Master Gardener State Advisory Committee Minutes
November 13, 2012

PRESENT: Monica David, Harry Clayton, Brenda Dahlfors, Jennifer Fishburn, Joy Gulotta, Rachelle Hollinshead, Rodger Harfst, Pat Kosmach, Shey Lowman, Jennifer Nelson, Corinna Walker

Via telnet: Nancy Kuhajda, Sonya Lallemand, Tracy Jo Mulliken, Linda Smith, MaryAnne Spinner

Guests: Russella Nave

Call to Order: by Harry Clayton @ 10:05 a.m.

Minutes: September 5, 2012 minutes approved with corrections and additions. On page 3 under Mini-Grants added “per county”, so reads “ONLY one grant per county may be awarded a year.” Added under Other Discussion the discussion about whether or not Master Gardener Coordinators or other Extension staff could also serve as Master Gardener volunteers.

REPORTS:

International MG Award Nominations- Monica reported that 5 nominations were submitted from Illinois: DuPage- Convalescence Center, Chicago- Peterson Garden, McLean- Sara’s Garden, Cook South Suburban- Sandwich and Willow Gardens, there may be a sixth nomination.

New Committee Members to Begin in 2013- Rusty Nave (EC, Staff) was introduced as a new member to the committee starting in January. Other new members include: Kari Houle (WC, Staff), Kelly Stelmach (Madison, MG), and Lisa Valle (NW, Staff).

2013 MG Conference- Monica reported that $6,000 was raised at the 2012 conference by the silent auction, she will post the auction results on the MG website. The 2013 conference will be in Moline September 19-21. The popular river boat cruise will be held on Thursday night. There will be two keynote speakers, the themes are garden restoration and gardening then and now. Denise Adams author of Restoring American Gardens: An Encyclopedia of Heirloom Ornamental Plants, 1640-1940 and Vincent Simeone horticulturist and author of several landscape books (http://vincentsimeone.com/Vinnie_S/Welcome_to_the_Website_of_Vincent_Simeone_-_Home.html) are the two keynotes. The conference committee is meeting is early December.

Staff Youth Gardening Workshop in November- Jane Taylor from Maine will conducting training on November 27 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Champaign. She will give an inspirational talk on how to do youth gardens as well as a talk on grass roots fundraising. This is a PDO for Extension staff, there will be 10-12 displays as well. There will be a follow up webinar that will include food safety.

Mini-Grants- Monica has received 5 final reports. She will be sending information about this year’s mini-grants out to counties soon. We will discuss the mini-grant applications at the February telnet.
DISCUSSION ITEMS:

**On-line Reporting, needed changes**- Monica asked for input on needed changes for the Volunteer Time Tracking System. These were the updates requested:

- Add comments so they don’t disappear for MG Coordinators when approved (maybe available if under current year, select category and will see comments).
- Reports need to sort by year or status.
- Hide inactive volunteers or archive them.
- Ability to print out total hours for volunteers, want those with zero hours to show up.
- Automated Volunteer agreements (see motion below)
- Ability to sort by subcategory
- Add year of graduation
- Add anecdotal space to add information such as MG awards or committees
- Change request forms for volunteers to change own contact information
- Ability for state coordinator add statewide events to system
- Email list of volunteers by county for local coordinators
- Subscription list for Imagine newsletter
- ?? check-off list for screening

Discussed Volunteer Agreements and if they should be part of the Volunteer Time Tracking System. Previous discussion supported having the agreement as part of the login process, current concerns were about how to control who gets to sign an agreement. Final decision was not to include the agreement in the system, but to look at having a signable PDF version that can be used at the county level. Brenda made a motion to remove the automated Volunteer Agreement from the Volunteer Time Tracking System, Pat seconded, motion passed.

**2013 ID Cards, suggestions for distribution**- Discussion about what the ID cards are used for. Some show them at the MidAm show to get the MG discount. Some counties use them and others don’t. It was suggested that a template be set up in MS Word so that counties could print them out locally as needed, the template could be put on the MG Coordinators web page. Printing would be an improvement over the current handwritten version.

