Schulz

The meeting was called to order by President Corcoran at 5:37 pm.

Officer Reports:

President – Melody Corcoran

Jean Friedman, Class of 2004, has agreed to accept the treasurer's position left vacant by Pat Vellas' death in September. She previously served as treasurer from April 2007 through December 2009. Welcome to the executive board, Jean, and thank you for accepting this position.

Vice President – Elizabeth Gil

No report.

Treasurer

There was no Treasurer's Report presented.
For month ending Oct.31, 2023:

Melody reported that she issued two checks; one payable to tonight's speaker, Steve Adams for \$300.00 and one for the Fall Festival for \$90.06.

The checkbook balance as of Oct. 31 is \$15,163.35.

Recording Secretary – Keith Mazanec

Keith stated that the final copy of the October 17, 2023 Board Meeting minutes had been sent to all Board Members for review, and that if there were no changes or questions, proposed that a motion be made to approve them.

***Motion:** Arnie motioned to approve the Oct. 2023 meeting minutes; Joseph seconded the motion. All in attendance voted "Yes." APPROVED.

Corresponding Secretary – Miriam Taub

Miriam reported that she had distributed the November Potting Shed and is working on the mid-month edition of the November Potting Shed. She also sent out a reminder for tonight's meeting and deposited two checks totaling \$335.00.

Old Business:

Nominating Committee

Joseph reported that the president's position remains open. Chris Kozar will be heading up Hospitality. Janet Stofkoper is working with Theresa in Membership. The Nominating Committee has had no luck in identifying a candidate for president. We need to think about an interim president in the meantime. Once we identify a president, that person would need to be voted on by the Board then by the general membership. Realistically, we are looking at spring before someone is in place. Theresa Schneider has agreed to be vice president. After some discussion, Theresa said she would agree to be president with the understanding that work commitments may preclude her from attending some outside functions and/or meetings. Joseph was concerned about the amount of time before the next board meeting, and after a discussion, the board agreed to hold an emergency zoom meeting to discuss and vote on the slate of officers presented by the nominating committee once it is ready. Theresa will call some of her associates to ascertain any interest in the VP role.

Goals ad hoc committee

Miriam proposed that the discussion of goals and objectives be postponed until the January meeting when the new slate of officers is in place. Arnie moved to table the discussion until January.

Melody will run the January meeting.

On-line voting policy

Since there needs to be a physical record when votes are cast, there was a discussion on the best way to do that. It was agreed that Zoom would be used when casting votes on-line.

MG holiday party

The holiday party, which had been scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 12, at Van Saun County Park, has been canceled due to a lack of response (only 11 people rsvp'd – four on the holiday party committee and seven others).

Donna suggested that the board get together for a holiday celebration. Arnie offered to host the party at his home. TBD

Miriam will notify Joel and Marianne Zella from the Van Saun County Park Zoo that we're cancelling the event.

Committee Reports:

Community outreach liaison – Arnie Friedman

Arnie has an upcoming lecture on Bonsai. Other than that, things are going well. Arnie initiated a discussion about hybrid meetings. It gets very complicated when you have a camera setup and try to incorporate the Power Point presentation. He suggested holding two virtual meetings on Zoom a year, maybe in January and February.

Hospitality –

Melody introduced Chris Kozar as the new Hospitality Chair and wished her good luck in her new role.

Membership – Theresa Schneider

To date we have 139 members; 119 have paid their dues, two are lifetime members who have not paid dues, and 18 are new MGs.

We will explore using Zelle for members who'd prefer to transfer their dues money from their individual bank account directly to an account we set up for MGofBC. We will have membership forms available at the January meeting.

Newsletter – Miriam Taub

Miriam reported she is putting together the November mid-month Potting Shed and will include that Jean Friedman is our new Treasurer. It will also be mentioned that it is now time to submit dues for 2024.

Sue Sheridan is desperately seeking docents for the Holiday Open House at Skylands Manor.

Janet Schulz – absent, no report given.

Programs – Donna Faustini

Tonight's speaker is Steve Adams who specializes in wild edibles.

