

Bedford Garden Club  
Minutes  
Executive Committee Meeting (via Zoom)  
9 am February 9, 2022

**Attendance:** Beth Sachs, Virginia Maybank, Suzanne Bowers, Cynthia Mas, Nancy Kronenberg, Natica von Althann, Susan West, Jayni Chase, Tina Winchester, Leslie Wortmann, Diane Lewis, Ellen Conrad, Emily Grand, Debbie Gourd, Anita Stockbridge, Leslie Regan, Varner Redmon, Susan Burke

**Welcome:** President's Report Beth Sachs

Beth began the meeting by thanking everyone for their continued hard work noting that we have made great strides in accomplishing many of the goals we spoke about during the summer despite Covid and the restrictions it has placed on meeting together. Beth mentioned that this is an important meeting as the committee needs to vote on several items and asked that we change the order of business to discuss these items at the beginning of the meeting to ensure that we have a quorum.

Beth spoke about a special Zoom presentation that she attended which was hosted by the Rye Garden Club on February 8<sup>th</sup> for all Zone III members. The guest speaker Dede Petri, past President of the GCA and current President and CEO of the National Association of Olmsted Parks and Managing Partner of Olmsted 200, spoke about the life and legacy of Frederick Law Olmsted and how he shaped the American landscape in preparation for the celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. Beth reminded everyone that our guest speaker next week, Justin Martin, author of Genius of Place, a biography of Olmsted, will begin promptly at 10 am and asked that we begin our business meeting at 9:15 am.

Beth noted that due to the ice storm last weekend, the Naturalist Series event for February was divided into two parts. Last Saturday the group met via Zoom to hear a lecture by Taro Letaka on Winter Trees, Their Moss and Lichen Companions. Beth will send the link to the lecture to anyone interested. Taro will lead the group for a walk at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation this Saturday at 8:45 am.

**Minutes:** Suzanne Bowers

A motion was made to waive the reading of the minutes from the January Executive Committee Meeting and was seconded. The minutes were then unanimously approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Virginia Maybank

Virginia reported that our balance on hand on January 1, 2022 was \$116,000 (checking account). We received \$25,000 from Susan Burke as a matching gift towards the enhancement of the Wildflower Garden at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation. Virginia noted some additional income and expenses during the month and reported that our balance at the end of January was \$138,000.

**Floral Design:** Leslie Wortmann

Leslie reported that she has invited her committee via email to small group tours of East Coast Florist so that she can show everyone how it's done. She will be in touch with plans for April, May and June.

**Grants and Scholarship:** Cecilia Wolfson and Caroline Black

Beth reported on behalf of Cecilia and Caroline and thanked them for the outstanding work they have done in sheparding the following three proposals. She noted that all three proposals are within our budget.

### **Westmoreland Sanctuary College Internship Proposal Summary:**

Westmoreland Sanctuary is requesting support in the amount \$3,000 for their College Internship Program. Westmoreland has received funding from the Bedford Garden Club since 2013 and it has been a critical piece to both accomplishing the needed conservation work and helping to secure other grants.

In summer 2022: Interns will be growing a variety of native plants in support of two wildlife restoration projects.

A discussion ensued. A motion was then made and seconded to approve this request and was unanimously approved by the voting members of the Executive Committee.

### **Bedford Garden Club Conservation Committee/Mianus River Gorge Research Proposal Summary:**

The BGC Conservation Committee in partnership with the Mianus River Gorge is seeking \$5,000 in BGC Scholarship funding to support the research phase of a new Pilot Study dedicated to addressing the burgeoning problem of invasive species in our area.

Specifically, the research funds will be used to collect data on the incidence and prevalence of invasive local plants, as well as to document barriers leading to the effective removal, management, and disposal of invasive plants on private land in the Town of Bedford.

The Research phase of the study will begin in the Spring of 2022 and a summary report will be submitted by November 2022.

A discussion ensued. A motion was then made and seconded to approve this request and was unanimously approved by the voting members of the Executive Committee.

