

Havre de Grace Green Team 2022 General Membership Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 12, 2022, 6:30 PM at the Havre de Grace police station

Attending: Carol George Andrews, Joan Black, Ennise Bloom, Dona Bushong, Hugh Campbell, Joanne Campbell, Carol Cullison, Valerie Elliot, Peter Green, Tammy Lynn Schneegas, Ann Marie Serwa, Liz Stewart, Andrew Tom, Tammy Truitt, Aaron Wilcoxon, Elizabeth Wilcoxon, Danielle Wolfe, Carol Zimmerman

Call to order, Welcome and Introductions: 6:33pm

The current board of directors was introduced: Carol Zimmerman, President; Danielle Wolfe, Secretary; and Joan Black, Treasurer were present. Joan Michel, Vice President; and Jean Johnson, Education Director were absent.

President's remarks- Carol Zimmerman

- Highlights of recent accomplishments of the Green Team:
 - Survey of members with 81 responses has helped us to understand interests and preferences of our members. The survey was created by Joan Black.
 - Year in review for 2021 was created by Joan Black and distributed to membership
 - Email distribution list contains approximately 700 contacts
 - Continued social media presence including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram
 - Updated mission and organizational goals which will be available on website soon
 - Completed a planning process for each of our projects including goals and resources needed through 2024
- Looking forward:
 - We are actively recruiting volunteers who are interested in taking over leadership positions in the future with a focus on building board diversity. Let one of the board members know if you are interested or have a recommendation.
 - A current goal is to develop a more diverse board
 - We are seeking a volunteer coordinator for social media, which will be a flexible position that can fit the schedule of the individual completing the tasks. A detailed description of the position will be distributed soon.

Treasurer's Report – Joan Black *Full report is included as an attachment to these minutes*

Project Summaries:

Think Green Eat Green (Carol Zimmerman for Patty McAllister-Shakeshaft)

- Newsletter is distributed quarterly via email
- Discusses sustainable eating and how our food choices affect the environment
- Process for creating newsletter involves heavily researching a chosen sustainability topic to include relevant research
- All previous issues are archived on our website
- Promotion of plant-based meals at local restaurants is undertaken as appropriate
- Upcoming programming will include tours of a local farm and workshops on plant-based eating

Zero Waste (Danielle Wolfe)

- Primary project is our food waste disposal drop off:
 - Located by Hutchins Park
 - Has collected 12,795 pounds of scraps to date in 2022
 - Has collected 71,107 pounds of scraps since program launch in June 2020
 - Partnership with the city of Havre de Grace
 - Plastic bags remain the most common contaminant found in the bins
 - Comment from member about the possibility of placing a collection bin for bags in the enclosure itself
 - Danielle will investigate feasibility
- Upcoming zero waste actions include:
 - Workshop and discussion in winter focused on recycling
 - Survey of local businesses and restaurants about food waste attitudes and processes

Heirloom Victory Garden (Ennise Bloom)

- Project background:
 - Began in 2018
 - Volunteers are the life blood of this project
 - Ennise was initially a liaison but not intended to be the hands-on coordinator of the project. She has led the project including directly overseeing and completing all aspects of the work for several years. This will be her final year leading the project and volunteers for a committee to lead the project are being sought.
 - This project is a giving garden- the produce grown is entirely donated to the 3 local food pantries (St. Patrick's, St. John's, Grace Place)
 - Initial goals vs. total produced by year:
 - 2019- 500-pound goal; 1,000 pounds produced
 - 2020- 1,000-pound goal; over 1,000 pounds produced
 - 2021- 1,400-pound goal; 1,820 pounds produced
 - A variety of crops have been grown including but not limited to radishes, potatoes, strawberries, tomatoes, peppers, long beans, kale, golden beets
- Current focus areas include:
 - Accessible gardening using 55-gallon drums
 - Winter sowing
 - Straw bale gardening
- Upcoming talk and tour will be held on June 5th at 11:00am. A sign-up sheet for those seeking more information was distributed.
- Seeking volunteers:
 - Time commitments as small as an hour per month
 - Flexible scheduling
- Comment from membership highlighted that this is a worthy and rewarding project

Apiary (Dona Bushong)

- Apiary is entering third year following a bumpy start with changing project leadership

- Dona is working through Susquehanna Beekeepers Association to try to recruit beekeepers
- Beekeeping is a form of animal husbandry. A few key points about the immense importance and burden of beekeeping:
 - Many volunteers we recruit use beekeeping as a secondary source of income and will have their own hives to tend
 - Because of the intensive process, there are many months of the year when a single beekeeper, if tasked with keeping the apiary running, cannot make personal plans or leave the area
 - Included in the tasks of beekeeping are items where specialized training is critical, such as spotting a disease and if needed reporting problems to the state with which the apiary is registered
 - The health and careful tending of our apiary directly impacts the health of bees within a two-mile radius
- To properly address the needs and sustainability of this project, at least two beekeepers need to be established volunteers
- The possibility of educational programming exists, but at this time is not practical with our slim volunteer base. Future apiary educational outreach could be handled by the pollinator committee.

