

Bedford Garden Club
Executive Committee Meeting
201 Croton Lake Road, Katonah
November 1, 2017
1:00 p.m.

Attendance: Liza Clymer, Carol Bouyoucos, Jayni Chase, Ellen Conrad, Joyce Corrigan, Wendy Cushman, Debbie Gourd, Mary Kendrick, Linda Merrill, Varner Redmon, Janet Robinson, Anita Stockbridge, Holly Warshaw, Tina Winchester

Minutes of the October 11, 2017 Executive Committee Meeting

After being moved and seconded, the minutes of the October meeting were unanimously approved by hand by those present.

Treasurer's report

Tina Winchester, who had attended the October 18 Zone III meeting, had met with the treasurers from other clubs and was pleased to confirm that we employ "best practices" in our accounting and financial reporting.

She told us that our highly successful October Fundraiser had netted \$34,495 from the silent auction and \$22,575 in ticket sales and donations for a total of \$53,678, an outstanding effort far exceeding our goal.

After sending an email reminder to those members who still had not paid their 2017-2018 dues, Tina said that 15 members' dues remain outstanding. Debbie commented that that is an historically good number for this time of the year. Even so, concern was expressed with the number of members whose dues are yet to be paid as well as the broader issue of participation rate in club activities. It was noted that several members do not attend meetings nor participate in committee activities. The discussion was continued later in this meeting as documented under "Membership", below.

Regarding our Year Book, Tina noted the high expense entailed to produce and mail it. Tina and Liza will consult with Liddy Baker the possibilities of simply having the data available online on our website. A copy could be printed out for anyone who does not use a computer.

Internships

In looking for ways to find organizations with worthwhile projects for interns, Ellen suggested that we follow Rusticus' lead in sending out information on our interests and availability of funding to various local organizations. Varner suggested that the amounts we have been offering of \$500 for each intern, for a total of \$1,000 available should be increased to a more meaningful amount. Tina agreed and added that in view of our healthy balance sheet and our need to give to causes relevant to our mission, an increase in internship grants would be a good way of handling our largesse. Liza will discuss this with Tori Cox and be in contact with Rusticus for ideas.

Branch Out

Tina noted that this committee is funded by a special account designated for this purpose. This year with \$2,000 added, the account totals \$7,787. Varner reminded us that a membership vote is required

on expenditures greater than \$500 other than ongoing club projects. Liza will discuss this with Virginia. Debbie said that for a couple of years when she was Treasurer, she had not allocated the \$2,000, but had been asked to put it in again when this year's budget was prepared.

Greens Day

Discussion focused on whether or not to have a speaker. Liza had been thinking of enlisting Dana Worlock, if she has availability at this busy time of the year. Wendy commented that Leslie Wortmann's wreath making demonstrations by a few members had been a hit at a recent Greens Day. The suggestion was made that perhaps Leslie and Dana might team-up for a presentation. Varner recommended that any formal presentation be limited to no more than 15 minutes. Liza and Joyce will contact Dana and Leslie.

Wendy will be arranging the purchase of materials for wreath making. She will have those of us who have interest in making wreaths for ourselves preorder and prepay for frames to ensure that we do not over, or under, order. Suggestions on the set-up for the meeting included:

- Use big tables to allow several people room to work comfortably at each.
- Have table assignments so that everyone feels that she has a place.
- Have no more than a couple of chairs set-up for the meeting as it will be a short meeting and chairs will take away space for the tables.

The discussion also touched on whether or not the frames should have greenery pre-attached. At least for the larger wreaths which will be given to local organizations it was agreed that they should have the greenery attached.

Floral Design

Wendy Cushman will be making up a questionnaire to be sent to participants of the floral arrangement workshop at Varner's studio earlier in the day. This will allow attendees to assess the value of the workshop and provide feedback for designing future ones.

Conservation

Ellen Conrad brought up the subject of the Bedford Conservation Board's \$48,000 grant to conduct a tree inventory. Liza felt that we should find out what we might do to facilitate the town's efforts. Co-chair **Jayni Chase** recommended that we get a copy of the grant proposal. Nancy K was identified as the appropriate person to contact. Ellen will enlist Heather Langham and Virginia Maybank as Branch Out co-chairs.

Ellen discussed two other projects the committee is planning:

1. Pollinator habitat. In creating a native plant pollinator site, is it better to use seeds or plug-ins. Quality of seed supply is utmost importance and the primary reason why native plants fail. Ellen said that some seeds have poison bred into them. We need to communicate with nurseries we use to obtain seeds and native plants. The first three years, she said, require intensive work to eradicate invasive species.
Jayni recommended that any project involve school aged children. Liza will be contacting Alexandra Forrester in this regard.
2. Solar Arrays as pollinator habitats. Jayni has told us that she has one that might be used. We will be trying to identify other more extensive projects that we might study.

