

**Dallas County Master Gardener Association
Board Meeting
Date: Sept. 14th, 2021**

Attending:

Abbe Bolich – President
Zandra Faris - Immediate Past President
Barbara St. Clair - 1st Vice President (Fundraising)
Monica Nagle – Secretary
Mark Jones - Director-at-Large
Fern Brown - Director-at-Large
Margaret Marshall - Director-at-Large
Barbara Anderson – Parliamentarian
Rick Coke - Director-at-Large

AgriLife:

Jeff Raska

Absent:

Joellyn Nobbe - 2nd Vice President (Member Services)
TBD - Treasurer

Guests:

Cynthia Jones - Communication
Tig Thompson - Statistician
Ned Buxton
Janet Lind

Quorum:

The meeting was held via Zoom. It was called to order by President Abbe Bolich at 10:00am with a quorum present.

Opening Remarks/President's Report: Abbe Bolich

Treasurer Replacement:

- Treasurer John Ellis resigned from the DCMGA board on July 24th. His treasurer duties were turned over to President Abbe Bolich.
- Abbe will send out a request for interested candidates to replace John using Mailchimp. The job requires knowledge of QuickBooks, general bookkeeping (approximately 10 hours a week), and monthly reports. All accounts have been setup and immaculately kept, training will be included.
- Rick Coke suggested Kim Lester as a candidate. Kim was in his class and has a CPA.
- Tig Thompson suggested Linda Seidel, who is familiar with the job responsibilities.
- Margaret Marshall commented that the Treasurer's email account will need to be reset.
- Abbe Bolich has been processing check requests as they come in. John has not been removed from the bank accounts. His name will be replaced when the new Treasurer is assigned.

General Comments from President Abbe Bolich:

- Abbe commented that it was great to see those who chose to venture out into the heat for the Open House / Tour at the Lake Cliff Park Garden last month. The R&B1 Urban County Farm group sold their jellies, and the Crepe Myrtles were spectacular, as was the rest of the garden.
- The Garden Tour Committee is meeting monthly, to create the *best ever* Garden Tour on April 30 thru May 1st 2022. There will be 7 home gardens and 1 school garden on the tour. Additional details will be provided at a later date.

Approval of July 13th, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes

Margaret Marshall made a motion to accept the meeting minutes from the July 13th, 2021 DCMGA Board meeting as presented. Rick Coke seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: N/A

Texas AgriLife Extension Service Report - Jeff Raska

Covid-19 Protocol:

Jeff Raska will be meeting with Dr. Miller on Monday, August 16th, to discuss Covid-19 protocol and will publish any changes next week.

- Texas A&M Agrilife currently follows county-specific requirements.
- The university has some additional regulations, but this does not apply to Texas A&M Agrilife.
- DISD requires masks.
- Master Gardener's should error on the side of caution.

Jeff will discuss any possible changes to Covid-19 forms with Dr. Hurley next week.

- Mark commented that the R&B1 jelly sales in Garland will be an inside sales event and asked if this was wise. Jeff responded that it was OK if they wear a mask. Jeff said to leave it up to the individual until he has guidance from Dr. Hurley on Monday.

Meetings:

- Abbe Bolich commented that the DCMGA August 2021 monthly meeting has been moved back to Zoom format.
- Similarly, Jeff Raska commented that Advisory meetings will be held on Zoom for the remainder of the year.
- Jeff recommends moving all meetings back to Zoom for at least the next couple of months.

2022 MG school:

- Jeff Raska said the current plan is to use a hybrid format – Zoom class with some field activity. This will make it easier for people with daytime conflicts (jobs) to participate.
- Denise Strueber did a good job handling homework through Zoom.
- A final decision will be made by October for the Jan-April 2022 class format.
- Rick Coke requested anyone who receives an email inquiring about the class to please forward it to him for placement in a class specific folder.

- Jeff plans to have a pre-application Zoom meeting to show what the program/class is about.

Collaboratives:

Margaret Marshall asked for an update on the collaboratives and how they are established.

Learn Grow – Eat Go

- This class is currently only for new agent training (statewide). There will be another training session for Master Gardeners and teachers that Paula will put together.

4H

- A new training class is being setup for agents.

Green Team

- The Green Team is a City of Dallas internship program.
- They emailed Jeff Raska to inquire about a rain barrel talk for the group.
- However, after they discussed this with the R&B1 leader, it was determined that this was better aligned with the Naturalist program.
- Jeff anticipates that there will be a good opportunity for students to participant in future projects.