It is difficult finding speakers for January and February. A possibility for March is Dr. Charles West.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension liaison – Karen Riede

Karen presented Joel's report:

RCE Report to the MG Association Board Mtg. 11/14/23
Joel Flagler

- Everyone has noticed the super-abundance of acorns this year and wonders why this is happening. Dr. Jason Grabosky, the Rutgers NJAES Tree Guru, tells me that it is his belief that such a phenomenon, known as a mast cycle, is not totally unusual. He explains that a heavy acorn yield like what we see now is typically followed by a lean year—with markedly fewer acorns produced. It also suggests that squirrels will be fat this year, producing more offspring, and then all will be leaner next year when food is more scarce. It can be expected that squirrels will be coming closer to humans next year when the larger population seeks food that is less abundant in nature. Thus, they may bring about spikes in tick-borne diseases as squirrels, like chipmunks, are common hosts for ticks. Dr. Grabosky says he does not sense signs of stress or collapse in oak communities, but notes that weaker trees will be expending a lot more energy in fruit production. This can lead to declines, especially if winter and spring weather are harsh and demanding for overwinter survival and spring leaf-out sequence.
- Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) has a search underway for a new Agricultural and Natural Resources Agent (ANR) in Essex County. Joel is on the search committee and they will be processing a large number of applications for the position. It is hoped that a new faculty member will be announced early in the new year. While Bergen and Essex Counties may not be considered “agricultural” like southern NJ counties, most of the state's residents live in these two counties. The ornamental horticulture industries, e.g., lawn and landscape, are huge and now being recognized as part of NJ's agricultural profile. This is great news. It is hoped that the Passaic County search for an RCE program Associate in ANR will be restarted soon.

***Motion:** Donna motioned that the meetings scheduled for January and February, 2024, be held on Zoom. Arnie seconded the motion. All in attendance voted yes. APPROVED. Both the Board and General Membership meetings for January and February will be held via Zoom. The meeting dates so far for 2024 are as follows: Jan. 23, Feb. 20, March 19, April 16, and May 21. Both the April and May meetings will be held in the Learning Center.

RMGANJ report – Herb Arbeiter

Herb was not in attendance at last Thursday's RMGANJ meeting. He did attend the fall conference on Oct. 21, and reported they had three good speakers. There were approximately 100 people in attendance with another 100 people on-line. The presentations were recorded and viewers can receive 3.5 hours of educational credit hours. (Please note: You had to register and pay the conference fee to get access to the recorded presentations.)

Site coordinator liaison – Liz Gil

Many of the sites are wrapping up for the year.
Herb stated Thielke Arboretum is looking for docents.

Volunteer Records – Suzanne Danzig

We welcome two newly certified MGs this month: Owen Fox, Class of 2020, and Dineen Policano, Class of 2023. This month an additional 456 outreach hours, 36 administrative hours, 3 special projects, and 2 teaching hours were recorded on Better Impact as well as 48 CE hours, bringing the total YTD to 5,110 outreach, 666 administrative, 57 teaching, 138 special projects, and 711 CE hours. Again, Garretson continues to record the greatest number of hours with 140 this month; Thielke with 81 hours. Many of our sites have closed for the winter months but we continue to record hours for a half-dozen. In next month's Potting Shed we will ask everyone to record this year's hours before Jan. 15 so that I can assist Karen Riede in preparing an accurate year-end report for Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

Website – Joseph Cooper

Nothing new to report.

New Business:

Year-end committee reports

Melody asked that committee chairs prepare their year-end reports and submit them to her as well as to Keith.

Hybrid meetings-live streaming, equipment

Previously discussed.

MG class liaison

There was a discussion of the pros and cons of reinstating the class liaison. The class liaison would be someone from the current class of MGs who is selected to attend a monthly board meeting. They would report to the board on what is being discussed in class and, in turn, report to the class what is discussed at the monthly board meetings. TBD

Mentoring

Liz initiated a discussion about the importance of having a mentoring program for new board members and committee chairs. Individuals can be elected or appointed into positions without having received any orientation into what the role entails. Having a program in place where an outgoing board member or committee chair spends time with the new person will ensure a smooth transition for the new person and continuity in the role. TBD

Adjournment

***Motion:** A motion was made by Joseph to adjourn the meeting. Arnie seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm.