



**Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.
Board of Directors Meeting
September 9, 2008**

Attendees –

Board Members Present: James Buckley, Jodie Douglass, Brenda Dresner, Glenn Dresner, Robert Goehring, Ginny Grant, Jane Gray, Mike Greenwood, Nat Gruesen, Mary Beth McCaughey, and Marilyn Almon.

Board Members Absent: Sallie Bourgeois, Barbara Brannon, Barbara McCormick, and Cindy Fairbanks.

AgriLife Extension Advisor Present:
Master Volunteer Coordinator, Fort Bend County – Margo McDowell

AgriLife Extension Advisor:
CEA - Horticulture – Open position

Quorum Present? Yes

Call to Order – Nat Gruesen called the Board of Directors meeting to order at 6:57 p.m.

Approval of the Minutes – After a motion by Robert Goehring and a second by Brenda Dresner, the minutes of the August 12, 2008, Board meeting were approved by all.

Officer and Committee Reports:

President – Nat Gruesen

- Nat announced that construction on the outdoor classroom was completed.
- Nat complimented Robert for his work on the website.

Vice President – Barbara McCormick

- Barbara was not present.

Secretary – Marilyn Almon

- No report.

Treasurer – Mike Greenwood

- Mike reported that the sale of insect cards by the Entomology Group will be reported on a separate line of the P&L under Other Income.

Past President – Mary Beth McCaughey

- No report.

Awards – Jodie Douglass

- Jodie will write an article for The Grapevine requesting volunteers to help with the awards banquet which will be held on December 10th.
- Mary Beth commented that it is now time to begin writing the 2009 TMGA awards applications.

Communications – Robert Goehring

- Robert's report is attached to the minutes.
- All certified members will be notified about the recent password change.

Community Relations – Brenda Dresner

- Brenda made a motion that the new insect cards created by the Entomology Group be sold for \$3 per set. Mike seconded the motion and it was approved by all.
- Jodie needs help with Green Thumb set up and take down each month.

Fundraising – Barbara Brannon

- Barbara was not present.

Greenhouse – James Buckley and Glenn Dresner, co-chairs

- Jodie questioned the wind velocity tolerance of the greenhouse.
- Mary Beth thanked Cliff Bergman and Glenn for installing the new signs on the grounds identifying the FBCMG demonstration gardens.
- Glenn stated that a storm preparation checklist is needed for the grounds. Ginny suggested creating a spreadsheet with assignments to be executed and checked off. Nat suggested refining the spreadsheet and posting it on the website.
- Margo stated that Patrice Kyle had obtained 12 new plant carts for FBCMG that were about to be discarded by Lowe's.

Landscape – Cindy Fairbanks and Jane Gray, co-chairs

- Cindy and Jane's report is attached to the minutes.
- Nat will send a thank you letter to Treeseach Farms for donating trees to be planted on the grounds.
- Steve Spears is the new chair of the Trees Across the Grounds committee, replacing Dell Keene.
- Glenn stated that there is a serious need to have someone responsible for keeping the donated trees and newly purchased trees watered. Nat, Jane, and Cindy will formulate a plan to accomplish the task.
- Concerning the expense of landscaping the Outdoor Classroom area, Mary Beth commented that there is almost \$5,000 in the Outdoor Classroom capital budget which could be used for landscaping purposes. In 2009, this area will have its own separate budget for landscaping which will be reflected on the P&L.
- Mary Beth also suggested hiring a licensed irrigation specialist who could handle irrigation issues when Doug Staff leaves.

Member Relations – Sallie Bourgeois

- Sallie was not present.

Youth Activities – Ginny Grant

- Ginny announced that Margo would be requesting volunteers to work in the Ag'tivity Barn. The Ag'tivity Barn committee would like to have the exhibits manned full time.

Standing Committee Reports:

Governance Committee

- No report.

Extension Service Advisor Reports:

CEA – Horticulture – Open

- Mark resigned from the position on September 3, 2008.

Master Volunteer Coordinator, Fort Bend County – Margo McDowell

- Margo reported that Doug Welsh sold copies of his newest book, The Texas Garden Almanac, to the Fall 2008 class on September 3rd. Margo will order 50 more books that will be sold to FBCMG members.
- Margo expressed concerns about master gardeners having to pay sales tax for refreshment items.
- Mary Beth will contact Wal-Mart regarding their procedures for nonprofit purchases.
- The Texas Rose Rustlers will pay the speakers fee for Felder Rushing's presentation on April 18, 2009, and FMCBG will be listed as a co-sponsor. Rental of the convention center will be investigated since the crowd is anticipated to be larger than the capacity of the Bud O'Shieles Community Center. Robert will post event information on the website when it is available.

Old Business:

Fall Garden Tours

- Board members expressed verbal acceptance of the written proposal presented by Marilyn to hold informal tours of master gardeners' gardens on four consecutive Sunday afternoons beginning October 19th. The proposal is attached to the minutes. Marilyn will chair the committee to organize the tours and will obtain assistance on the committee.

New Business:

Extra September Workday

- Due to the uncertain path of Hurricane Ike, plans for an additional September garden workday were canceled.

Fence

- One bid for \$21,000 for fencing and posts has been obtained. Robert expressed concern about whether there would be a \$21K payoff for damages on the grounds over the depreciable life of the fence. Nat commented about the increased volume of foot traffic through the grounds and the need to protect the property. It was agreed that avenues for sharing costs with other entities should be explored.
- Robert made a motion, seconded by Jodie and approved by all, to restrict \$30,000 until December 31, 2008, for capital improvements.

Flag/Flag Pole

- Glenn suggested that FBCMG hold a contest to design a master gardener flag to be flown on the demonstration grounds. He and Brenda will draft rules and guidelines for a contest. Comments and suggestions can be emailed to Brenda.

Nominating Committee

- Mary Beth will chair the nominating committee and have suggestions for committee members in October. Recommendations of members to serve on the nominating committee or for officer positions can be emailed to Mary Beth.

Other New Business

- There was discussion about the security of the roster on the website and the propriety of having certain information on the public pages versus the members only page. Robert assured Board members that the roster is secure and that the website is very low risk.
- Glenn reminded everyone that it is time to prepare budgets for year end submittal and approval in January 2009. Garden chairs were given budget instructions at their midyear meeting.
- Mary Beth commented on the need for a midyear financial review and Marilyn suggested a third quarter review for 2008. Nat will contact Gail Blair about conducting the audit.
- The public dedication of the Outdoor Classroom was discussed again. Guidelines for its usage are still needed.
- Marilyn will research the minutes for unfinished business from previous months in 2008 and report the findings to the Board.

After a motion by Nat, seconded by Brenda and approved by all, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

The next Board meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, October 14th, at 6:30 p.m. in the Annex kitchen.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Almon
Secretary, Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.
10/13/2008

Communications Director Report – September 2008

1. Entomology section for the website has been uploaded.
2. New header and footer for each page have been updated.
3. Our website, www.FBMG.com, is averaging more than 7,000 visitors each month. Since January, we have had over 57,000 visitors and well over 100,000 visitors since we launched our new format just over one year ago.

Submitted by Robert Goehring

Greenhouse Report September, 2008

Listed below is the report on Greenhouse activities for the September 2008 Board meeting. I have included some miscellaneous report items for activities that really do not fall into any particular board member area.

Greenhouse Report:

- * The plastic tube that distributes the air from the heaters in the greenhouse was repaired. The operation of the blower fan for this distribution tube was modified so that it can be operated in manual. It is hoped that this manual operation will give better air distribution in the greenhouse which will hopefully give better environment for healthier plants.
- * Clean up of the areas of the tables was accomplished along with removal of dead plants from the tables. We are preparing the greenhouse for the tours planned for September.
- * Cliff, James and I continue to work on the watering of the plants in the shade room. We are trying to find the correct type of nozzles for watering of plants moved to this area.
- * Additional shelving was purchased and erected for more storage in the greenhouse.
- * Cliff, Doug Staff, and I continue to look for possible solutions to the poor drainage in the entrance to the greenhouse. Any suggestions on ways to eliminate or minimize this problem will be greatly appreciated.

