



**Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting
March 17, 2009**

Attendees –

Board Members Present: Mary Beth McCaughey, James Buckley, Robert Goehring, Peg Turrentine, Nat Gruesen, Marilyn Almon, Ginny Grant, Glenn Dresner, Brenda Dresner, Jane Gray, Cindy Fairbanks, Jodie Douglass, and Susan Peacock

Board Members Absent: Barbara Brannon

AgriLife Extension Advisor Present:

Master Volunteer Coordinator, Fort Bend County – Absent

AgriLife Extension Advisor:

CEA - Horticulture – Open position

Quorum Present? Yes

Call to Order – Nat Gruesen called the Board of Directors meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes – After a motion by Robert Goehring and a second by Susan Peacock, the minutes of the February 11, 2009 Board meeting were approved by all.

Officer and Committee Reports:

President – Nat Gruesen

- Nat thanked everyone involved in the Perennial and Vegetable Sale.
- Nat reported that he has walked the grounds and given a list of observations to Cindy.

Vice President – Glenn Dresner

- Glenn gave special thanks to James and Barbara for their hard work in growing the vegetables and James expressed his gratitude to all the volunteers that helped them.

Secretary – Susan Peacock

- No report

Treasurer – Peg Turrentine

- Peg reported that the Profit and Loss statement currently lists the total Fruit Tree Sale profit as \$24,635 with \$61,412.10 in gross receipts minus the expenses received to date. Fruit Tree sale receipts are approximately 10% more than last year.
- The gross income from the Perennial Sale was \$21,464 but not many invoices have been received yet.
- Landscape expenses spent year-to-date are: \$1866.01.
- Nat will be checking where to install the printer.
- Mary Beth mentioned that budget allotments should be checked prior to writing expense checks.
- James reported that money from the vegetable sale held earlier today will be given to Peg.
- Cathy Dominguez has asked that her speaker gratuity be donated to the Food Pantry.
- Peg reported that she is paying Heidi first for her expenses.

Past President – Mary Beth McCaughey

- No report

Awards – Jodie Douglass

- No report submitted
- Jodie reported that taxable sales items have been purchased and we have the Sam's Club membership.

Communications – Robert Goehring

- Report is attached to the minutes.
- Mary Beth wants to get more material submitted for a newsletter.
- Jodie complimented Robert on the site coverage of the Perennial Sale.
- Nat asked Robert about the guidelines being developed for website endorsements. Recommendations are in draft form on the attached report and will be discussed as an Unfinished Business item (#2).

Community Relations – Brenda Dresner

- Brenda reported that the March speaker for the FBMG monthly meeting on March 19, 2009 is Cathy Dominguez from the Brazos River Authority. She will be speaking on *Water – How much do You REALLY Use?* Cathy will be able to meet for dinner at 5 pm.
- The April monthly meeting for April 16, 2009 is the program that was rescheduled after being cancelled during the hurricane. The speaker will be Chris LaChance who is a WaterSmart Program Coordinator for Sea Grant Texas and Texas AgriLife speaking on *Habitat Landscapes – Providing for Butterflies and Birds in an Urban Setting.*

Fundraising – Barbara Brannon

- Barbara was not present but Mary Beth provided some preliminary financial numbers for the Fruit Tree and Perennial Sales. There were 2196 perennials sold. She stated that we will be looking at other facilities/locations for future sales. There was some confusion among customers in locating the different areas of the sale. One of the Master Gardeners was injured during a fall on Saturday; she is currently recovering.

Greenhouse – James Buckley and Glenn Dresner, co-chairs

- Report is attached to the minutes.
- James expressed thanks to Cliff and Glenn for their bench building.
- James reported that Barbara had additionally sold \$303 in veggies today.

Landscape –Cindy Fairbanks and Jane Gray, co-chairs

- Report is attached to the minutes.
- Ginny noted a correction to the class date for Marlene Shobe, the new co-chair for the Japanese Garden. Her class was Fall 2008.
- As a followup for Unfinished Business item #14. the decision has been made to grow the citrus trees in their current location for one more year to see if they improve. Debrah Birge will be watching the citrus and planning for a citrus area behind Composting.
- Glenn mentioned that there were three trees in the greenhouse left over from the Fruit Tree Sale that are struggling and need planting. The trees outside the greenhouse that were moved out during the sale planting could be included in a monthly meeting plant swap.
- Cindy suggested that funds be allocated for the Outdoor Classroom. None was allocated during the original budget and \$300 has been spent so far. Jodie moved that \$2000 be allocated for the Classroom and Brenda seconded the motion. The motion was approved by all.
- A tour of the FBMG Gardens will be included in the *Fling with Felder* event on April 18th.
- The possibility of a landscaping class given by Mary Dargan was discussed. She and her husband are very talented landscapers. Classes are \$350.00. Their web site is www.dargan.com.
- Advanced training on the maintenance of the garden tools will be given on the workday April 1st and on the first Saturday workday. Jane suggested that the training be called “April Tools Day”.

