

MINUTES OF HOUSTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER MEETING/PICNIC

JUNE13, 2017

The gathering was held at the home of Char & Keith Meiners in rural Caledonia starting at 5:30 pm with a tour of her extensive flower beds, then we ate a bounteous pot luck meal and the meeting started at 6:45.

Present were: Charmaine, Anna, Doug, Sarah, Jean, Linda, Terri, Vicki, Jennifer, Janene, Mary Z, Lane, Barb, Kathy, Sue, Char and Loretta. Mike Cruse said he was unable to attend but mentioned items he wanted brought up. Brenda, Mike W. and Mary T were unable to attend. Also, many of the spouses attended. A big Thank You to Char for hosting the large group.

Items for discussion:

Fair booth: Houston County Fair is August 16-20. Janene and others are doing an event for children at the Fun Fest in Caledonia on Saturday, June 17 from 11-3 on planting. The event is called: plant it, grow it, taste it. It sounded so interesting that we decided that Children's gardening should be the theme of the fair booth also. Terri & Anna did a program on micro greens in La Crescent for the school age children. This got good front page publicity in the Houston County News. 25 kids attended. This will also be incorporated into the fair booth. Charmaine and Terri supervised planting in raised beds in La Crescent and possibly something relating to this can also be used in the fair booth. Our Master Gardeners have been busy!! Char had made two beautiful posters on pollinators for our Garden Day and she will bring them for the fair also. Loretta will apply for a Thrivent grant for the expenses for the fair booth since we are providing food for the children. Prior to our next meeting we will have to set up times and dates for the demonstrations so it gets publicized.

We will be giving two awards again for the best floral display to 4-H & open class as we have in the past.

The Master Gardener banner has disappeared. We decided we should ask the former extension secretary if she has any ideas where it might be. It is not in the usual spot at the extension office or any other place where Janene and others have looked.

Plant Exchange – Janene, Terri and Sue reported it went well even though it was a very cool morning. Terri said she wore her winter coat! Was a rainy day but it held off during the exchange. Janene thinks this is the 33rd year this has been held with various groups leading it in the past. We have been involved for at least the last 10 years. It has always been the third Saturday in May and September.

Garden Day we need to set a timeline or master plan for promotions, possible speakers. Appointed committees for marketing, finding speakers, etc. First, Loretta brought up that possibly we could change the name of our garden day "we dig it" to "Gardening with the Masters" and put a picture of our group on the brochure. Everyone agreed that this would be a much more appropriate title for the event. The date has been set for March 17, 2018. Committees were appointed as follows:

Marketing and publicity: Char, Doug, Jennifer – newspapers, TV, radio, facebook (Doug is our facebook expert) and any other kind of publicity we can think of.

Speakers: Mary Z Mary T and Lane – since we know the date already, it will be easier to arrange for speakers earlier so the brochures can get out earlier.

Vendors: Mary Z – we decided to limit the vendors to 3 as they compete with our Silent Auction items, which we make a lot of money on.

Food: Anna & Loretta - Everyone agreed the food from Elsie's was good this year and we should ask her again. Wouldn't hurt to get in writing what she is providing and the total price including tip. Charmaine said we are not to pay tax since it is at a school.

Brochures and Tech: Brenda

Donations: Kathy, Jean, Vickie

More committees will be set closer to the date. Everyone can look for speakers, donations, etc. and report to the appropriate committees.

Food Summit – Brenda – no report as she was not present

County Extension report: Mike said “regrettably I will not be able to join the group for the picnic/meeting. Keep me in the loop on the topics covered during the meeting and let me know what I can do to help. I am particularly interested in how the group decided to move forward with the grant that has not yet been paid to Spring Grove Schools To maintain the credibility of the Master Gardeners, County Extension and the U of M. I believe it is very important that we follow through and pay the school as we had promised. I also support writing better guidelines within the school grant so the MG's receive more complete information from grant recipients in the future. Or has Spring Grove been paid?

Charmaine reported that Spring Grove has not been paid. Mary Z said she has talked to the school several times and they don't seem to get a report done although all the work has been done that they received the grant for. Charmaine made a check and Mary Z will deliver it. Mary & Lane Zaffke worked with them on the project.

A revised form for schools to apply for the garden grants needs to be done soon as we had agreed that we would look at applications in the fall so, if approved, they had time to plan until spring. The form needs to include a requirement that they report at the end of the project on pounds of produce produced, how much was used in the school, how much went home with the children during the summer and how much went to the food shelf. The following were appointed to work with the various schools in the county: Vicky – La Crescent; Mary & Lane Z – Spring Grove; Mary T – Caledonia; and Linda - Houston (if they should apply). Possibly Mary T could work on this prior to the next meeting since she wrote the earlier ones.

Newspaper articles the following will write articles for the newspapers: June – Doug; July – Sarah; and August – Loretta. Reminder, they are to be submitted to the extension office for their review and they will send them on the appropriate newspapers.

Next meeting will be August 8 at Janene's home. Bring snacks. She lives at 106 Adams in Caledonia. We will not have a July meeting. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm so 1 hour volunteer time plus drive time

Loretta Knutson, Leader and note-taker