Education (Carol Zimmerman for Jean Johnson)

- Monthly film screenings are now back in person at the maritime museum
 - May 25th “Backfired- When VW Lied to America”
 - June and July films will also be shown
- Beginning in fall we will be offering films alternating with book discussions on environmental topics; this will be covered through a grant from BGE
- Independence Day Parade:
 - Sunday, July 3rd
 - Partnering with Maritime Museum and Harford County Climate Action
 - Theme will be pollinators- specifically native bees and other pollinators and their dependence on native plants

Todd Park Food Forest (Carol Zimmerman)

- Background on the project:
 - Located along Seneca Avenue in Todd Park
 - Started in 2016 and has had edible plantings added annually
 - Open to the public to harvest
 - To date: Serviceberries, blueberries, elderberries, peaches and figs have become harvestable
 - Currently there are 30 trees and 4 permaculture beds containing blueberries and pollinator plants
- Tree adoption information:
 - There are 21 current adopters
 - 4 trees are available for adoption (persimmon, apricot, and two chestnut)
 - Workday sessions were held in April and will be held in fall

- Adopting a tree is free
- Adopters are assigned a plant and are responsible for weeding, mulching, watering, and watching for any signs of disease which should be reported to the project lead
- Water and mulch are provided on site; adopters must bring their own tools
- A grant will be sought in the coming year for enhancements including additional plantings and a shed
- Additional informational signs for individual plantings will be added in the coming year

Bee City and Pollinator Gardens (Joan Black)

- We achieved Bee City designation through Xerces Society in 2021
 - Focus is on helping cities to sustain native pollinators
 - By helping native bees, we in turn support the domestic bee supply (such as our apiary)
- A pollinator garden at Todd Park was added last year
- Pollinator and native planting information is available on our website
- Independence Day Parade, two First Friday booths, and a Holiday Tree Jubilee submission in 2021 were pollinator focused
- BayWise certifications are helpful to this initiative
- A Bee City sign designating our status will be posted this year
- A pollinator committee will be forming this fall to help develop a plan for where we focus going forward and is seeking volunteers

Great Outdoors (Joan Black)

- Focus is on communicating trail, bike, and paddle opportunities in and around the Havre de Grace area
- Information is available and kept up to date on our website
- A trail cleanup was held on the Joe K in 2021
- Efforts include promotion of area events such as RiverSweep and the opening of the new Mason Dixon trail segment
- A handout that can be circulated at events and through local businesses is being developed
- Ideas for this initiative are welcome

Community Gardens (Carol Zimmerman and Garden Leaders)

- Established in 2012 with the Market Street garden, this is the oldest Green Team initiative
- Currently there are four gardens (Market Street, Strawberry Lane, Old Reservoir, and Seneca Avenue)
- Each site has one or more leaders; Carol Zimmerman recently stepped down after many years as the garden chairperson
- Individual Garden Report- Market Street (Peter Green)
 - 18 plots, all currently rented
 - Fee for a 10 x 10 foot plot is 45.00 per season and includes water and mulch (and in some cases seeds are also available)
 - A shed is on-site with tools for gardeners to use

- A significant challenge is getting everyone into the garden at the same time for garden wide work needs
- Individual Garden Report- Old Reservoir (Liz Stewart and Tammy Truitt)
 - 23 plots were able to be rented for beginning of season
 - 1 plot had been rendered unusable but was recently able to be rented after Kathy Tollar's family dedicated time to remove tree stumps
 - February 26th was a light workday and included cleaning the shed and beautification of surroundings
 - Carol Zimmerman facilitated having the overgrown compost heap removed by DPW
 - Carol Zimmerman picked up and delivered compost for the plots from Veteran Compost
 - April 2nd was opening day – Kirk Smith went through water tank procedures with new gardeners
 - One plot was deemed abandoned after unsuccessful attempts to reach the plot renter and was re-rented for the season
 - Another load of mulch is requested for this site
- Individual Garden Report -Strawberry Lane (Ann Marie Serwa)
 - This is the newest garden, having recently been re-located from Market Street in anticipation of the opening of the Harmer's Town mural installation
 - 15 plots at this location, one is reserved to be a pollinator plot
 - Local residents do not care for gardeners parking along the street
 - The adjoining church lot is used however gardeners try to avoid this lot on weekends when the church is holding activities
 - Goal for this year is to get a shed installed
- Individual Garden Report- Seneca Avenue (Arlene Grace)
 - 13 plots are tended by 11 gardeners
 - One plot is an herb bed used by all gardeners
 - Physical condition of the garden has improved this year after a difficult season last year including lack of a site leader
- A garden committee with representatives from each garden handles budgeting, policies, and marketing of the gardens

Member Questions and Discussion

- Can we advocate for Havre de Grace to eliminate single use plastic bags? (Danielle will communicate with councilmember Boyer about this)
- When we are seeking information about food waste habits of local businesses, can we include clubs such as the Elks, Legion, Community Center, etc.?
- We will be handing out tree seedlings courtesy of the Maryland Forestry Board at the Garden Mart on Saturday from 10am to 2pm

New Business

- June 11th at Harford Community College there will be a magic of science fair and family festival. The Green Team has been invited to participate but would need representatives to staff a booth. Please let us know if interested.

- Election results: voting was held, and each current member was re-elected for another one-year term

Adjournment: 8:00pm

Respectfully Submitted, Danielle Wolfe