Deflection program

- This project is for youth who are struggling with mental health and/or drugs.
- They need a meditation garden. This may be a good opportunity for the Green Team.

Mark Cuban Heros Project:

- This project was initiated by Mark Cuban and Dirk Nowitzki to teach top athletes wealth management, life, and social skills.
- The participants walked around the R&B1 garden and attended a cooking demonstration.

Jeff Raska met with Garland ISD about potential field projects for their students.

Recurring/Unfinished Business:

Past President's Report: Zandra Faris

Awards Committee:

The Committee met on July 26th to continue the discussion about award submissions for 2022.

- The PlantTAGG submission (Education Category) will be written and edited by Cynthia Jones, Linda Seidel, and Margaret Ghose.
- The Remote Help Desk submission (Project Category) will be written and edited by Joellyn Nobbe, Rick Coke, Maureen O'Hanahan, and Margaret Ghose.
- Committee members are searching for a writer and editor for the 'Outstanding MG Program' submission.
- Zandra Faris will provide a mock-up of this submission on the specific TMGA form by the next meeting, scheduled for August 30th. A comparison by Joellyn Nobbe to another county's winning award application will hopefully confirm that all requested answers for each question makes it a viable and worthy offering.
- Award pictures for R&B 1's 2020 winning submission are currently scheduled to be taken on August 12, 2021. No picture date has been set yet for Steve Houser, Outstanding MG of the Year.

Texas Discovery Garden Tree ID Project

The TDG Tree ID team has identified over two hundred trees and are about 40% complete. Plans are to provide a project overview at the October DCMGA monthly meeting.

Betsy See is providing an article with pictures to the Help Hands Newsletter to describe the phases.

- Phase 1: Identification of trees
- Phase 2: Education opportunities for the public and Master Gardeners.

Linda Seidel is writing an article for the Grow, Know & Go public newsletter's August edition on 'Best Trees for Fall Color in Dallas County.'

Nominating Committee:

- The Nominating Chairperson sent out a VMS email to all Master Gardeners as stipulated in the DCMGA By-laws.
- Zandra Faris, Chairman, requested help from members to provide potential Board nominees for
 - Director-at-Large (2),
 - Nominating Committee (2), and
 - Financial Review (1).
- Response has been good from the members with suggested names. The committee will reach out to these Master Gardeners for interest and requests the Board to submit potential nominees as well. One person has already agreed to be considered for the position of Director-At-Large.
- Other current members of the Committee are Mary Kay Eastep, Maggie Saucedo, Vicki Cartwright, and Ann Rogers. Ned Buxton recently joined the Nomination Committee.

2021 Intern Events:

Jadi Oliver scheduled an event for Harvest Day at R&B1.

1st VP Report: Fundraising: Barbara St. Clair

North Texas Giving Day

- Key dates
 - Fundraising pages begin 8/1/21
 - Early giving begins 9/1/21
 - September 23rd is the actual Giving Day
- Publicity
 - Articles will be written for Helping Hands and Grow, Know & Go newsletters.
 - Cynthia Jones commented that Barbara St. Clair will provide flyers and dates for social media. The DCMGA logo needs to be added to the flyer.
- Donation Goal / Matching

- DCMGA was gifted \$5123 during last year's North Texas Giving Day vs. a goal of \$5k. Lynn Prude played a pivotal role in growing the program.
- What is this year's goal? \$6k? The goal # is used to publish where we are vs. where we want to be.
- Barbara Anderson asked if we can we move the goal. Barbara St. Clair responded 'Yes.' Barbara St. Clair stated she will start with a goal of \$6k, but may raise it, depending on the level of donations.
- Previously, Lynn published that the board members would match individual donations, up to a predetermined amount. Barbara St. Clair asked for an email from each board member on how much they pledge to donate.
- Barbara St. Clair will communicate that matching is only done if the goal is reached.
- Barbara St. Clair recommends scheduling the donation for credit on 9/23/21.
- Should the Board Members donate through The Communities Foundation or directly to DCMGA? Barbara St. Clair will verify that The Communities Foundation is giving 100% of the donations back to the organizations. If not, the Board Members should donate directly to DCMGA.
- Superfan FUNdraising pages: The Communities Foundation is pushing for 'super fans'. Their marketing group will target these fans for donations and testimonials. The idea behind the method is that it is a message from you as an established donor to your circle of contacts rather than from an NPO to potential donors. The statistics show that it is a highly effective way to fundraise.

Master Gardener Handouts:

- Abbe Bolich, Rick Coke and the Garden Tour Committee have taken some of the 'Who Are the Dallas County Master Gardeners' handouts.
- Abbe placed hers at the Extension Office for walk-ins.
- Mark expressed a concern about last sentence in first paragraph. Mark recommends some clarification that MGs are not targeted in the program.

The sentence reads: 'A love of gardening and our environment, a desire for latest research-based horticultural information, and a spirit of community volunteerism is central to why Master Gardeners join the program.'

Miscellaneous Request for Raincatchers Garden Equipment.

The Raincatchers Garden group requested money for a chipper, mower, plants, and material for a raised bed.

Barbara St. Clair made a motion to approve \$2600 for Raincatchers Garden from the non-budgeted fund. The money will be broken down as follows:

- Replace a non-functioning mower, provided that another bid is obtained and that \$1299 is the cheapest of the two bids. (\$1299 = \$999 for Toro lawn mower plus \$300 for a 3 year warranty.)
- Replace lost plants up to \$500, and
- Materials for reconstruction of the Mediterranean bed in the Edible Garden for \$500-\$1k.

Margaret Marshall seconded the motion.

Anonymous votes were sent to Barbara Anderson.

The motion passed.

Discussion:

Chipper:

- There was a substantial amount of discussion pertaining to the safety of using a chipper.
- Jeff Raska recommends limiting users of the chipper to those who are trained.
- Zandra Faris expressed concern about liability.
- Abbe Bolich commented that the existing chipper is in disrepair and is a hazard itself.
- What is the chipper needed for? To breakup vines and sticks from the garden for compost.
- Barbara Anderson recommends checking with the insurance company to make sure that accidents are covered. May want to limit the users to those with experience.
- Cynthia Jones had experience with hand injuries as an anesthesiologist. From a safety standpoint, is there an alternative to using a chipper?

- Jeff Raska said the chipper from Raincatchers was never lent out to R&B1 because no one at R&B1 had used a chipper in the past.
- Jeff Raska commented that chipper users may need to sign a waiver.
- Mark Jones recommends updating the safety manual with requirements needed when operating any type of equipment.
- Zandra will check with the DCMGA insurance agent to see what the requirements are for a chipper.
- Barbara Anderson recommends removing the chipper from the funding request and asked if there's a service who will do the chipping?
- Barbara St. Clair commented that, of the money requested, \$949.99 was for the chipper. Can this amount be tabled?
- Abbe Bolich recommends removing the chipper from the funding description.
- Final: Table the chipper (and make an amendment to the safety manual at that time.)

Mower:

- Is a self-propelled mower needed? Yes.
- Cynthia Jones commented that, if the amount of the bid is over \$1k, a 2nd bid is needed.
- Barbara Anderson suggests getting a 2nd quote on a lawnmower.
- Zandra Faris recommends approving up to \$999 for the lawnmower, and to purchase the protection plan (\$300) separately.
- Final recommendation: approve \$1299 for lawn mower if this is the lowest bid.

Plants:

- Replacement of lost plants for \$500.

Mediterranean Bed Reconstruction:

- Materials for the edible garden Mediterranean bed are \$500-\$1k.

Side comment: Jeff doesn't approve funding, just fundraisers.

Other Fundraising:

- The restaurant fundraiser is being discontinued.

- There's a link in the Helping Hands newsletter on how to donate a portion of your Kroger's and/or Tom Thumb purchases to DCMGA.

2nd VP Report: Membership: Joellyn Nobbe

We are going back to a virtual meeting for August, at least. Decisions about other 2021 meetings will be made at a later date, once we see how Covid-19 is going.

Monthly Meetings

- The July Monthly meeting was successfully conducted as an open house at Lake Cliff Park from 9:00am to 1:00pm on both, July 22nd and July 24th. There were 33 attendees on Thursday, July 22 and another 15 unique participants on Saturday along with 4 returning participants. The Urban County Farm team from R&B1 sold jelly on Saturday, with a number of park visitors making purchases along with MG attendees. Despite the heat, Project Leader John Ellis spent the entire time in the garden, guiding groups of visitors. Joellyn thanked John Ellis for his time and commented that garden looked wonderful.
- An attempt to generate a video of the Lake Cliff Garden was dropped due to audio issues.
- The next 4 monthly meetings are currently scheduled for live participation. However, Cynthia Jones checked with Jeff Raska for updates on Covid-19 policy and he suggests not to hold any face-to-face meetings until 2022. After discussion with Abbe Bolich, it was decided to convert the August 26 meeting to a live Zoom meeting. Decisions about subsequent meetings will be made later.

