

**Master Gardener Association of Bergen County
Board Meeting Minutes – November 19, 2024**

President Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm.

Roll Call – Keith Mazanec took the roll call.

Present: Hosting – Theresa Schneider, Lisa Yoler, Jean Friedman, Arnie Friedman, Keith Mazanec, Miriam Taub, Suzanne Danzig, Chris Kozar, Janet Stofkoper, Donna Dorgan, Wendy Sowa-Maldarelli, Dineen Policano, Maria Bushman, Cesar Coy, Joseph Cooper (Zoom), Suzy Basu (Zoom).

Absent: N/A

Approval of Minutes - President Schneider announced the October minutes had been distributed. Since there were no objections or comments, the minutes were approved.

Officer Reports:

President – Theresa Schneider

Theresa reported on three items: 1) Joel submitted his November report. There was a discussion regarding Joel and Karen Riede's replacements. Karen has already retired and Joel will be leaving in February. Much of the work of Bergen County will fall on us to facilitate with the assistance of Ruth Carll from Rutgers. Some examples include Better Impact, issues that may arise concerning hours, awards, etc... 2) Janet was recognized for her service as chair of the Membership Committee. While Janet Stofkoper will be staying on, the committee will be led by Dineen Policano. Donna Dorgan will also be stepping down as chair of the Program Committee, and Lisa Yoler will assume that role as well continuing as Vice President. These changes will take effect on Jan. 1, 2025.

Vice President – Lisa Yoler

Lisa will be working with Donna on the Program chair transition.

Treasurer – Jean Friedman

The Treasurer's report for October was submitted, reviewed and filed.

Recording Secretary – Keith Mazanec

No additional report given.

Corresponding Secretary – Miriam Taub

Corresponding secretary

- Distributed Nov. 1 and 16 Potting Sheds.
- Mailed Potting Shed and attachments to two dues-paying members who don't have electronic access.

Committee Reports:

Community outreach liaison – Arnie Friedman

Nothing new to report.

Publicity - Maria Bushman

Maria reported we have 61 followers on Facebook and 63 followers on Instagram.

Hospitality – Chris Kozar

Chris reported we are set for the holiday party for Dec. 10 in the Education Center of the Bergen County Zoo at Van Saun Park, beginning at noon. RSVP's continue to come in. To date we have 28 participants confirmed and are anticipating between 30 – 40 to attend. We are asking attendees to bring a dessert.

Membership – Janet Stofkoper

Janet reported the 2025 membership form has been updated and is posted on the website.

Newsletter – Miriam Taub

- Wrapping up for year end.
- Produced Nov. 1 and 16 Potting Sheds.
- Emailed board and site coordinators of upcoming Potting Shed deadlines.
- Reached out to the site coordinators requesting names and class year of their volunteers to be included in Dec. 1 Potting Shed.
- **Garden Club liaison** – Distributed Potting Sheds and notified liaisons of upcoming Potting Shed deadlines.

Programs – Donna Dorgan

Donna reported that the money budgeted for program speakers has been spent.

- **Trips and Tours sub-committee – Suzy Basu**

Suzy reported that trips are concluded for 2024. Upcoming trips and tours include: Plant-O-Rama symposium, Trade Show and Career Fair for Horticulture Professionals at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden on Jan. 28; the Philadelphia Flower Show on March 1, (with a guided tour to take place at 8 am); and a tour at Wave Hill set for Saturday, May 3. (There is a \$25 fee per person for this event.)

Site coordinator liaison – Wendy Sowa-Maldarelli

The sites have been relatively quiet. Wendy has reached out to the site coordinators regarding their plans for next year.

Volunteer Records – Suzanne Danzig

Our most recently certified MG is Jennifer Ermoian, Class of 2023. Congratulations to Jennifer. This brings us to a total of 107 active/accepted members and 35 interns who are still completing their 60 hours. At the end of this month, I will most likely be reclassifying five of those who are still “in process” who started the program in 2023 and have not logged into Better Impact. There are a few from the Class of 2024 who have not logged in but they still have time. I will be sending our reminders to them. There has been an additional 525 volunteer hours logged since last month. Several outdoor sites have discontinued activities during the winter months, but Garretson, Thielke, The Hermitage, BNBMC, Butterfly Garden, Mary Topolsky, and of course Skylands Manor Holiday Open House are going strong. Last month we also recorded an additional nine teaching hours, 62 Admin and 90 CE hours. This brings us to a total of 7,180 volunteers hours and 902 CE hours for the year.