Miscellaneous Report Items:

- * All the work is complete on the gazebo except for some touch up painting that needs to be done where the roof area meets the walls. All the vinyl siding has been installed in the ceiling of the gazebo and the fans and lights are fully operational. Switches inside the electrical breaker panel need to be turned on for the fans, lights, and 110v receptacles to have power. This was designed this way so that this equipment was not accidentally left running when no one is around.
- * All the FBGM signs purchased by the board have been installed around the various gardens. The large 48" x 52" metal sign was also installed near the entrance to the Master Garden offices on Band Road.
- * We also picked up 12 carts that had been used by Lowe's in their plant area. Lowe's was going to dispose of the carts until Patrice; one of our Master Gardeners said she wanted to see if they could be used by FBMG. We picked up the carts and they are stored in the barn area.

Submitted by Glenn Dresner

September 8, 2008

Ft. Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.
Landscaping Report – September 2008

Report to the Board

Submitted by: Cindy Fairbanks/Jane Gray

Berry Patch –

Dell and other are working on preparing the strawberry beds for new plants.

Butterfly Garden –

Regretfully Denise Riccobono has to resign from being Chair. Barbara Buckley will take over this garden as long as she has a co-chair. Jane and I will be working on finding her someone. Barbara has agreed to give up her duties in the Rose Garden and hand them over to Faith

Circle Gardens –

Becky and committee members will soon be planting some of the new plants that are growing in the greenhouse.

Cottage Garden –

Collected dinner plates are being placed around the borders to add a colorful touch. Old knives, forks and kitchenware of all kinds are being collected to create a wind chime.

EarthKind Rose Garden –

More mulch was laid around the roses. Working on getting the weeds under control.

Everyone's Garden (the E-Garden) –

A rain harvesting presentation by Cathy Pennington and David Gerstenberger will be given to the E-Garden committee this Wednesday, Sept. 10th. Anyone here this week is invited to come. Waiting on electrical plug to be installed for the fountain. Drawing will be looked at this Wednesday. Pictures are being taken.

Front Yard -

Pruning and mulching was done.

Greenhouse -

Seeds planted a few weeks ago are growing.

Herb Knot Garden –

Labels were added and staking was done at the Saturday workday.

Japanese Garden –

Progress was made on cleaning up the garden during the Saturday workday. Maria Blaise from the spring class of 2005 has volunteered to be the new Chair. She has been

in contact with Cheryl who is in England and Cheryl has given Maria several ideas and suggestions.

Native Garden –

A lot of work has been done with so many helpers pitching in and cleaning up at the Saturday workday. Nat, Cindy & Jane met with Cathy Pennington to discuss her rain harvesting plan. A galvanized cistern, windmill and gate will be ordered soon. Vince requested specific measurements of the area.

Rose Garden –

Soaker hoses were buried. Faith Bickley and Nery Voss have agreed to take over as co-chairs of this garden if Barbara Buckley would take over as chair of the Butterfly garden.

Vegetable Garden –

Weeding and new fall seeds were planted this past weekend. Patti has put together a yearly planting chart.

Vineyard -

No report.

Water Garden –

Terri Williams will be adding some more plants to the pond on Tuesday evening. He and others worked very hard at the Saturday workday cleaning up and getting rid of the weeds. Stone will be ordered and delivered soon to finish off the walkway.

Yardwise/Compost –

No report.

Miscellaneous –

- ❖ Sept. Saturday workday was very successful. About 12 Associates did show up and a grand tour of each garden was given to those who wanted it. They were then let loose to work in the garden of their choice and they were a tremendous help. They were able to meet others during our ice cream break.
- ❖ Trees – Dell and Bill Young came out on Friday, Sept. 5th to discuss the new plan for the trees. Dwight from the county has agreed to help us with preparing the holes for each tree. We plan on setting up a date with him. The persimmon trees will be worked into the drawing. Brenda Dresner requested that two olive trees from the cottage garden also be worked into the plan.
- ❖ The outdoor classroom/gazebo landscaping – The design is completed. We are putting together a plan for the exact quantities and costs for each item. We would like to make a motion to request \$1,500.00 to get this project started.