Directors' Report: Website: Margaret Marshall

Sandi Means Bannon, interim DCMGA Webmaster, has obtained two bids for rebuilding the DCMGA website.

Sandi plans to have more detailed discussions about the bids prior to her recommendation for board discussion, final motions, and approval in the September 14, 2021 DCMGA Board Meeting.

Directors' Report: Rick Coke

Rick Coke is ready to begin soliciting student applicants for a scholarship.

He would like the applications to be submitted by 10/15.

Barbara Anderson commented that no motion is needed if there are no additional questions.

Rick wants the Board to be aware that several checks could be written for one scholarship due to a fragmented class schedule.

Fern Brown will be added to the scholarship committee.

Directors' Report: Advisory Committee: Fern Brown

The Advisory Committee did not meet in July. Therefore, no minutes were distributed.

Directors' Report: Project Leadership: Mark Jones

The schools have either opened for the fall or will very soon. Since the recent surge in the Covid-19 delta variant, there has been no official word if Master Gardeners will be allowed on the campuses during school hours.

The Project Budget Planning meeting for 2022 is scheduled for August 25th.

Statistics/Data Report: Tig Thompson

Volunteer Hours:

- The value of our volunteer hours (21,884) to date is \$624,562 based upon the 2020 value of a volunteer hour (\$28.54).
- Reported volunteer hours through July exceed 2020 by 2,566.
- 327 (72%) individuals have entered hours successfully into the new VMS.
- 79 (18%) have not reported any hours.
- Through July, 24% have met their continued certification/graduation requirements. Last year 29% had. However, June and July hours are still being reported.
- To-date, 25% have met their continued certification/graduation requirements.
- While there is a "three month" rule for hours submission, Tig has been crediting all reported hours due to the VMS system switch-over problems.

- Zandra Faris asked if more MGs asked for a leave of absence this year? Tig: yes.
- Tig Thompson commented that volunteers have not embraced at-home opportunities.
- Zandra Faris asked if help is needed from the class captains. Tig: Yes.
- Margaret Marshall asked:
 - Are the lower intern volunteer hours due to a lack of relationship building with a mentor?
 - Are interns having trouble using VMS to record their hours?
- Zandra Faris commented that she is willing to hold a zoom training session for VMS. Tig Thompson and Cynthia Jones offered to help with training as well. It was recommended to advertise the YouTube link for training. Record new sessions and make them available.

Background Checks:

- Need resolution of the background checks.

Communications Report: Cynthia Jones

At-Home-Botanist (AHB) program progress has been slow. Cynthia would like someone on the Board to help with communications. She would like to see Board members embrace the AHB program.

Cynthia Jones asked Abbe Bolich to lead a communications team meeting.

The Help Desk Question of the Week has been very successful.

New Business

Lowe's Information Table

- Rick Coke and Abbe Bolich met with Edie Fife (CCMG President) at the Collin County library for seed pick-up.
- The plan is to have an information table at Lowe's (Preston Rd. at Bush Hwy) on the 1st Saturday of each month, starting in Sept. They are watching Covid-19 case numbers to stay in compliance with regulations.
- The table will be in the rain sheltered region of the Lowe's outdoor greenhouse.

Adjournment:

At the conclusion of business, Rick Coke motion to adjourn the meeting. Margaret Marshall seconded the motion. The motion carried. President Abbe Bolich adjourned the meeting at 12:17pm.

Supporting Documents:

DCMGA Monthly Meeting Agenda, August 2021
DCMGA President's Report, August 2021
DCMGA July 2021 Board Meeting Minutes
DCMGA Immediate Past President's Report, August 2021
DCMGA 1st VP, Fundraising Report, August 2021
Raincatchers Non-Budget Request, August 2021
DCMGA Marketing Handout, August 2021
DCMGA 2nd VP, Membership Report, August 2021
Director-At-Large Report: Website Update, August 2021
Website Development Proposal, August 2021
MG Proposal of Work_Website, August 2021
Director-At-Large Report: Scholarships, July 2021
Director-At-Large Report: Community Projects, August 2021
DCMGA Non-Budgeted Funding Request
Communications Update for August 2021
Statistical Report, August 2021
Statistical Report Graphs, August 2021