Ellen announced that Bedford 2020 is planning a "climate summit" for February 3, 2018 at which experts

will recommend the tools and steps forward to implement the most impactful, cutting-edge solutions to climate change. Ellen would like a volunteer to be on the steering committee. Liza said she would serve, but may find someone else to serve in her place.

Programs

Joyce Corrigan told us that the programming slot is open for our February 14 open meeting at the Katonah Library. One thought, Joyce said, would be to have a fun topic such as fragrance in the garden, as the date is Valentine's Day. Joyce asked for suggestions.

For our May meeting, which will feature a plant exchange, there is interest in having a speaker talk about seeds. Joyce had contacted Thor Hansen, an author who has written two books on seeds, to speak at a meeting. Unfortunately, his fee was too high for us to consider. Both Varner and Joyce said that Mimi Lines may be in the position to recommend a speaker.

Regarding the presentation by Tim Stanley at our October General Meeting, Liza said that while he was very well informed and had interesting material, it might better have been focused on issues more germane to our interests. Liza and Joyce will work with future speakers to help them focus on topics of particular interest to us.

Membership

Liza announced that Mary Grandy, who is well known to many of us, had been proposed for membership by Suzy Beatty. Kirk Ferguson seconded the nomination and Varner, Nancy Vincent and Cassie Kernan wrote letters of support. After reading the letters to us, Liza took a hand vote to confirm her membership. Support was enthusiastically and unanimously given for this wonderful new member.

With the addition of Mary as an Active member, there are no membership slots available. We need to address the situation. Possible remedies include one or more of the following actions:

1. Change our By-Laws to increase the combined number of Active and Sustaining members to more than the currently allowed 100.
2. Encourage those Active members who are qualified to switch their membership from Active to Associate, a category that allows as many as 25 to be so designated and for which we have several slots available. Varner noted that the "Associate" category had historically been viewed as an honor.
3. Encourage those who do not participate in club activities to resign. Liza is considering contacting current members who do not participate to determine whether they might want to drop their memberships, with the assurance that they would be welcomed back in the future. (Our By-Laws give priority to former members, as well as children of former and present members, seeking membership; former members need only a proposer and seconder.) Ellen expressed concern that we may lose some inactive members who may, in the future, become valued contributors to the club. Ellen Conrad pointed to herself as one who had participated actively as a new member, then became inactive, and now is very active. She doubts as to whether she would have reapplied had she left the club during a period of her life when she did not have the time for it.

The subject of male membership was discussed. Varner commented that our By-Laws are silent on this issue. The response of the committee was positive on including a few men as members.

Project Review

Mary Kendrick recommended that we increase the amount available in our budget for grants available under project review to make it a more meaningful amount to organizations. Anita brought up a project helpful to the Marsh Sanctuary, Varner commented that the focus has changed to school projects away from projects involving wildlife sanctuaries.

Garden History & Design

Carol Bouyoucos announced that we have submitted to the Smithsonian documentation of our former member Marna and her husband Robert MacLean's Riverview Ranch, Wilson, WY. Documentation of Susan Burke's garden is being completed. Diane Lewis is currently working on hers and work is progressing on Denise Santomero's property.

Audubon Award

Liza thanked all that were attending the luncheon given by the Audubon Society in New York on Wednesday, November 8th at which club member Susan Burke and her husband Coleman Burke, among others, will be honored. As a few seats at our table are still available, Liza asked those who had not responded yet to please consider coming to this special event honoring our valued member.

Invitations

Kirk Ferguson has issued an open invitation to us to visit one of three Rhode Island prisons where, through gardening, they foster education, inspiration, and empowerment; teach inmates to grow food for economic and personal self-reliance; and connect participants with opportunities that enable permanent re-entry into society. Wendy suggested that we consider undertaking a similar project at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women. The general feeling expressed was that this would be very worthwhile endeavor for us with the added potential benefit of drawing a few more of our membership into active service who might find this type of project relevant to them.

Other local clubs have issued invitations to our membership, as follows:

- Rusticus Garden Club's Horticultural Committee Lecture titled **Horticultural Expressions and Culture of Ecology: Recent Landscapes of Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects** by Thomas Woltz at John Jay Homestead on November 14, 2017 at 9:30 am.
- New Canaan Garden Club on November 3 will have Paul Cox discuss his findings in "**Toxic Puzzle – Hunt for the Hidden Killer**" which portrays the efforts of the Brain Chemistry Labs (BCL) in Jackson, Wyoming, to find and fight environmental triggers for neurodegenerative illness like ALS.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.

Linda J. Merrill
Recording Secretary