Website – Joseph Cooper and Miriam Taub

Website

- Updated meeting notice and “news and newsletters” section as needed.
- Other small items were updated including Karen Riede’s information.

Rutgers Cooperative Extension

RCE Report to the MG Association Board Mtg. 11.19.2024 – Joel Flagler

1) The Director of Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Dr. Brian Schilling, and Associate Director Kathleen Howell and Chair of the Agriculture & Natural Resources Department, Nick Polanin, are coming up Thursday 11/14 to meet with Bergen County Acting Director of Parks Craig Dorsett and Commissioner Mary Amoroso (former MG from the Class of 1989). We will meet to discuss the future of Rutgers Cooperative Extension as relates to staffing. With Karen Riede retired and my retirement coming up at end of February 2025, it is time to look forward and make a plan for filling the vacancies. Rutgers asks that counties cover 50% or salary for all new hires. That will impact how the office fills positions in 2025. Over the 37 years I have been serving as county ag agent, I have seen county budgets that vary widely. For many years we struggled with inadequate budget allocations from the county. The hope is that with good relationships and solid impact reporting, the county will increase funding to meet the need. It is always essential that we document our impacts and show the full value of RCE. Thank you to the entire MG community for all you do and for your help during the transition period which starts now.

2) The North Jersey Ornamental Horticultural symposium is coming up Jan 7, 8, and 9 at County College of Morris. It will be a wonderful series and the MGs will love the program for Landscape Day Jan. 9. I have asked Miriam to send the program, which also has the website link. Registration online is easy and safe. Please join us if you can. The symposium will be accredited for MGs.

RCE report, cont...

MGs will earn one CEU for each hour of the training. Thus, five CEU's for attending each full day of the training series (Jan 7, 8, and 9).

Joel

MG Class Liaison – Cesar Coy

Cesar reported that he has 1) emailed all 2024 interns to gather their topics of interest. 2) Was asked by Joel, through Karen, to consult with him first prior to speaking with the MG of BC and 3) Is communicating with all 2024 interns for them to RSVP to the upcoming luncheon.

Discussion Topics

Bylaws – Officer Term Limits

Joseph, who was on the nominating committee in 2022, provided background information on Article 2, Section 3 of the bylaws stating that there are five elected positions that are voted upon by membership. Those are president, vice president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, and treasurer. There were discussions in 2022 about removing the term limits for the positions of recording secretary, corresponding secretary, and treasurer.

(Note: At the September 20, 2022 board meeting, then-president Melody Corcoran stated that we have been following the term limits for president and vice president but not for recording secretary, corresponding secretary, or treasurer. Arnie motioned the board approve a change to the bylaws removing the term limits for recording secretary, corresponding secretary, and treasurer. Janet Schulz suggested that term limits only apply to president and vice president.

Arnie withdrew his original motion. Melody motioned that Art. 2, Section 3, be amended to read the president and vice president may serve for no more than two consecutive terms. There was further discussion on the language and the motion was not approved. Before the Oct. 25, 2022 meeting, Melody had reworked the language and sent it to the board as an agenda item. There was further discussion on the new language and it was agreed that Melody would clarify the changes further. Prior to the Nov. 22, 2022 board meeting, Melody had reworded the proposed changes to the bylaws and these were voted on and approved by the board. The approved language to be voted upon by the general membership at the Feb. 21, 2023 membership meeting and the change in language was included in the January 2023 Potting Shed. (There is no documentation that the general membership voted or that the changes were approved at the February meeting.)

Bylaw discussion, cont...

Issue: There are two officer positions approaching the end of their term limits: recording secretary and corresponding secretary (the treasurer, Jean Friedman, is presently serving out the term of former treasurer Pat Vellas). At this time, we are not prepared to present a slate of candidates, as there is no evidence that the changes to the bylaws to extend the terms of the incumbents were ever voted on. There was discussion as to the timing of posting the bylaw language change, searching for a new slate of officers, and possibly extending the term limits of the incumbents while a new slate of candidates was put together. It was decided the vote on the change to the bylaws would take place at the January membership meeting via Zoom.

Budget

Theresa had sent out a draft of the 2025 worksheet for the budget. She asked that committee chairs review the worksheet and the data that Jean had sent out and forecast what their expenses will be in 2025. There will be a meeting scheduled to review the budget between now and the January board meeting.

Adjournment

Motion: Suzanne motioned to adjourn the meeting. Arnie seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned 6:53 pm.