

JCMG Steering Committee

Wednesday, Sept. 13, 6:30 P.M., Hybrid Meeting

Minutes

8. Call to order 6:35 P.M. (12/24 Quorum-no)

Present:

Doug Geraets, Chair
Jean Holzhammer, Treasurer
Barb Robinson, Secretary
Emil Rinderspacher, Plant Sale & Flea Market
Chris Sedrel, Demo Garden, Fairgrounds Beautification
Lavon Yeggy, Plum Grove Gardens, Buckets of Flowers, 4H Scarecrows
Megan Garrels, Speakers Bureau
Kay Mohling, Yard and Garden Information
Linda Schreiber, Downtown City Gardens
Michael Hesseltine, Ecumenical Tower
Mary Starry, Hortline
Darlene Clausen, Plum Grove, Plant Sale & Flea Market

Absent:

Jackie Wellborn, Vice-Chair, Yard and Garden Information
Melissa Serenda, Thymes
Laurie Roehl, Demo Garden, Fairgrounds Beautification
Carolyn Murphy, Plum Grove Gardens, Butterfly House
Mike Murphy, Butterfly House
Karen Martinek, Coralville Schoolhouse
Beth Fisher, Social Events
John Weeg, Ecumenical Tower
Barb Schintler, Firefighters Memorial
Melanie Hauptert, Hospice Garden
Vickie Siefers, Oaknoll
Sharon Jeter, Past Chair

Others present: Shannon Bielicke, Kathy Erenberger, Jan Dallas

9. Approval of August 2023 meeting minutes - approved with minor corrections

10. Treasurer's Report

- a. General Fund: **\$34,690.79**

- Income: \$50.00 from Karen Hughes (memorial in honor of Virginia Stutsman)
- Expense: \$3928.84
- b. Plum Grove: **\$973.99**
 - Expense: \$314.89
- c. Butterfly House: **\$4,579.70**
 - Expense: \$1,653.93
- d. New or known pending receipts (as of Sept. 12):
 - Barb Schintler, \$78.11, MG General, Plum Grove account, Plum Grove Heritage party, table supplies
 - Darlene Clausen, \$180.45, Plum Grove account, Plum Grove gardens, wire cloches & galvanized netting
 - Darlene Clausen, \$66.17, Plum Grove account, Plum Grove Tomato Taste, Aero Rental - PA system rental

11. Extension Report/Announcements (Shannon)

- a. Staffing report: Tammy broke her foot but will be in the office M, W, F. She has the old cell phone #.
- b. The 28E agreement (a memorandum of understanding between the fair board and JCMG) was signed in the spring. The agreement addresses the use of space, equipment and supplies.

12. Review of JCMG Steering Committee Meeting Calendar (Doug)

- a. September
 - The initial planning meeting for the May 11, 2024 Plant Sale & Flea Market has been scheduled for Sept. 27, 2023 at 7P.M. via Zoom.
 - Finalize dates for MG activities in the coming year (see New Business).
 - The events calendar can be found on the MG website at the bottom of the MG only page and also on the MG Facebook page.

- The 2023 Fall Harvest Social & Potluck will be Sunday Oct. 1, from 4-7P.M. Please refer to the Thymes newsletter for more information. There will not be an education component this year. Instead Shannon has planned a Jeopardy-like gardening game.

b. October

- Nominate steering committee officers
 - ☐ Only the vice-chair will be nominated. Please forward names of possible candidates to Doug or Shannon before the next meeting.
- Develop fiscal budget with project leaders
 - ☐ Doug requested that project leaders please come to the October meeting with a budget request for 2024.
 - ☐ Shannon asked Jean to prepare an updated budget breakdown (by project) for the October 11 meeting.
 - ☐ There was discussion of larger budget items that will be requested for Ecumenical Towers and Plum Grove. Michael described damage from a motor vehicle and Lavon reported that the fences for all 3 Plum Grove gardens need to be repaired or replaced.
- The 2023 review of Bylaws has been completed. The next review will be in 2026.

c. November

- Approve fiscal budget
- Approve steering committee officers (vice-chair)
- MG project brochure review
- Reporting hours reminder
 - ☐ Shannon explained that hours for one project can be lumped together for reporting.

- ☐ Michael suggested that the MG class session that Shannon presents could be recorded and made available on the website for member review as needed.

