University of Illinois Extension
State Master Gardener Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes 7-6-2011

Present: Monica David, Patricia Kosmach, Shey Lowman, Roger Harfst, Jennifer Fishburn, Tracy Jo Mulliken, Peter Chege, Jennifer Nelson, Harry Clayton, Linda Smith, MaryAnne Spinner

Telnet: Mary Thiesing, Rhonda Ferree, Rachelle Hollinshead

Absent: Ron Wolford, Robert Bisser, Theresa Greene

Meeting called to order July 6th @ 1:05 by Monica David

Changes to minutes: Added Mary to telnet, change advanced training grandfather MN to 5 years, Change little to rural. Minutes approved with changes.

Committee: Linda Smith and Peter Chege will do 2nd term. Mary Thiesing, Robert Bisser and Ron Wolford will be going off.

Staffing changes still going on. Some coordinators still don’t know if they were rehired. New hires will not be complete until September or later in some cases.

REPORTS

Conferences

2011 Conference has 250 registered. Different than any other conference we’ve had. Lunch in tent by ACES library, morning tours to gardens and research sites, afternoon classes in Turner, PSL, ACES library.

2012 Conference: McHenry will host. Hoping to include Lake County in planning also. Sites being investigated are the McHenry Community College and Holiday Inn in Crystal Lake. Conference timing will be in late August or September.

2013 Conference: We will co-host with southern Indiana and the conference will most likely be in Terre Haute or Evansville IN.

Organic Gardening Sessions
15-20 counties have signed up for both July and Sept sessions. The seminars will be in the evening and will be delivered via LIVE Elluminate. Rich Tobiasz, McHenry County MG has completed a MS degree recently at U of I and his thesis work was in organics. As part of his Masters work he agreed to give workshops to MGs and write factsheets for their use.

Volunteer Reporting Data Base
Tutorial is now online for staff. Another training session will be set up for September 7 for new staff or those counties which have not begun to use the system yet. All counties will be required to use the online reporting system. Beginning in 2012 – all reporting by MGs will be done online using this system-
no reporting of hours by paper copies. There will be a link on the MG homepage for Master Gardeners to logon. Once County staff are trained and are comfortable with adding volunteer projects and continuing education activities into the system they must train their MGs on how to use the system. There is also a tutorial for MGs to use on the website.

**Mini-Grants from Silent Auction Proceeds**

Monica is working to get the gift account set-up for the silent auction proceeds. Monica can supplement the account if needed with other funds.

The committee discussed changes to the mini-grant application and instruction document. For the instructions, it was suggested to list the 6 Extension priorities and that the application be written with collaboration of both MGs and staff. Delete $4000 verbiage for total amount of grants per year and state that the total amount of money given out each year will depend on the previous year’s silent auction profits and that the amount of the individual grants given to a county will be at the discretion of the judges. Maximum award is $1200.

Application MUST be emailed via staff member. Add to the instructions: Submission must follow instructions. Applications beyond the limit will not be considered. Limit attachments to 3 and fewer than 10 MB. Applications should be no more than 5 pages. Add that counties are encouraged to include drawings and/or pictures. Under format include itemized budget of project with narrative that would include funding from other sources. Purchases must be made according to U of I policies.

Due date for applications is January 31 of each year. Applications will be reviewed at the Feb advisory committee meeting and announced on March 1. One grant awarded per county per year. Counties may submit more than one project.

Criteria for judging: Existing projects need background, must be related to at least one of the 6 Extension priority areas. Applicants are encouraged to make multiple contacts with the audiences instead of just submitting a one day garden event. Break-up of application narrative: 1. What is the project and where and include community partners. 2. Educational goals 3. Timeline 4. Anticipated results and outcomes. Include plans on how they will follow up.

**Advanced Training**

Discussion on amending the advanced training guidelines. Amend MN and Master Composter to include those who have completed these trainings in the last 6 years. Current advanced training courses will count towards your CEU’s. Add to timeline section that MGs submit their credentials to coordinator for confirmation.

Monica will have pins and certificates made up for each of the 4 advanced training areas.

**Hort Questions**

The Hort team is working on a flow chart to assist MGs and counties in how to handle client calls and
where to seek help if needed. This document is due to be released in July. If the question is not an emergency, it will be directed to the MGs first. Physical sample: if MG can’t answer then they should be sent via DDDI or to the plant clinic. Commercial/Drift questions should go to an Educator or the plant clinic.

Volunteer Management Meeting for Staff (Sept 20-21)
This meeting was originally scheduled to be on campus but due to cost will be delivered via technology. Invitations will include Educators, Program Coordinators, Community Workers, and County Directors. A national speaker Susan Ellis is scheduled to facilitate the meeting. Unit staff will all meet at a central location to view the live sessions and then will work independently to review their volunteer management strategies and needs.

The committee came up with topics to be included in the current meeting or future meetings which would benefit MG Coordinators. These are: re-motivating volunteers, the application process, mentoring, policies, screening, liability insurance, conflict management and dismissal procedure, utilizing volunteer talents, volunteer communication, setting budgets, recognition and retention.

Suggestions for future sessions for MGs included working with kids; leadership topics and how to write mini-grant or award applications.

Training: Chicago will not have this year. The staff feels as they need a year to TLC the ones they have. Volunteers are worried about program. Monica assures Cook County program is still strong.

Future Meetings:
September 14- telnet or campus
November 16- telnet
Feb 8, 2012- telnet
May 16, 2012- campus