

Minutes of the Southwest Louisiana Master Gardeners' Monthly Meeting Mar. 5, 2024



Master Gardener President Rob Piraro called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. at the LSU Lake Charles AgCenter on Gulf Hwy. Mark Derise led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Minutes

Janice Esthay moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes, since they were emailed to the members for review prior to the meeting. Thelma Cook seconded the motion. The motion carried. Minutes will be filed as the emailed version.

REPORTS

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Thelma Cook reported that we had a closing balance of \$45,290.72. Income was from early plant sale - \$5,456 and Calendar sales - \$550. Expenses included materials to improve the shade area on the south side of the greenhouse - \$263.53; sink shelf - \$142.51; Harris Seed - \$57.47; Soil - \$99.09; Sausage for Expo jambalaya - \$87.92; Cart for Expo Hospitality Room - \$88.15; Printer cartridge - \$103.58; Donuts for plant sale workers - \$47.35; and a table for the greenhouse - \$38.57. Betsy Doucet moved to accept the report and it was seconded by Mark Derise. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

4-H: Janet reported that she attended the Calcasieu 4-H meeting this past Tuesday night and all is progressing well.

School Gardens: Nola passed around a list of schools that need volunteer help. She encouraged members to sign-up. 22 schools were listed, and she said about half of those are active with some type of gardening program. Our schoolboard contact is Leslie Petrov. About 12 school representatives showed up to our early plant sale and we distributed 6 strawberry plants and 4 tomato plants to each. The proceeds from our silent auction at the Expo on Thursday night goes to support schools in their gardening efforts.

Rose Garden: Cynthia Robertson read a report from Julie Engert regarding the rose garden. Julie would like to thank Mary McMahan, Maria Bond, and Cynthia for their help in the rose garden. Julie is in the process of procuring pine straw for the rose garden. James Burnet does not have any available, so she is looking for other local sources.

Scholarship: Linda Finley reported that we started giving scholarships in 2010 and to date we have awarded \$26,000 in scholarships. Our current scholarship recipient is Chelsea Coleman from Beauregard. Chelsea is a senior planning on going to LSU in the fall to become a veterinarian. She currently works part-time at the Delta Equine Center in Vinton and is a reserve member of the air force.

New BUSINESS

Garden Expo: Mark reported that we have 2100 plants to sell at the Expo. We will sell vegetables, fig trees, and landscape plants. Janice Esthay asked if it was possible to reward persons who donated \$75 or more worth of items for the silent auction two free Jambalaya tickets. The group was in agreement. Tickets for the jambalaya are still available.

Rob reminded members that the next Expo meeting will be held this coming Friday at 10 am. There are sign-up sheets for volunteers to help our with the Jambalaya, Hospitality Room, and Thursday night desserts. The president of the Beauregard MG's assured Rob that they would have volunteers to sit at the North Door and help in Hospitality Room.

Preparations for Expo will begin on Tuesday, with getting plants ready for the move to Burton Coliseum.

Wednesday will be floor marking day from 9:00 – 1:00 along with Jambalaya preparations. People volunteering to help with Jambalaya should bring knives and cutting boards and be prepared to cut sausage and meat. Wednesday will also be set-up day for the Hospitality room. Kathy Sledge is the coliseum contact and she has agreed to provide lunches of fish burgers and hamburgers on Friday and hamburgers on Saturday. There will be no lunch on Thursday, but snacks and coffee will be available. The hospitality room will be open from 8am – 5pm on Friday and Saturday.

On Thursday, the jambalaya will be cooked, desserts will be put in serving sizes all in the kitchen and Chalkley Room. Serving will start at 4:30pm to vendors. Doors open to the public at 5 pm and we will serve until 7pm.

Lenn Knapp had large Expo signs on display that we need to have re-made. His question was on whether the signs needed to be single sided or double sided. These are the large signs posted at the North and South entrances of the coliseum letting the public know of the entrance fee and hours of operation. The consensus was that signs may be hung on walls so single sided would be sufficient. The cost of single sided signs is \$485; double sided is \$496.

Nominating Committee

Betsy Doucet announced that the committee is still searching for members interested in serving the organization in an officer position. Anyone interested in any office should contact Janet P. or Betsy D.

Flower Garden

Linda Bienvenue moved that we purchase a structure sturdy enough to hold a tarp over the ponytail plant that is in the south garden. She has found one that would be appropriate on Amazon for \$200. The motion was seconded by Janet and passed unanimously.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:56 am.

Attendance

Linda Bienvenue
Mark Derise
Janice Esthay
Veronica Benoit
Janet Piraro
Rob Piraro
Thelma Cook
Sam Istre
Frank Conrad
Cynthia Robertson
Jessie Arabie
Betsy Doucet
Myna Boggan

Gyneth Simmons
Mary McMahan
Annette DesOrmeaux
Clare Prejean
Linda Finley
Roger Newman
Patty Palmer
Maria Bond
Cindy Ottenweller
Leonard Knapp
Alice O'Keefe
Susan Burke
Nola Ducote

Dianne Fruge
Raymond Andrews
Keith Lawrence
Carolyn Miller
Gloria Byars