

Houston County Master Gardeners' Meeting

Date: 4/21/2020

Present: Mary Thompson, Mary Zaffke, Jean Davy, Nora Beckjord, Richard Bartz, Sarah Goff, Barb Hefte, Janene Hosch, Loretta Knutson, Kris Litscher Lee, Char Meiners, Sue Meyer, Bev Nelson, Vicki Otto, Kathleen Taylor, Doug Thompson, Charmaine Uphaus, Jean Young, Lane Zaffke, Deb Zilmer, Bonnie Geisler, Mike Cruse, Christy Marsden, Linda Lind.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mary Thompson, Chair, via Zoom.

On motion, the April Agenda was approved.

On motion the minutes of the February 18 meeting were approved.

The Treasurer's Report was as follows: Checking account balance: \$396.89, Savings account balance: \$1118.89, CD: \$3036.60. Total: \$4552.38. Activity was as follows:

We earned \$0.43 in interest from our savings account for the first quarter of 2020. That is the difference from last month's total of \$4551.95.

Finance Report was approved.

Deb Zilmer gave her wonderful presentation on how to avoid injury in the garden- thanks Deb!

Report from Extension:

Mike Cruse reported that there is nothing definitive with COVID-19 still a factor. All in-person events have been cancelled thru the end of June and that includes MG and 4H Meetings. Meetings have been moved online. The President at the UofM makes the call through working with the Governor. The next time we can have an in-person meeting may be in the Fall Semester. All summer classes have been moved on-line. This will impact financial issues- there will be furloughs, pay reductions, etc. Once there is more up-to-date information, we will be notified. All County Fairs will be determined at the State Fair level if they will happen. Extension cannot make that decision. The Houston County Fair is still up in the air since it's not until August. It will be reviewed County by County.

Mike mentioned that there will be an update email tomorrow about volunteer and education announcements (**See the very end of this report**)

We can still do meetings through Facebook Live, Online events for kids in the garden, there are options for signs and posters at Community Gardens, Farmers Markets, etc. We will need to be creative to find ways to reach out to the Community.

Old Business:

Vegetable of the Year- Beets:

Kathy asked if we could put something together perhaps with Community Ed on our presentations (like Deb's and Charles') which we discussed. We will try to put such presentations on our website and reference it on our FB page.

Jean Young sent beet seeds out to everyone- these were the beets that were to be given away at the Garden Day Event. (Thanks Jean!). She also offered to put together a recipe book on beets so please send her your favorite beet recipes. (jbatyyoung@yahoo.com).

Bonnie mentioned that she made chocolate beet muffins that tasted like red velvet cake (for all you beet haters).

Grants Awarded this Year:

Mary Thompson reported that we gave \$250 to La Crescent School for a composter and other items. We gave \$200 to ABC Workshops- a company that has disabled clients.

These payments represent ½ of what they were awarded- they will get the other half when they complete the projects.

New Business:

Deb mentioned the Free Program on Ticks offered by Wisconsin via Zoom and Mary Thompson sent the invitation to everyone.

Next Meeting will be May 19 at 5:30 PM via Zoom. Charles Beckjord will give a presentation on Water Gardens. The June Meeting will be via Zoom as well.

Mary Thompson asked Linda if she could do the Kokedama presentation via Zoom but she said it would be too difficult to demo online.

Bonnie is willing to do a presentation on beets – taken from the poster she put together for the cancelled workshop. Deb is also willing to do a book report on the National Geographic book, The world in your garden.

Janene confirmed that the Caledonia Founder's Day has been cancelled.

Beverly said we can still start making plans for next year's events.

Mary Thompson said we didn't lose too much money by cancelling our Garden Day. Our biggest investment was the beet seeds and advertising. We didn't lose much but we didn't

make any money either. Jean Davy reports our costs were \$163.50 which was ½ the cost of an advertisement in local papers and printing up handouts – shared with Community Ed.

Kathy asked if we could use our ideas from the Spring Event and do one in the Fall. It was discussed that people aren't as excited about gardening in the Fall and since Germany cancelled Oktoberfest, we don't know what will be happening by then.

Some ideas for staying in touch-We talked about our Team Trivia game and how it could be done online. Also we can send in pictures of our gardens- we can have an online Garden Tour! Lastly, it was mentioned that anyone owing money on their shirts or jackets should send it in to Jean Davy.

Motion to adjourn was passed. Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM. 1 hour of Education time and 1 hour of Volunteer time will be given for attendance at this meeting.

Nora Beckjord

Email from Extension Office:

Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program State Office (mgweb@umn.edu)

Last week, the Master Gardener Volunteer Statewide Conference Committee made the hard decision to postpone the 2020 Master Gardener Volunteer Conference. That same week, the University of Minnesota Provost extended the cancellation of University events and in-person activities through June 30, which would have included the conference. It is the recommendation and hope of the Master Gardener Conference Committee to use the same speakers and content planned for the 2020 conference for the June 2021 conference. We are working on confirming the June 2021 date as soon as possible and when plans are confirmed, the announcement will be made through the Volunteer Newsletter.

On April 17, the State Advisory Board decided to postpone the in-person Regional Educational Gatherings. Over the next several weeks, the State Advisory Board will work together to develop opportunities to network and to share resources virtually in place of in-person gatherings. Look to future newsletters for more information on what these will look like.

As we continue to shelter-in-place, please do not worry about meeting your annual volunteer or intern hour requirements. If you do not meet the hour requirements by the end of 2020, your volunteer status will not be changed. That said, please continue to log any volunteer and continuing education hours as normal. We encourage you to pursue your continuing education commitments. There are many continuing education opportunities accessible online. Look for links in the next Volunteer Newsletter.

We know the cancellation extension through June 30 will have local implications for your county group activities. These decisions are not made lightly, as we understand how disappointing this is for you and your work. Thank you for continuing to adapt with us through this challenging time and keep healthy and safe.

Please let us know if you have any questions by contacting us at mgweb@umn.edu.

Sincerely,

Your State Leadership Team