### **Northern Westchester Hospital's Cancer Center Garden Proposal Summary:**

**Mission:** To revitalize Northern Westchester Hospital's Cancer Center Garden at the entrance of the center with the purpose of creating a successful garden environment crucial to a patients' physical, psychological and social recuperation and wellness. In addition, our hope is to use the project to help educate the community about native species and to take the opportunity to work with the NWH Facilities team to encourage care and maintenance over native plantings.

**Budget:** \$30,000

#### **Committee (in-formation)**

Caroline Black  
Deirdre Glascott  
Betsy Mitchell  
Varner Redmon  
Cecilia Wolfson

**Timeline:** Two-year project with a goal of planning the garden in Spring 2022 and planting in Fall 2022.

**History:** The Bedford Garden Club has worked with Northern Westchester hospital since 1930. From 1930-65, the Garden Club donated over \$17,315 (over \$200,000 in today's value) towards planting. Revitalizing the Cancer Center garden is a natural next phase in continuing the relationship between BGC and NWH. Our goal is to offer a healing environment to patients and staff at the hospital, use the plantings to education the community about native species, and to take the opportunity to educate the maintenance staff about caring for native species.

A discussion ensued. Funds will be distributed in increments of \$15,000 over the next two years. A motion was then made and seconded to approve this request and was unanimously approved by the voting members of the Executive Committee.

Beth thanked the Executive Committee and recognized Cecilia and Caroline again for their hard work.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

#### **Membership:** Cynthia Mas

Beth noted that Cynthia and her committee have thoughtfully reviewed our Membership Bylaws and are proposing changes that will increase our Membership capacity and simplify our Membership categories (see attached proposed amendment to the Bylaws). Debbie Gourd read a summary of the proposed changes and a discussion ensued. Here is a summary of the proposed changes:

- Increases the total possible membership (excluding affiliate members who live out of the area) from 125 to 130. Eliminates the restriction on Active plus Sustaining members not exceeding 100.
- Eliminates the Associate category.
- Reduces the privileges of Sustaining members since they have chosen to become "inactive".

All were in favor by show of hands and all were appreciative of the work done by Cynthia and her committee. Ratification of the proposed Bylaw changes will take place during the Annual Meeting in June. Cynthia then reported that all is going smoothly with this year's candidate timeline and that all letters will have been submitted by the March 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. If all the candidates are approved, and the new Bylaws approved in June, there will be 15 new spots for future candidates.

#### **Civic Affairs and Conservation:** Ellen Conrad and Jayni Chase

Ellen thanked the Executive Committee for the support given to the Invasive research project with Mianus River Gorge. She mentioned that on February 17<sup>th</sup> the GCA will be hosting an Advocacy Workshop which will provide the tools to advocate for GCA backed legislation. Additionally, the National Affairs and Legislation (NAL) meeting of GCA will be held on March 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Both of these events will be fully virtual and free of charge. Ellen encouraged our club's participation as it is a terrific opportunity to hear presentations by amazing leaders in conservation and by Senators and Representatives who will explain the issues that the environmental legislation addresses, as well as other major environmental topics which will soon need to be addressed. Ellen said that Diane Lewis has drafted a flyer regarding this opportunity which will be distributed to the Membership.

Ellen continued by saying we are all very lucky to have Jayni Chase, "our own Wilhemine Waller", a beloved BGC member and advocate of our environment, in our midst. Jayni has worked tirelessly with our local politicians and in Washington to further environmental causes. Jayni spoke about her conversations with our local politicians, notably Kristen Gillibrand, who has an excellent understanding

of the GCA and who has offered to speak to our Zone on March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10:30 or 11 am. Jayni noted that in general the GCA is reluctant to deliver support of a bill unless it has strong bipartisan support. A discussion ensued.

**Garden History and Design:** Susan Burke, Wendy Cushman, Varner Redmon

Varner reported that she sent photos from the Smithsonian of individual gardens that were documented in the 1920's to their committee. We know some of the locations and owners, but Varner is hoping that the committee will further research the photos, which she said are quite beautiful, in the hopes of identifying more. She is hopeful that the committee can gather in the spring to start their own documentation.