Informal Fall Garden Tours Proposal

The idea for holding informal tours of members' gardens arose from a discussion by a few FBCMG members at a Wednesday workday lunch in early August. All who were a part of the discussion agreed that although considerable work and planning would be required to reinstate the FBCMG Annual Fall Garden Tour which was held in the past, holding informal tours of members' gardens would be achievable with much less planning. The concept was introduced to the Board on August 12, 2008, and I agreed to formulate the following proposal for Board discussion and vote at the September Board meeting.

Objective: To make available to the FBCMG membership informal tours of certified members' gardens in an "as is" state.

- Those who volunteer to open their gardens would be able to do so without the added pressure of having their gardens in the show condition that would be expected if this were meant to be a fundraiser open to the public.
- Garden tours would be open to members only and not to the general public.
- Members could gain ideas and learn from each other as well as enjoy the resulting comraderie.

Proposed Dates and Locations:

- Four consecutive Sunday afternoons - October 19, 26, and November 2, and 9.
- 1pm to 5 pm (Daylight savings time ends on Nov. 2nd)
- Fort Bend County would be divided roughly into four sections, featuring gardens in one section per week. This would minimize driving time between gardens as well as gas consumption and maximize the time spent enjoying the gardens each week.
- Locations could be mapped on Google maps and made available on the website (members only page) for each week's schedule. Map info would be verified for accuracy before posting.
- For those few members who do not use computers, they would have to pick up driving directions from Margo's office each week.

Garden Selection:

- The request for participating gardens could be announced in the APBees, The Grapevine, on www.fbmg.com in the members only section, and at the September monthly meeting. The selection process and scheduling would be explained in the written announcements.
- Ideally, there would be a minimum of three gardens and a maximum of six gardens scheduled each week.
- Gardens would be previewed in advance by a committee of three FBCMG members before adding them to the schedule to ensure suitability.
- In the event more than six gardens are volunteered for a given week, selections may have to be made. Criteria for selection may include uniqueness, educational concepts and gardening practices, creativity in design and content, how challenges have been met, safety, accessibility, and any other factors that may be considered relevant.

Tour Days:

- Tours would be held rain or shine, but cancelled if severe weather conditions were present. There would be no rain out dates.
- Homeowners must be present for the duration of the tour hours: 1 pm until the last visitor has left.
- Homeowners would not be expected to offer refreshments to visitors, but may if they so choose.
- It would be the responsibility of the homeowners to obtain guidance assistance in their gardens on tour days if they think it is needed.
- Volunteer hours for those assisting would not be granted unless approved by Margo. Hours preparing gardens for the tour would not be given unless approved by Margo. Volunteer hours (4) would be granted to the homeowner for the day of the tour, if approved by Margo. Master gardeners attending the tour would not receive volunteer or advanced training hours.

Liability:

- Homeowners would accept liability for any accidents that may occur as the result of their negligence on their property.
- FBCMG would not be held liable for any damages. (Do we need a signed waiver or proof of liability insurance?)

Advantages:

- Does not require long range planning, massive advertising, ticket sales, or large committees.
- Not open to the public.
- It is believed that there will be enthusiastic members who are willing to share their gardens to foster this member relations opportunity. Other than at workdays and at the monthly meetings, members are not offered many opportunities for socializing as a large group.
- The accent is on "informal" garden tour so that more members will be inclined to invite master gardeners into their gardens.
- Enough interest may be generated to eventually reinstate the annual garden tour open to the public.
- Master gardeners can learn from other master gardeners.

Workforce Needed:

- Committee chair to coordinate and schedule gardens
- Two contact people to receive info on gardens being offered
- Three members for garden approval and for selection should there be more than six gardens volunteered for a given week
- Webmaster (Robert) to post info on website as it becomes available
- One or two people to verify accuracy of driving directions
- Someone to write weekly APBees to announce the schedule
- Someone to prepare the hard copy of directions each week for Margo's office
- One person can handle more than one job assignment

*****Do we need approval from Extension for this project?

Submitted by Marilyn Almon, September 8, 2008