Member Relations – Marilyn Almon

- Marilyn reported that she has received the 2009 dues payment for 164 members and is expecting two more. The directory is being updated as dues are received. Membership cards are being distributed.
- The plant swap will begin at this month’s monthly meeting.
- Plans are being made for the field trip to Austin on 3/28/09; details to follow.

- Seven people have been recruited for the Garden Work Day Hospitality Committee. There will be a hot dog lunch for the kids and master gardeners on the April 4th JMG Activity Day/Work Day.

Youth Activities – Ginny Grant

- Report is attached to the minutes.
- Ginny reported that there is a JMG Kids Activity Day scheduled on the April Work Day. The kids expected will be elementary school age.
- Work is ongoing for the Earth-kind Kids Kamp. The date of the camp has been moved to June 15-19 due to a scheduling conflict with a 4-H event. The camp is being planned for 30 kids and the fee will be \$50. Camp hours are 9am – 3pm. It will include an activity at the Recycling Center. The camp is being advertised on the web site.
- Ginny said that Mac is talking to the mayor of Stafford about future activities. Mac is also looking into the Vegetable Specialist Training.

Glenn reminded the Board what a great job the probationers did helping on Thursday and Saturday of the Perennial Sale. He suggested that a letter be sent to thank them for their efforts. Nat will get their supervisor's name from Mac and write a letter of appreciation.

Extra storage space has been created in the barn and closet when they were cleaned up.

Standing Committee Reports:

Governance Committee

- Work in progress

Extension Service Advisor Reports:

CEA – Horticulture – Open

Master Volunteer Coordinator, Fort Bend County – Margo McDowell

Margo was not present.

Old Business:

2008 Unfinished Business

- The status of the items on the 2008 Unfinished Business list that are still listed was discussed.
 - Item #2 - Guidelines for endorsement on the website
 - Robert has submitted draft recommendations for these guidelines to the Board. Mary Beth made a motion, seconded by Glenn and approved by all, to approve these recommendations as written.
 - Item #3 - Master Gardener opinion surveys

- Marilyn is summarizing the results and will be distributing them to the Board.
- Item #4 – Options for master gardeners with physical limitations
 - Margo is working on this but was not present to report.
- Item #5 – Hospitality Committee
 - Marilyn reported that a committee has been formed but this will be an ongoing item.
- Item #6 – Garden historian
 - This item is in process. There is a volunteer but Margo is still working on determining the responsibilities for this position.
- Item #7 – Metal sign
 - Mary Beth reported that this has been completed.
- Item #8 – Changing the monthly meeting time
 - Brenda reported that this has been completed.
- Item #9 – Guidelines for usage of the Outdoor Classroom
 - Nat will be responsible for this item.
- Item #10 – Equipment inventory
 - Margo is working on this item.
- Item #11 – Equipment manager
 - This item is still under discussion.
- Item #12 – Mentoring program
 - Margo is working on this item.
- Item #13 – Posting insect cards on website
 - Robert reported that this item is complete.
- Item #14 – Removal of citrus trees
 - Removal will be postponed (see Landscape discussion)
- Item #15 – Dedication of Outdoor Classroom
 - In process
- Item #16 – Flag design contest
 - Deleted from list
- Item #17 – Creation of storm prep list
 - In process
- Item #18 – Posting of updated Operations Manual
 - In process

Property Fence

- Cindy has obtained two estimates for a proposed fence on the extension property. Both are for a chain link 6' fence made with 9-gauge 2" coated mesh. The fence would include two gates and would be mounted in concrete. An estimate from Brazos Fence Co. is \$21,772 and one from Apache Co. is \$16,361.
- A discussion followed regarding the fence. This would require approval from the county and would need to be discussed with the commissioner and Don Brady. The county does not have plans at this time to add the road. Some vandalism has occurred on the property and a list of these events should be sent to Jane, Cindy and Margo.

- It was decided that the Board would not proceed on the fence at this time but would keep the issue as an item on the Unfinished Business list, thereby establishing a target date for review. It was further decided to create a motion to continue to monitor any property and landscape losses, hold the funds for the fence in the budget, reevaluate through the last business meeting of 2009. Jodi moved that this motion be accepted, Cindy seconded the motion and it was approved by all.

New Business:

Reimbursement for Specialist Training

- A discussion was held on the current policy for the eligibility and reimbursement criteria for master gardeners attending specialist training
- A plan to cap the number of trainings per year and a requirement to add 12 required service hours within 12 months is being developed. Marilyn will wordsmith the plan for this for next month's board meeting.

