Master Gardener State Advisory Board
Minutes November 16, 2011

Present: Harry Clayton, Brenda Dahlfors (new staff), Monica David, Joy Gulotta (new MG), Roger Harfst, Patricia Kosmach, Nancy Kuhajda (new staff), Sonja Lallemand (new staff), Shey Lowman, Tracy Jo Mulliken, Corinna Walker (new MG), Rachelle Hollinshead (new staff), Jennifer Fishburn, Jennifer Nelson

Telenet: Rhonda Ferree, Linda Smith, Mary Anne Spinner

Absent: Peter Chege, Sheila Stamer, Mary Jo Novak, Theresa Greene.

Meeting called to order at 10:02 am

Introductions: New members to committee in parenthesis.

Reports:

Conferences and awards:

- 2011: Last year’s conference was a totally different format. The conference was held on campus with MGs visiting research plots and Horticulture highlights. Staff and faculty conducted tours and gave classes. 250 attendees. The new format was generally well received although a few attendees did not like the fact that they could not park on campus.
- 2012: Sept-6-8 Crystal Lake Holiday Inn. Speakers and tours are nearly planned. Conference will follow normal format- 1 day of tours, 2 days of speakers. Eliot Coleman will be the keynote speaker.
- 2013: This conference will be held in Evansville IN and will be a bi-state conference- IL and IN.
- 2012 Upper Midwest MG conference is being hosted by Minnesota and will be held at the MN Landscape Arboretum near Minneapolis. July 19-21, 2012.
- 2011 International MG conference in West Virginia was a great conference. We received 3 of 18 Search for Excellence awards. Boone County received a first place in the Innovative projects category for their EAB project. Champaign received a 2nd place for their youth detention garden and Macon County received a second place in the workshop category for their Rain Barrel workshops. There was a blog about each SFE winner on the national EMG blog- the blog may be accesses via our IL MG web page.
- 2013 International MG conference will be an Alaskan Cruise- departing out of Seattle.

Advanced Training: Pins are done and will be offered free of charge. Those who have completed the MN or Master Composter training will be grandfathered in to receive their advanced training. For a new MG that had MN or Master Composter advanced trainings much discussion if they need additional trainings. Shey made a motion and Pat seconded to allow grandfathering of previous trainings for six years on new Master Gardeners. The motion passed.

Four Areas of advanced training are: Local foods, Sustainable Landscaping, Master Naturalist, IPM

Discussion Items:

Extension Volunteer Survey: This survey was done to gain input from Extension volunteers before the staff trainings held last fall. Monica and Sheri Seibold will conduct 4 webinars for staff: Risk
management, policies, screening and fiscal management. Screening and risk management procedures will be set up to be uniform for all Extension volunteers. The volunteer reporting system was designed to eventually include reporting of all Extension volunteers. MN will be the next group to implement the online reporting.

Survey and trends: 1,802 volunteers completed the survey -55% (about 1000) of responses were from MG’s. Overall the volunteers gave good ratings to the program. The MG’s comments on the survey indicated 6 areas where we need to improve.

- **Offer more educational opportunities:** Monica hopes to have more online educational topics posted to the MG website. The taped Elluminate sessions from core course training may be used as continuing education- these are now uploaded to the MG Coordinators website.

- **More communication/information on money they raise and how it can be spent:** Much discussion on fundraising and what volunteers should know about budgets. Monica stressed that the MGs within a county need to sit down with their MG Coordinator and County Director and create a yearly budget for expenses including what funds will be brought in thru fundraising. There was discussion on how to reimburse MGs for purchases. Linda went through what McLean County does. Volunteer may be reimbursed for expenses from the in and out account with original receipt. Volunteers may not use university P-cards and should arrange convenient times for staff to purchase items on their cards. Discussion on donations and what can be used for tax write-offs. Joan Stehulak, Ogle County MG has put together a sheet for guidelines on charitable contributions by MGs. This has since been approved by Extension administration and is on the MG website for our volunteers.

- **More mentoring programs:** There was discussion on how to set up a program. It varies what will work according to county. Action item for committee to bring in mentoring ideas for future meetings. Email ideas/suggestions to Monica. This might be a good topic for a future staff webinar.

- **More communication both on state and local level:** More info on county websites would be helpful. Post this committee’s notes on IL MG page. Monica is working on a state MG Blog. The blog will be more programmatic as opposed to talking about favorite types of tomato. There was discussion on Facebook, blogging and tweeting as a good way or not to communicate. **NEED** to add calendar function to state MG page so that county web page can add their event to state page (in process as of 2-2012).

- **Flexibility in volunteer times:** MGs would prefer more evening and weekend volunteer opportunities and meetings.

- **Better marketing of the MG program**

**Screening:** All volunteers will need to be screened. Staff webinar on screening to be held in late November, 2011. Monica wrote an article in Jan- Feb Imagine explaining the need and reasons for screening all MGs. Discussion occurred on our volunteer application, acceptance and rejection letters and other paperwork. Monica and Sheri Seibold hope to have a standardized application form across all program areas. Committee members should send paperwork that is currently used to Monica. Members who offered to work on standardized forms are Monica, Tracy Jo, Sonya, Jennifer and Jennifer.

**Volunteer Data Base System:** Most of the larger counties are up and running with the new system but it smaller counties are the ones who have not gone onto system. In some cases- staff turnover has resulted in a county not getting the program up and running. Monica will have to hand-hold to insure that all counties get on board. She will not accept paper copies of hours for 2011. All counties should have their system up and running by early 2012.
**By-Laws:** Monica’s suggestions of changes include #4 memberships and could ex-officio members of one membership from Chicago Botanic Garden #4 state staff member, Extension administration. #9 Quorums is a simple majority of members. #5 Remove terms center staff

Motion for changes from Shey and seconded by Nancy K. Motion approved.

**Mini-Grants:** The response has been very positive and many counties are working on applications. They are due Jan 31 and will be discussed on our Feb 8th, 2012 telnet meeting. Shey will come up with scoring sheet. Winners will be announced around March 1st.

**Future Meetings:**

February 8th Elluminate 1:30-3:30

May 16th In Champaign from 10-3

September 5th at conference in Crystal Lake and telenet @ noon-4

November 13th TUESDAY in Champaign 10-3