

## **EMG Southeast Chapter Meeting Minutes, February 4, 2024**

**In attendance:** Little Tree, Sarah Edelman, Michele Delhaye, Marion Gerardi, Janet Spencer, Fiona Cook, Deb Heleba

Little Tree called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Sarah signed all the paperwork for Mascoma Bank (Mica Roberts) on January 20 digitally, transferring the account from Peg and Melanie Campbell. Checks are being sent to Sarah via mail at this time. There is no update on what is in the account at this time, as things have not yet been completed.

### **Reading of the Minutes of the January 7 Meeting**

Little Tree made a motion to accept the minutes. Janet seconded the motion. Reading of the minutes was waived since they were sent out to everyone.

### **Report on Zoom Account**

Until Sarah has access to the bank account, we cannot pay the cost for Zoom which is \$159.90 per year. This will allow us access for up to 30 meeting hours per year, for up to 100 people per meeting. A vote can be taken once we know the status of the bank account.

Google Meet was raised as an option for use, as it is free. A test run was proposed by Fiona – she will set a time and send the group a note to see who can participate in a brief (~5 minutes) test.

### **Report on Facebook**

Proposed SE Chapter Facebook Manager, Danielle, was not present but Sarah provided an update. Danielle is very enthusiastic about taking on her role and will coordinate with Sarah to ensure that she can take over the admin responsibilities.

Since Danielle was not present, the decision to vote on her proposed role was not taken – it will be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

The question was raised to Deb by Sarah as to whether former members of the Chapter (e.g., Marcia, Peg, etc.) should remain on the page or be removed. Deb's suggestion was to keep them on if they are contributing to the page as Master Gardeners as there is no downside.

Sarah will add a SE Chapter Gmail account as administrator.

### **Chapter Meetings**

Little Tree reiterated that we will meet virtually, on the first Sunday of each month at 6:00, and will try to meet in person outdoors in the summer at some point. Suggestions were made to potentially meet centrally (as we are spread out geographically) around a project tour and involve a potluck meal. The topic will be raised again at the next meeting.

## Information on Applying for a Grant

Deb had sent out information on how to apply for a Grant. Because Chapters have the 501C status, grants typically run through the Chapter not through the Project. Each project works a little differently: Some are getting support for plants and materials directly through the host, others apply directly to the Chapter for support. It depends on the Chapter as to how best to handle this.

Some Chapters work up a budget (contributed to by plant sales, etc.) and Projects put in their request for funding which is then voted on by all members of the Chapter.

For Grant writing, the Chapter needs to reach out to Deb – particularly for grants of \$5,000 or more. This is because of the Chapter's 501C status and its relationship to the bigger unit of which the Chapter is a part, and exempts the Chapter from having to go through the paperwork with the IRS, etc.

## UVM Requirements

### *Background Checks*

Our program has been under an audit by UVM's Compliance Office for more than two years for how we are achieving the expectations under UVM's Minor Protection policies. Volunteers are required to have background checks by the University.

While many people are teachers or have roles related to schools, all new interns and volunteers go through the Minor Protection training and background check process. UVM requires *all* its volunteers to complete a free background check consent form every three years (Deb put this information into the chat). This has to be notarized, although Deb has been doing online verifications for people's identity to make this easy. This is different from a \$35 finger printing process, which is not required currently. Lisa is responsible for keeping all records current, and for ensuring longer-term Master Gardeners are compliant.

### *Advocacy and Lobbying*

All members as staff and volunteers are required to educate – not advocate or lobby. In an election year, and with the issue of neonicotinoids, it is important to keep this in mind when staffing tables or operating as volunteers in any way.

## Project Updates

Michele presented an overview of her project at Howard Dean Education Center (HDEC) in Springfield (*see pictures below*). Highlights included:

- The Center houses six different educational institutions in the building. The Natural Resources Program (NRP) there has operated as a partner with Michele, who now sits on their Advisory Committee and assists with student interviews. In 2022, she worked with the teenage students to redesign a flowerbed in front of the greenhouse.
- *Challenges*

- The NRP provides annuals that haven't been sold from their greenhouse, however most of the three flowerbeds at the HDEC are perennial beds that have an almost xeric climate: They contain a great deal of glass, concrete, brick and asphalt – it is a challenging three beds to keep up and running. Only the hardy, xeric-tolerant perennials have survived, and the annuals need a lot of watering. There is also a large roof overhang above one of the beds. A sprinkler-hose seems to work well there and a new one may be in order. The good news is that there are two outside water spigots there, but it can be hard to access the bolt handles that are onsite.
  - A lot of volunteers are needed to assist in keeping the beds alive and the perennials need to be thinned out.
  - There may be jumping worm infestation, although this needs to be explored further – and potentially tackled if that is the case. In thinning out the perennials, it may be possible to eliminate the babies by using clear plastic. This could be a large task, but potentially very educational!
- *Opportunities*
    - There are lots of opportunities for education. Many students pass through with questions, and a few years ago, UVM donated plant tags which are instructional as well.
    - The NRP planted the trees that are there – but there may be an opportunity for a pruning workshop similar to one held a few years ago. The trees there are not doing too well (they are large and affected by salt put down in the area) – Michele will ask about opportunities.
    - It could be good to host a meeting there – it is centrally located, and there are rooms that might be used inside. Henry Homeyer, Charlie Nardozzi and others have presented at events onsite, for donations. Potlucks have also been held there.

Little Tree motioned to adjourn the meeting. Sarah seconded. All in favor – motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

### **Next Meeting**

March 3, 6 to 7 p.m. on Zoom at: <https://uvm-edu.zoom.us/j/85876962943>, Meeting ID: 858 7696 2943; One tap mobile: +19294362866,,85876962943# US (New York).

Little Tree will solicit ideas for topics and projects for the next meeting.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Janet Spencer, 2/13/2024.

Howard Dean Education Center (HDEC) Project Pictures / Michele Delhaye



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