Security

- The need for a safe was discussed but it was decided not to pursue this.
- The use of security guards at the sales has gone very well. Brenda will write a thank-you note to the Sheriff to commend the deputies for their help.

Appreciation gift for Heidi

- The Board discussed setting up an event for Heidi to see the FBMG grounds and have dinner with her. Tuesday was suggested as a good day of the week and Mary Beth will check dates for this in the last part of April. Carl's restaurant was suggested for the dinner location.
- Mary Beth made a motion to approve a \$50 speaker meal fee to pay for Heidi's dinner, James seconded the motion and it was approved by all.

Appreciation gift for Melissa Anderson

- Glenn reported that Melissa in the extension office has been extremely helpful to FBMG. The members of the Board voted to give her a \$50 gift card to show their appreciation. The motion was made by Glenn, seconded by James and approved by all. Brenda volunteered to get the card.

FBMG Classes

- Jodie told the Board that Terry had gotten a number of inquiries from people interested in night classes.

Nat adjourned the meeting at 9:04 p.m.

The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 14th at 6:30 p.m. in the annex kitchen.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Peacock
Secretary, Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.
Amended and submitted 4/17/09

**Communications Director Report
March 17, 2009**

1. Barbara Buckley has been tasked with making changes to the website in order to better familiarize her with the content and technical layout. So far, she is doing extremely well!
2. Now that the sale season is over, we will start investigating the FAQ list and determining the layout and general content.
3. The Perennial Sale link was added to the Home page of the website. It was removed after the sale. Also, the Perennial Sale 2009 page was created and new photos added.
4. I have a request into Google search to find out what requirements they have for providing a free localized search engine for non-profit organizations.
5. I provided the board members with a Web Site Endorsement recommendation as part of the 2008 Unfinished Business listing #2. I will include it as the second page of this report.

Submitted by Robert Goehring

**Web Site Endorsement Guidelines
2008 Unfinished Business #2
Draft**

Background:

In 2008, the Katy Home and Garden Show was prominently featured on the home page of www.FBMG.com with a link to a flyer and promotional coupon. A booth, manned by Master Gardeners, was provided at the show. A concern was raised as to whether or not it was appropriate to advertise a commercial event on our web site.

Discussion:

Many events that are popular with, or are useful to, Master Gardeners are provided by our Master Volunteer Coordinator through her "APBeees". Some of these events may involve a cost and may even specify a commercial enterprise (such as the Enchanted Gardens). Although no specific endorsement of the commercial enterprise is made, there could be an assumption of endorsement if presented to the public via our web site.

Since this concern was raised, a Privacy Policy statement was developed and included on the web site. In part, the policy statement includes a disclaimer stating that "*References to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the AgriLife Extension or the FBCMG is implied*".

Recommendations:

1. Develop a listing of commercial enterprises with which FBCMG have a mutually beneficial association, i.e., partnerships (potentially Tree Search Farms, Inc. and others), and publish this listing on the web site with a statement that we have a working relationship with these enterprises. Include a statement also indicating that although we have a relationship with them, neither FBCMG nor AgriLife specifically endorses them. The Communications Director and Master Volunteer Coordinator shall periodically review the list to ensure accuracy of current partnerships.
2. Allow the use of advertising commercial events on our web site but limit the advertising to a single PDF document linked from the event date on our calendar. In other words, place the event in our calendar and have it linked to their flyer. Limit the events listing to only those events of interest to FBCMG members (horticultural information). Do not prominently display the event on the Home page. The Executive Committee members, the Board of Directors, or

the Master Volunteer Coordinator shall make decisions relating to which events will be placed on the calendar.

3. Occasionally, some events may be of such import that displaying information about that event on the Home page of the web site would be beneficial to the FBCMG membership and the public in general. To allow such exceptions to the general recommended guidelines, each instance shall be approved by the Executive Committee of the FBCMG Board of Directors and the Master Volunteer Coordinator. The display of such exceptions should be short timeframes not exceeding 7 calendar days. Each exception shall include a disclaimer prominently displayed with the event description.

March 2009 Greenhouse Report

February was extremely busy in the greenhouse.

All the vegetables (approximately 1900 plants) were bumped up and cared for. We learned a lot and had even more fun in our first ever endeavor of growing and selling vegetables and herbs. A great group of master gardeners really worked hard on this project. I hope all of you got to see what great plants we had for the sale!!

A thermal heat printer was bought so that all 4" pots would have pot tags and labels . This printer can also print weather proof ID signs for all the gardens. 9" T-stakes and labels were purchased to make the garden signs.

More vegetables are being grown for the community garden.

Now that the vegetables are out of the greenhouse the needed repairs and cleaning can begin.

Submitted by James Buckley

Ft. Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.
Landscaping Report – March, 2009
Report to the Board

Submitted by: Cindy Fairbanks/Jane Gray

Berry Patch –

Dell sprayed the berries. Cleaned up on workday.