6. Old Business

- a. Update on *JCMG Community Speaker Series 2024* (previously JCMG Continuing Education) - Linda
 - The event will be held March 3 (alt. March 24). Of the 3 invitations, 2 speakers have confirmed and 1 declined. Another invitation has been issued.
- b. Summary Report of the 2023 Plant Sale & Flea Market and Budget Request for 2024
 - Emil presented a table detailing 2023 income (\$15,971), 2023 expenses (\$1872.61), and 2024 requested budget (\$4280)
 - ☐ \$648.08 were one-time expenses in 2023.
 - ☐ \$300 of requested budget items for 2024 are one-time expenses for additional signs.
 - ☐ Planting medium (3 cubic ft. bags) will be purchased from Commercial Land Products in Tipton. (\$2000). The compost we used last year was inexpensive but not ideal for keeping potted plants in the best condition for the sale.
 - ☐ A \$1000 donation is anticipated from Hills Bank, so the total requested 2024 budget is \$3280.
 - Laurie Roehl's husband Larry has volunteered to make new sign standards.
 - Although a quorum of voters was not present, a vote on the requested 2024 budget was held with all voting members present in favor giving provisional approval for Emil to move forward with purchases (so he can lock in purchases before possible price increases in spring 2024).
- c. Vote to approve revised JCMG Bylaws
 - Since there is not a quorum the vote will be delayed until the October meeting. Shannon requested that everyone review the revised document.

- Megan pointed out that the Bylaws defines a quorum as “at least 50% of the members with voting privileges in attendance”. There are currently 24 voting members and 12 were present. This will be addressed at the next meeting.

7. New Business

a. Solon Library request to be Approved Project - Kathy Erenberger & Jan Dallas

- The goal of the project is to “assist with new plantings and general maintenance with existing plantings, weeding and mulching” and to work with the Solon Librarian, Liz King, “to bring some educational presentations to the Library”.
- The project has been in existence for 4 years as a non-core project.
- There are currently no JCMG Core projects in northern Johnson County. Many of the MGs from this area are unable to commute to Iowa City or Coralville on a regular basis to attend scheduled work sessions. There are 10-12 MGs currently working on this project.
- Regular work sessions take place every 1st and 3rd Monday in early evening.
- Friends of the Solon Public Library provide funding for plantings and assist in garden maintenance. The city of Solon provides mulch and water.
- Megan Garrels (Speakers Bureau) is currently working with Librarian Liz King to bring MG educational presentations of interest to the community.
- During discussion Emil pointed out that we (JCMG) have a number of core projects that have moved more toward landscaping and minimized the education component of our mission. Linda suggested that they write an article for the Thymes which would include a work schedule.
- If approved, there will be one coordinator with voting privileges and one co-coordinator. Shannon explained that coordinators are expected to come to Steering Committee meetings, set budgets and submit reports.
- Because there is not a quorum tonight a vote will be deferred until the October 11 meeting. Please contact Kathy Erenberger with any questions.

b. Identify dates for MG activities & events in 2024

- *Community Speaker Series*: Sunday, **March 3** (alt. March 24)
- *Winter/Spring Potluck*: Sunday, **March 17** (tentative).
- *Taste of the Heritage Garden* at Plum Grove: Wednesday, **July 10**.
- *Tomato Taste* at Plum Grove: Sunday, **Aug. 25**, 3:30 – 5 P.M.
- *Johnson County Fair*: Sunday, **July 21** – Wednesday, **July 24** (not yet official).
- *Fall Potluck*: Sunday, **Oct. 6**.

8. **Administrative Reports**

- a. Linda reminded us of the free presentation on Regenerative Farming at the ICPL on Sept. 19.
- b. Michael announced a work session at Ecumenical Towers for Sunday, Sept 17 at 9am. They will be tearing out a bed with a plan of slowly adding back for rejuvenation and redesign.

9. **Adjourn** (8:05 P.M.)

- a. Date of Next Meeting: **Wednesday, Oct. 11**
- b. Thymes Newsletter Deadline: **Wednesday, Sept. 27**

Project Reports

(submitted in advance of meeting)

- **Yard & Garden Information –**
- **Butterfly House –**
- **Coralville Historical Schoolhouse –** Our work team took a break during the extreme heat in July and August. After a visit to check the condition of the gardens and finding them dry and singed looking, we scheduled a group watering, dead heading and weeding session on Sept. 1 which greatly improved the appearance of the gardens. Coordinator, Karen Martinek
- **Ecumenical Towers –** Last Wednesday night, Aug. 30, I spent a couple hours doing a cleanup at ET. John had alerted me that there was an accident over the prior weekend. A motor vehicle had jumped the curb, ran through one of the perennial beds and demolished a bench. Lost was a rose bush and this year's perennials in that bed. I will be sending an approximate replacement cost to the facility for the cost of the handful of plants lost. I also removed some invasive gourd vines planted by someone without consulting the coordinators.