**Weed ID Booklets**- Monica reported that she was able to purchase 1200 copies of the Weed ID booklets with extra money from the IPM grant. The booklets were produced from an EPA grant and will be available through PubsPlus. The copies that Monica purchased will be distributed to counties as reference material and will be divided proportionally on the number of MGs in the counties. Monica will get copies for the Advisory Committee.

**IPM Modules, open to the public?**- Monica reported that there is extra money from the IPM grant that will be used to develop some more modules on topics like weeds, may also be used as UTube videos. It was agreed that the IPM modules should be opened up to the public. Downy Mildew, EAB and couple of others are also coming up. Certificates will have the .5 hour credit printed on them.

**Cash Handling Guidelines**- Shey shared the cash handling guidelines that she wrote for the Ogle county MGs. Consensus was that cash handling should be the primary responsibility of
Extension staff. Monica said that later this month John Horton will be talking about the new
guidelines for Extension collecting sales tax as mandated by the university on January 1, 2013.
MG manuals that are part of training will not be taxed, but those sold to the public will. There
were questions about if MG plant sales need to charge sales tax. Also cash receipts need to be
given to customers.

**Volunteer’s Assistance with Trainee Interviews** - The committee feels that MGs participating
in trainee interviews is an important recruiting tool as it creates a group bond in the beginning.
HR will allow, a set of recommended questions from HR that can and can’t be asked are being
developed. Also a training module is being created and will be in place in 2014. Counts as
continuing education.

**Review WSU Volunteer Management Modules** - The committee reviewed the Washington
State University Volunteer Management on-line modules, they are very good. It was
recommended that information about these modules be posted on the MG Coordinators resources
page, also suggested a webinar covering on-line resources would be helpful.

There was a discussion about the use of social media to promote MG programs including blogs.
Blogs need to be updated 3 times a week to be effective. Often users don’t associate on-line
content with Extension.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING:**
Reviewed Strategic Planning 2007 document that was put together by Karen Durtschi. A
weakness under Training Limited Advance training courses as a weakness has been taken care
of; Lack of Hort. Educators needs to be replaced with Lack of State Specialists. Under Retention,
mentoring needs to be added as a weakness. Marketing/Political Support, add social media as an
opportunity. MG Programs for the Public, add local programs as a strength. Recognition, remove
lack of consistency.

Monica said that other states are moving more to on-line training, there was a lengthy discussion
about the pros and cons. At least two members did the on-line training and felt that it was not a
disadvantage toward their integrating with the MGs of their unit, but they expected that they
would need to make an effort to become part of the group by attending meetings and
volunteering for projects. Monica said they are looking at training 4 counties at a time with in
person and Elluminate sessions where the in person session would rotate to a different county
each week, so that there would be some face to face interaction. The drawback is that for a class
like plant pathology, there aren’t enough samples to provide to 4 counties at a time. Jennifer
Fishburn suggested that counties be given instructions to develop their own samples.

There was a discussion about retention and a need for mentoring programs in each county with
consistent guidelines. Nancy and Joy have examples from their counties that they will send to the
group. It was suggested that state wide training on mentoring would be helpful, either a telnet or
on-line training module.

Marketing/Political Support with a focus on external marketing was discussed, how to do.
Suggestions were MG Day at capital or include with 4-H Day if doesn’t cause a conflict, use MG
decals on all MG vehicles, find a tie-in with youth gardening, how MGs can interact with local
entities for support by coordinating with unit directors, promoting MG programs for the public.
Monica said 2015 will be the end of telnets, programs will be via Elluminate. Units need to be thinking about projectors and audio speakers to support Elluminate.

Monica asked that everyone read over the Strategic Planning documents she gave us and select two items to target for the next year or two.

**Adjourned:** 2:52 p.m.

**Future 2013 Meetings:**
- February 11th, Monday by telnet (judge Mini Grants)
- May 15th, Wednesday in Champaign or telnet
- September 18th, Wednesday in Moline or telnet

Respectfully submitted:
Shey Lowman
University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener, Stephenson County