Butterfly Garden –

Barbara has bought some butterfly plants. They will be planted soon. She has been very busy with the perennials and the vegetables getting them ready for the sale.

Circle Gardens –

Winter plantings are still very beautiful.

Cottage Garden –

Clean up and pruning was done at the workday. Two new benches were built under the arbor and the bridge will be getting fixed.

Earth Kind Rose Garden –

No report.

Everyone's Garden (the E-Garden) –

Falling fence around the air conditioner was taken down. Working on getting someone to take the Chair position.

Front Yard -

Laurie Whittle is working on getting some water to the area. Also, replacing plants and getting those that do well in our climate. Using many plants from the greenhouse. She had help at the workday.

Herb Knot Garden –

Carol cleaned out cuttings by vineyards and pruned roses by the entrance.

Japanese Garden –

The sprinkler system was worked on by Jim Cowan during the Saturday workday. The drip system is a mess and doesn't do an adequate job of getting all of the plants watered. Mulch and leaves were placed around the large oak tree and many items were pruned. Someone went into the garden and pruned back several of the crepe myrtles. Maria, Marlene, Jane, Cindy and Mac will be meeting on the March 19th with Adam from Nelson's Water Gardens to discuss putting in a water feature in the creek bed.

Native Garden/Rain Harvesting –

Native garden looking great and many members showed up to help clean and prune. Catherine Pennington told us that the wood and rocks that are sitting on the side of the building is for Rain

Harvesting area and will be taken out and placed somewhere else. Flags have been placed in the Rain Harvesting area to show where the cement slab that holds the cistern will be placed.

Rose Garden –

Faith is adding pass along plants in with the roses.

Vegetable Garden –

Potatoes, tomatoes and pepper plants were planted during the Saturday workday. The potato eyes are starting to sprout through the hay. Peas are started to flower and are about 3 or 4 feet high already. Patti has been keeping up with the Veggie Information Notebook.

Vineyard –

Carolyn McDaniel and committee members pruned the vines. The weeds were taking over and they are working on calling some grass growing companies and finding out how much it will cost for grass. Cliff mowed the weeds at the workday.

Water Garden –

No report from Terri Williams.

Yardwise/Compost –

Valerie, Diane and Ron worked at cleaning up the composting area. Cindy Fairbanks will be checking on fixing one of the old shredders or buying a new one. They have decided to shorten the walkway and also cement in 2 of the composting bins into a slab of cement. Valerie was told about the unique composting area that Margo saw at the gardens in Galveston. Valerie said that they would like to use it and it would be easy to install. It would be a great chance to show several different ways of composting.

Miscellaneous –

- ❖ Margo, Jane and Cindy checked out the 3 citrus trees in the back and decided not to replace them right now. They will be pruned and fertilized. We will give them a year and see if they improve. That is listed as Unfinished Business #14. Debrah Birge will be helping with a citrus tree area that will be placed behind the composting.
- ❖ Marlene Shobe, class of spring 09 will be the new Co-Chair of the Japanese Garden after graduation. She will be working with Co-Chair Maria Blaise.
- ❖ Work has started on the flowerbed for the Outdoor Classroom. Cindy and Jane worked for 3 hours placing rocks around the drip line of the gazebo. Rock drain lines will be placed in the northern side of the flowerbed and one around the eastern side of the gazebo. A step will be placed on the eastern side of the gazebo. Jane and Cindy are working with Jim Cowan, Cliff and Glenn on the placement of the sprinkler system. We need to make a motion to add money to the Outdoor Classroom line item.
- ❖ Fence: FYI... Cindy Fairbanks has 2 bids for the fence when the board votes on the installation.
- ❖ Jane and Cindy will send an email to the chairs about the April 18th tour by Felder Rushing. He will be speaking at 10:00am, having a barbeque lunch and then a tour of the gardens.
- ❖ Many items need to be fixed in the gardens. Margo suggested having a maintenance workday.
- ❖ Jane ordered and received a flagpole that will be placed by the gazebo. Glenn and Cliff will install a light with a timer. It will be placed on the corner of the greenhouse and it will shine on the flag.
- ❖ Next workday will be April 4th. See you all there.

Youth Activities Report

March 15, 2009

- March 25, 2009 Deaf Smith Elementary, Rosenberg
School has established Habitat Garden; starting
JMG program/group
- March 28, 2009 Fort Bend Museum, Children's Day, Richmond
JMG activity—paper pots; estimating 300 children.
- April 4, 2009 FBCMG Garden Work Day
JMG activities for MG children, 9-11 a.m.
- June 15-19, 2009 JMG Day Camp – Earth-kind Kids Kamp, Rosenberg
Note date change---4-H State Shooting Sports will use Range during
June 8-12.