

Central Gorge Master Gardener™ Association
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 9, 2017

Next meeting: Tuesday, June 13, 2017, OSU Extension Service Office

Attendees: Bitter, Linda; Bosler, Eric; Bosler, Shari; Bradley, Christie; DeTar, Laurel; Fife, Teena; Montag, Sandy; Nastasi, Heidi; Randolph, Susan; Rousseau, Sandi; Sturman, Bill; Suits, Rachel;

Secretary's Report (Christie): The secretary's report for April is pending one addition, so it will be considered for approval at the next meeting.

Treasurers Report (Shari for Nancy): The audit was initiated but could not be completed because there was one document missing. The audit will be completed prior to the June 2017 meeting.

Extension Report (Rachel): A make-up training session and Brassicas and Beer are both happening tomorrow night. Rachel will send out a notice about them. Fire-wise planting is the topic at Brassicas and Beer. Fliers have started being hung around town and more are coming up.

Rachel is at FISH food bank on Wednesdays to provide an hour of hands-on education. They have invited food bank clients, but none have participated yet. One thing they might try is to work with kids while their parents are shopping at the food bank.

All the plant clinics for May are filled. The first Saturday Market plant clinic of the season was held. Mentors may need to assist their mentees with Shiftboard. Rachel will discuss this and the directory at the make-up class.

Rachel requested feedback on the classes, but she has not received much.

Rachel is changing offices. So she will be moving into Elizabeth's old office.

Master Gardener Awards (Rachel): Rachel has had a hard time recruiting people to be on the committee for awards (she only has two volunteers). The members are supposed to be chosen from past recipients and past presidents. She will be asking people who have not been until she gets a total of five. She needs to get the winners submitted by Monday and has also only received a few nominations. Linda Bitter will try to be at the meeting.

Brassicas and Beer (Rachel): The Brassicas and Beer sessions are at Volcanic Bottle Shop on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 6-7pm through September. There is a different lineup this year from last.

Project Leader Meeting (Rachel): The project leader meeting is set for May 24, from 12-2. Rachel will send out information about this so the project leaders can prepare.

New Business

Project Updates

Greenhouse (Sandi): Sandi has been working on the permits and the plans for starting construction. The committee met and were all in agreement about the potential site. Bill W and Eric were researching retaining walls. However, when the height of the greenhouse was visualized, it became apparent that it might obstruct the view. The view is a huge factor and a major asset to the learning garden.

Originally several sites had been considered, so the committee re-evaluated them and picked the one that was the best option of them, which is across from the SWCD office. The committee agreed, with one strong dissension. This person believes that the original site is so much better for the plant sale that it should still be used.

The evaluation team did another exercise to see if it would be feasible to excavate enough on the original site to preserve the view. All on the committee, with the exception of the original dissenting voter, believed that there was still too big of an impact on the view.

There was some discussion outside of the Executive Committee meeting about whether the committee would need to go back to the membership to approve a new site. The Executive Committee agreed that the membership was notified that there were four potential sites and that the greenhouse committee was leaning toward the learning garden site. They also agreed that the membership understood the decision had not been finalized, all of the sites were still being considered, any one of them could be the final selection. The original learning garden site was somewhat different than that presented to the membership because it had to be moved to accommodate the existing (and potential) septic drain fields.

There was also discussion about other potential greenhouse usages and whether this was cost effective. But the other uses were not fund raisers – they were educational outreach.

One concern about the SWCD site was wind. However, if necessary, a wind barrier of some sort could be built. The wind would only be a factor for the perennials and this would be mitigated. The greenhouse itself will protect the outdoor perennial plants, which is a plus.

There are some other advantages to the new site. Without having to do major excavation, the new greenhouse can probably be constructed for less than \$40K. Based on the profits generated from the plant sale, this would take about a 5 year period of operation and plant sale proceeds to pay for the building.

One other advantage includes the small building near the new site that could be used for weatherproof storage.

We may also consider moving the plant sale near the new site for the greenhouse. It may alleviate some of the logistics issues of the smaller site in the learning garden. It was originally staged in the learning garden to help share the learning garden with shoppers, but there are issues like parking and crowding that might be improved in the new location.

A vote was taken by the Executive Committee to reaffirm the decision to move to the new site as well as to reaffirm that we did not have to take this vote back to the membership. The Executive Committee voted to move forward on both.

