The Polk County Master Gardeners met at the Polk County Extension Office. Members present were:
Chair Bob Helvey, Chair-Elect Christine Barker, Secretary Sandie Sydnes, Paula Winslow, Sandie Hamilton, Jen Firzleff, Isabella Hurless Banks, Jean Schustek, Cheryl Fridl, Sheri Soich, Nancy Eichmann, Mary Poulter, Marietta Rives, Judy Pierick, Dean Brand, Rosie Surber, Kent Freise, Laurie Barrick, Ruth Doxon, and Dick Chavannes. Sherry Swihart was also present.

Motion by Dean Brand, second by Ruth Doxon, to accept minutes of the previous meeting dated January 17, 2019. Motion carried.

Motion by Ruth Doxon, second by Sheri Soich, to true up Demonstration and Enabling Gardens’ Capital Improvements accounts as discussed, allocate $3000 to each garden and grant all other projects requested amounts with exception of the farmers’ market which will be modified in light of increased fees. Motion carried.

Nancy met with Dick Chavannes today to discuss how the MG finances work and how he could assist Stephanie to keep the finances current. They want someone from each project to check each month that they agree with what the extension office provides.

Project Reports: new updates since the publishing of the March Green Thumb:
Demonstration Garden: Ruth said the pruning labs have been rescheduled to Wednesday March 20 at 1 pm and Saturdays March 23 and 30 at 1 pm. The March 20 date may have additional space for non interns.
Enabling Garden: Sandie said they are adding some Saturday work days between their Spring and Fall cleanup dates which will start at 1 pm and last for at least 2 hours.

Reports and Updates from the MG Program Coordinator- Nancy (Ike) Eichmann:
1. Discussed what to do with an old canopy frame with case but no tent topper and decided to put it on the curb with “free” sign.
2. Sharing ideas from the MG webinar discussion “Engaging New Audiences” (March 13th Urbandale Library) and next steps to use these ideas. Need a way to engage people.
3. Recommend addition of a speakers committee to present to organizations about Polk County Master Gardeners and our projects. Some curriculum material is available from the Extension Office.
   a. Suggested name “Polk County Master Gardeners Ambassadors”
   b. Examples: Kiwanis, Lions Club, Optimists, large employers, Art Center, etc.
   c. Outreach by our volunteers to those organizations as well as responding to speaker requests.
      d. Power Point and standard “elevator speech” is on the list for development by Polk Co. Extension’s Marketing Strategist.
Bob will put out a message exploring the opportunities and see if there are enough people interested.
4. Change name for committee approved last meeting from “Ambassadors” to “Volunteer Engagement”. Purpose of this committee is to connect our volunteers with projects primarily by making phone calls (or face to face meetings) and especially to welcome:
   a. MG transfers (from other counties or states)
   b. Re certifying MG (MG who have been inactive)
   c. Touch base with interns to ensure they are making progress with their 40 hours.
   d. Assist committees with special volunteer needs (for example: carpenter skills, web development)
5. 2019 New Master Gardener Class Schedule can begin August 5 and needs to be completed in November. Eleven engagements required along with one campus date.
6. Growing new leaders, Ike suggests thinking small to avoid scaring people off with large time commitments.
7. New Master Conservationist to be offered in 2019 in Polk County. It will be designed specific to issues in Polk County. Launch hopefully the middle of this summer and limited to 5-29 individuals (possibly up to 25).
8. Background re-checks and more feedback opportunities were sent out and being received back. Ike only sees the feedback survey.
9. Extension Week is April 8-13 with a special event at Des Moines Social Club on Tuesday, April 9th from 5-7 pm. Other events may also be planned.

Old Business
Jean Schustek reported that she and Kent met with City of Johnston. The city has plans for using the greenhouse property. They suggested we meet with the zoning people about getting approval for a hoop house construction. If that were approved and we went ahead with building, then they could us to use the existing greenhouse for 1-2 more years, otherwise we are out of there this summer. Jean said they are developing something to show zoning.
Parking will be a problem again this year. Isabella will be reaching out to the surrounding neighbors to establish some goodwill.

New Business
Project or program request outline was handed out. Bob explained how he, Judy and Jerry would use this to vet requests. They would then either reject the request or else meet with them to prepare a presentation to the steering committee.
Isabella reminded everyone to be on the lookout for plant sale items, especially with upcoming city clean up days.

Moton by Dean Brand, second by Kent Freise, to adjourn. Motion carried.

Need meeting date is Thursday, May 16, 6 PM at the Polk County Extension Office.