**Website:** Emily Grand and Nancy Vincent

Emily reported on the survey that was given to the Membership regarding the new website. She said that 40 members responded. Here are some of the results:

**How often do you use the BGC website?** 10% weekly, 30% monthly, 40% once or twice annually, 20% never

**What feature would you like to see on the website?** 90% a clickable Calendar of Events. Other ideas: a directory, ability to RSVP and pay for dues and events online, a photographic archive, a public page.

**How important is a BGC app?** 30% crucial, 70% moderately important.

Emily said they received a lot of feedback with regard to other sites to look at and get ideas from. They met initially on January 19<sup>th</sup> and plan to have a second meeting soon. They are getting proposals from three different website designers.

**Horticulture:** Virginia Maybank and Tina Winchester

Virginia and Tina reported that they held a meeting in January to discuss the Almanac and will be doing the same in February. They have a draft of the January page and will be revising and reviewing the February page. They packaged and Tina delivered the native plant seeds that Ellen and Jayni got from the Bedford Audobon. In February Virginia hopes to have an in-person meeting to share and discuss house plants and their propagation.

**Branch Out:** Heather Langham and Virginia Maybank

Virginia noted that Branch Out is working with Bedford 2030 and the Town to redo the sidewalks in Bedford Hills, notably helping to determine trees, tree wells and sidewalks that would encourage tree growth. A discussion ensued on removing vines from trees in our area. Ellen is going to prepare an email to the membership with the dates and times of the vine removal event which will take place at the Harvey School.

**Photography:** Anita Stockbridge

Anita said she was thrilled that the Record Review published three photos of the Winter Tree Challenge, from Anita, Diane Lewis and Varner Redmon. Anita said that members are sending masses of photos and she hopes to invite a GCA photography judge to speak with them on February 28<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm to review the photos. A workshop will be held at the Westmoreland Sanctuary on May 9<sup>th</sup> with a photographer, sponsored by Ann Paul. Anita said that she has corresponded with other Photography chairs within Zone III and hopes to submit some photos to the GCA for the Enews Letter.

**Programs:** Michaela Beitzel and Kim Morris

Beth announced on behalf of Michaela and Kim that the April membership meeting will be held outdoors at the Wildflower Garden at Ward Pound Ridge Reservation rain or shine. Beth hopes that

Varner will lead a tour of the Garden. Tina will be hosting the Plant Exchange in May during which time Cecilia has arranged for a garden author and painter to speak. The June Annual Meeting will be held at Caramoor under a tent. Michaela and Kim are already planning for next year's meetings.

**Special Committee Reports:**

**Seedlings:** Emily Grand  
No report.

**Trips and Visiting Gardens:** Varner Redmon  
No report.

**Zone III Meeting June 2023:** Heather Langham and Nancy Kronenberg  
Nancy reported that everything is moving forward and that they are finalizing the venue.

**Corresponding Secretary:** Leslie Regan  
No report.

**Members Calendar:** Tersey Regan  
Beth asked that all dates be given to Tersey by the 15<sup>th</sup> so that she could include them in the calendar.

**Historian:**  
Susan said that she is so pleased to have been asked to be the Club Historian and that our history is rich and delightful. Susan gave us a few examples and it was noted that Susan should report during our Membership meetings as the whole Membership would enjoy hearing about our wonderful past. Susan noted the difference between our Club's history and our archives, the latter of which are incomplete in places. She hopes that members will begin to fill in the gaps.

**New Business:**  
Diane Lewis encouraged everyone to attend the GCA's NAL and Advocacy meetings virtually. It is easy to do and so exciting and impactful. The focus is on the big topics that have strong bipartisan support such as clean air, clean water and public lands. Diane noted that the Bedford Garden Club has a long history of conservation and it would be great to have lots of members of our club participating. Beth said that we will dedicate 5 minutes at the beginning of each Membership meeting to focus on the issues presented during the NAL. Ellen thanked Diane for her work at the NAL and on the GCA level. Next week we will hopefully see a 5 minute video filmed by Diane on Waste Management.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:22 am.

**April 2022 Executive Committee Meeting:**

The next Executive Committee Meeting will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, April 13th at 9 AM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Suzanne Bowers  
Recording Secretary