Plant Sale (Laurel): Laurel has as many plants identified as we can handle already, so she is not looking for more plant sources. Jacquie Barrone had a lot of plants that Laurel potted. They also received another 100 leftover plants from the SWCD. Sandy M., Ann S., and Bill W. have some plants and there are some hostas from other people.

Laurel is proceeding on her own until Kathy L. is back to stay.

The Public Service Announcement (PSA) about the change to our plant sale is confusing some people, who think that the Wasco County chapter is not having a plant sale. Theirs is on the same day as ours normally is, and they are still having it.

We may need signs or someone to be at the extension office on the day of our cancelled plant sale in case some people did not get the message. It was decided that signs are good enough – these signs will direct people to Wasco County's plant sale and remind people that we will be holding a smaller plant sale, open to the public, at the garden tour.

There was also some discussion about the location of Wasco County's plant sale. It will be at City Park in The Dalles. They will have annuals and vegetables. They also invite vendors who do not compete with them. Another thing they do is allow pre-orders for Master Gardeners and staff.

Publicity for our perennial sale (at the garden tour) will be on the posters for the garden tour as well as on the radio and in the White Salmon and Hood River papers.

Seed to Supper (Eric): The English language Seed to Supper class is complete. There were 8 or 9 gardeners, some who had never gardened before. The hands on was popular last year, so it was expanded this year. The group planted spinach in the food bank beds and Lauren did a cooking demo. A number of CGMGA members expressed interest in taking the classes, but when Eric presented a possible class schedule, only one person responded. Sandi wants a copy of the booklet and Eric has them available for \$6.

Dennis gave a Spanish language Seed to Supper class with the assistance of Jody O'Conner. They had 9-15 Raices gardeners. They used a bit different format – instead of six 2-hour sessions, they did three 3-hour sessions.

Garden Tour (Shari): Posters and tickets should be ready soon. Glenda wanted them printed and ready for distribution by May 18. We need to make sure all the A-frames are back before the event, because they will all be needed for the tour. Sue Stender, Sue Sanchez, or Nancy Slagle may have one.

We may need to coordinate volunteers who signed up for the various locations to get most who have signed up for two shifts to try to do it in the same area. Volunteer parking will be at a premium and if we can get as many people as possible to car pool, it will be a lot better. Kathy L and Laurel are organizing the plant sale.

We need to rent a field mower for parking. We need to ask the membership, first, if anyone has a walk-behind field mower.

Shari located tubs, stamps, and other materials we used in the previous tours. Laurel has vests in the storage part of the greenhouse. There are other materials at Dede's. Shari also found zippered bags we used when we sold tickets before.

They will be selling tickets at locations including the Spring Fest and Saturday Market. The tickets are \$10.

There will not be a plant clinic at the garden tour – there are enough educational resources at the sites.

OMGA (Sandy M): The OMGA quarterly meeting is the first weekend in June. Plans for the International Conference are coming along.

Fish Garden (Susan Randolph): Susan is a coordinator of volunteers for the FISH food bank garden. She and Rachel put together a spreadsheet (logic model) summarizing their proposal to make this an OMGA project. It itemizes their short and long term goals. It also breaks down their mission and goals and how they go about achieving them, along with things they need to be successful. Susan was asked if FISH was a religious organization, and she

noted that it is overall non-religious, and that it operates under the Oregon Food bank.

They are in the third year having a garden. The church that donated land for the food bank also donated the space being used for the garden. There has been a church garden there for many years. One of the philosophies is that, in thinking about food insecurity and hunger in the community, they want to give choices about the food clients acquire. The food bank allows people to shop for the items they want.

There is a misconception that people who have food insecurities only want junk food, but this is not true. The food bank has healthy food, and it is being chosen quickly. With the food bank garden, they are poised to bring on a new educational component. People who want to eat vegetables are frequently interested in growing their own vegetables. There are programs like Seed to Supper, Canning and Preserving, the Food Security Coalition, and others. Their goal is not to replace those, but to augment them by taking their program to a different level – creating a community hub for hunger, food, and agricultural knowledge. This region has a large population of food-insecure people. The various groups providing resources could join forces. And one goal is to get the food bank clients into the garden. Susan already has three people who are clients at the food bank as garden volunteers, but most volunteers are from the community at large.

Rachel has been to the food bank garden on Wednesdays and she is providing education there. There is also the educational space at the food bank. Ultimately they would like to see it as a public space where people can come and interact with food and food-related resources in various ways.

If this was a CGMGA project, the association would be able to provide some funding (in the form of a budget that we submitted and managed).