John and I also have a multi-month project planned for this fall running Sept through November and includes existing bed rejuvenation, installing a new perennial bed and hopefully in November the building and installing of raised garden beds to enable residents who have limited range of motion to become gardeners. Coordinator, Michael Hesseltine

- **Demo Gardens –**
- **Downtown City Projects –** Downtown City Gardens MG volunteers continue to maintain the gardens' appearance. We removed sunflowers from Dottie Ray Garden on Melrose Avenue to improve visibility. Linda is drafting Broadway Gardens report for South District and working with Project GREEN to identify native perennials for an Ashton House garden.
- **Fairgrounds Beautification (includes Raingarden) –** Raingarden report: We are starting to deadhead plants but still had 12 different varieties blooming. We are going to plant bulbs for spring blooms.
- **Firefighters Memorial –**
- **Plant Sale & Flea Market –**
- **Hortline –**
- **Hospice Garden at Willow Creek –**
- **Oaknoll Garden Project –**
- **Plum Grove –** See the Thymes for story on Bucky the deer and report on return of tomato tasting & tasty tomatoes we all loved. Fall vegetables planted: fall beets, carrots, spinach & swiss chard. Donated 72lbs of grapes to Community foodbank. Both flower gardens continue to have lots of blossoms but do require some watering (until this week!). We will need to budget for new fences at both vegetable & wildflower gardens as both are old and rotting.
- **The Tomato Tasting** was held Thursday, Aug. 31, 5:30 to 7:00 P.M. The last tasting was held in 2019. The pandemic and lack of tomatoes put the event on hiatus until this year. Event planning committee members were Darlene Clausen,

Lavon Yeggy, Megan Garrels, and Melissa Close. Carolyn Murphy was an advisor. Volunteers for the event included the planning committee and MGs: Doug Geraets, Roger Jenson, Chris Smith, Steve Lyons, Jeff Walberg, Sadia Embree, Fred Meyer, Karen Miller, Janice Hining, Sue Kloos, Esther Retish, Marilyn Kempnich, Barb Schintler, Barb Robinson, Marge Jensen, Leah Latella, Kristin Ho, Helene Donta, and Holly Hotchkiss. Linda Schneider wrote and distributed a press release. Melissa Close contacted the Lucas Farms Facebook administrator. Volunteers signed up either by Sign Up Genius or by contacting Darlene Clausen. Darlene Clausen and Melissa Close served as emcees.

We brought in \$128. There were approximately 30 to 35 attendees. A suggested donation of \$4 was requested. Rental of the speaker system from Aero Rental was \$66.17. No other expenses were incurred. Twenty-two recipe booklets from the Taste of the Heritage Garden at Plum Grove were sold for \$1 each.

There were 20 varieties of tomatoes contributed by Master Gardeners. There were 9 categories for comparisons. Categories were cherry tomatoes, paste tomatoes, and sandwich slicers. Categories were further divided by color. An additional question asked voters to guess which tomatoes were hybrids. Our education effort was to describe the uses for each tomato type on the ballot. We also tried to show the difference between hybrid and heirloom tomatoes.

Samples of Tomato jam and Brethren cheddar bread were served. Melissa Close made the jams and Lavon Yeggy made the bread. The jams were Red Tomato Jam and Yellow Tomato Basil Jam. Recipes were found online. Ingredients were donated by makers.

Door prizes were drawn. Four bouquets were made by Master Gardeners, the book *Ten Tomatoes That Changed the World* by William Alexander was donated by Prairie Lights, two \$25 gift cards were donated by Hills Bank, and a gift bag of Plum Grove plum sauce, grape preserves, and jars of the tomato jams with recipe booklets from the Taste of the Heritage Garden Tastings in 2022 and 2023 were the prizes.

Suggestions for changes for next year include:

- ☐ Add overall best tomato to the ballot
 - ☐ Assign a photographer
 - ☐ Assign someone to distribute flyers
 - ☐ Make yard signs advertising the event
 - ☐ Provide music (background harp, guitar, or the like)
 - ☐ Count attendees
 - ☐ Provide recipe cards for food being tasted
- **Speakers Bureau** –
 - **Thymes Newsletter** – Great project photos and updates filled out the September *Thymes* as we wrapped up the summer. In August, the JCMG-Thymes blog had 362 views from 179 visitors, with the most popular articles being "[Trees please...](#)" by Linda Schreiber and interestingly Marilyn Kempnich's "[Great Grandma's Sun Dill Pickle Recipe](#)" which was originally published back in April

and continues to drive engagement several months later. So ... consider sharing your favorite recipes for the garden!