There is a formal project proposal process that we now require for all projects. Some of the specifics we would want to know are:

- The number of people served and potentially expected to be served.
- The kinds of activities Master Gardeners would perform
- If Rachel is considering offering payback hours for this project, what kind of criteria would there be for the allowable activities
- Susan would need to share, with the membership, the project details and how people can get involved
- Who would be the project leader?

Susan noted that she needs experienced gardeners who can use their skill set to assist. There would also be mentoring opportunities, working with food bank clients. There are already several Master Gardeners who volunteer now.

Rachel noted in response to the activities for payback hours, some of them include attending the Wednesday training sessions and mentoring. Hours would need to be assessed using the state's criteria of education versus indirect activities. Management of a garden is not enough, there would need to be activities like community demonstrations that are directly educational.

There also could be a natural relationship with the Seed to Supper classes. Maybe the class attendees would want a garden bed.

This would need to be an approved project before people could expect to get payback hour credits. The project is morphing in a number of possible directions, but they are trying to steer it in the direction of a public hub, with a relationship to the community as well as schools and school groups.

Susan is currently a paid staff member and a coordinator of volunteers, paid by the church. Funding at the church is ending, so she is working on finding funding. She was asked what the annual budget of the garden is, and she said it fluctuates, but it is somewhere around \$1000 per year, most of which comes from fundraisers and charitable donations. She was asked what would happen if and when the funding ends, and she noted that a large part of what she does is getting the garden sustainable. She continues to apply for grants and lead fundraisers, and she has a background in organizing and fund raising. The church is also working on that aspect. Worst case, the garden could be taken over by one or more people in the community who may all have unpaid roles.

Susan would be the project leader. Her role in the garden has evolved to mostly a "crew leader" who delegates tasks. She also has a possible intern that may take over as the volunteer coordinator. She looks for supplies, recruits volunteers, goes to events, and holds fund raisers.

She was asked what benefit the church derives from the garden. She noted that they see this as a good thing for the community. They provided the land, have been paying Susan, and they take care of the basics like watering and lawn mowing. If the church could no longer pay Susan, she would need to find another job. If it is still in the community, she would continue to work as a volunteer.

Some of the needs for the garden include having more of a public presence, like an email contact and a web page.

She was asked about the makeup of clients. An estimated fifty to sixty percent of the food bank clients are Hispanic.

It was noted that this project would provide tremendous value in educational outreach and Master Gardeners could be heavily involved. There is some concern that, if Susan does not get funding, how this would affect Master Gardener resources. We could fill the Master Gardener roles, but it would be hard for us to run the whole operation. So another suggestion was that we make an initial investment without actually taking it on as a project for now.

We need the following things, submitted in the formal proposal:

- Initial budget
- Direction on how budget would be used
- What kinds of MG volunteers would she need ideally
- How many
- What roles
- What is the impact (number of people ultimately impacted)

The project proposal would need to be presented at the Executive Committee and would need to include that budget proposal.

Susan noted that some of the activities for CGMGA volunteers would include mentoring clients, attending and conducting workshops, and working with school programs that come through.

Susan was asked to come back to the Executive Committee with more detail and a completed project request document with the proposed budget. She has already done a lot of outreach and has a lot of contacts. She sees CGMGA as another arm into the garden for the educational component.

She was asked about the volunteer hours and how much of that would be maintenance. Right now, she struggles to get volunteers at the garden in an organized party, but she has experienced people come in who like to work on their own when they have free time. They just call and ask what they need to do. She has experienced volunteers she can just turn loose. She hopes, if this becomes a project, people could fulfill their volunteer hours in this flexible way. Some of the educational aspects include things like teaching people how to perform various activities, like setting up drip irrigation. She likes to facilitate learning by doing – a hands-on approach to learning.

Quarterly Meeting (Shari): We did not do a quarterly meeting at the last class. One of the ways we could have one for the 2nd quarter would be to have one at the summer picnic, which we need to start thinking about it. The goal of a quarterly meeting is to have a discussion with the membership. There was a good turnout for the one last summer. Thinking about dates, there is the garden tour in June, the International Conference in July, and August is hot. The county fair is late July and Rachel will be gone. Sandi is having a garden

visit at her house June 28 and we could make that a quarterly as well. Shari will discuss this with Kathy, Becky, and Cheryl Moore.

Next Executive Committee (Shari): Shari will be gone at the next meeting. Heidi will chair the meeting in her place.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50.

Meeting minutes taken by Christie Bradley