



## Concord Garden Club Board Meeting

Dec. 1, 2021

9:30-11:00

Present: Lauren Savage, Johane Telgener, Jeanie West, Nancy Betchart, Tricia Wentworth, Gretchen Coughlin, Robyn Cotton, Gena Moses, Jo Ann Jordan, Millie Lafontaine,

Unable to attend: Peg Blume, Melissa Detwiller, Kate Russo, Kim Arndt, Pam Young, Gayle Kimball, Barbara Jobin

1. Financial Report – Gretchen gave the report. We began the fiscal year with \$6611 and we have raised \$2571 from dues, sponsors for Art in Bloom and from program fees. Costs to date have included \$480 for programs, \$605 for regular expenses such as insurance, membership to Audubon and \$2586 in operating expenses most of which was the website, postage, Zoom costs, etc. There were a few questions about the cost of maintaining the website. The web designer charges \$25/hour for updates and the estimate is that the cost will be no more than \$150/year. Hosting the website is also \$150. We also joined the Chamber of Commerce for \$150 in the hope of gaining exposure and new members. We can revisit that membership next year. The Polly Perry fund is doing well and currently is \$30,497.
2. Approval of Minutes – Corrections to the minutes included the following: the new speaker for the December program was not more expensive and Nicki Kilfara's name was spelled incorrectly. The minutes were approved as corrected. Nancy will correct the minutes and they will be posted on the website under Board Updates.
3. Art and Bloom Committee Report – Millie reported that the committee met on the November 15<sup>th</sup> and decided to go ahead with Art and Bloom. They currently have 18 designers and would welcome additions. We had a discussion about the format of the event and it was agreed that due to Covid, we will not have refreshments nor an opening night "gala". The opening hours will be from 1:00 to 6:30 on Thursday the 20<sup>th</sup>. Friday and Saturday hours will be 10:00-4:00. Gena said they had discussed requiring masks or proof of vaccination but after a discussion we agreed to just require masks. Jo Ann suggested we get a couple of boxes of masks to have available and also post on the door that masks are required. The League has a policy of maximum of 75 people. We will not have coat racks this year. We'll encourage people to come in, look through the exhibits and leave. Garden Club members will be invited to attend at 1:00 on Thursday so that the designers can present their arrangements. An all member email will be sent to encourage members to attend. Millie brought up the other issue of the necessary presence of the garden club during the whole event – 2 members at all time. A sign-up sheet will be sent out to members with the hope that people will sign up for 2-hour shifts. Nicki Kilfara is taking the lead in recruiting volunteers. We have 7 sponsors to date with the hope of

several more. To date we have about \$975 from sponsorships. The sponsors will have their logos on the website. We are obligated to give the League \$300. Judith Malloy is going to produce the posters at no cost. There will be no expenses for sound system, coatracks, or wine this year.

4. Discussion of Membership Dues – Johane began the discussion about increasing the dues. Robyn reported that she believed at least 80% of the respondents said they had no trouble augmenting the dues with extra fees. Over the years 90% of the programs were at no additional costs. Dues are mostly used for programs and operating expenses. Annual donations, e.g., camperships to Spaulding, Audubon, the NOFA (CSA shares for families in need, etc.) have come from fundraising, e.g., sponsorships from Art in Bloom. Robyn brought up the costs of programs. She suggested that it is not that they have increased so dramatically, but if we want to go beyond local people, programs will cost more. JoAnn suggested that any changes be communicated effectively to the membership with the rationale for the changes. There was a discussion about how to include members in the discussion re dues and which direction to take the club with regard to programs. Do we want to have nationally known speakers who are a bit more expensive or rely on local experts who may be less expensive or have a blend? The general feeling is that dues should go to programming. There is still the question regarding local programming or more high profile programming. We agreed to have a smaller group with members in addition to board members, meet to discuss raising dues and to what extent we want to support local charities. Lauren suggested the group include a cross-section of members including for example, a long-time member, a newer member, someone in favor or raising dues and someone opposed. Robyn and Lauren will recruit the group to study the issues and make recommendations to the board. Another suggestion was to do a survey of the membership or somehow include the entire membership in the discussion. Jo Ann pointed out that any changes should be communicated effectively to membership especially the rationale. A side discussion included the topic of donations. Lauren pointed out that the Garden club used to do garden design and installation, e.g., plantings at the library and she suggested it would be a good direction for the club to maintain some median installations. Laurie also pointed out that our 100 year anniversary is coming up in 2024 and she would like to see us celebrate with the membership and the community.
5. Discussion of Business Memberships – While several people thought this was a good idea, the topic was tabled for the present.
6. Committee Reports
  - a. Service Committee. Kim sent a report that they met on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> at the Friendly Kitchen to place holiday decorations; however, the Friendly Kitchen is now closed due to increased cases of Covid so they are not sure when they will resume decorations there. The committee then planted bulbs at the Peace Pole Garden in White’s park that were donated by Ashley Hooper’s family. She died after a battle with cancer and the family is pleased that the bulbs will be a living memorial to her. The Christmas decoration event for nursing homes is cancelled due to Covid.

- b. Fundraising- Johane reported that July 9<sup>th</sup> is the garden tour date. If any member would like their garden to be included in the tour they will have priority. An email will be sent inviting members to volunteer their gardens. They are hoping for 5-6 gardens on the tour.
  - c. Membership – There was a discussion about sending announcements to the whole club with the new members’ names and contact information. Jeanie pointed out that the names were in the newsletter and members are encouraged to put their contact information into the directory on the website. Some people suggested that an email with the new member information would still be nice.
  - d. Publicity – Gena reported that press releases for Art in Bloom have been sent to the Insider, Around Concord and to online calendars, e.g., Hippo, Monitor, Chamber of Commerce. She will also submit information to the Town Crier for the south end, the Patch, and Next door. Tricia suggested sending information to NPR. Gena showed us a sample of the new CGC notecards. The notecards will be nice for thank you notes and other club correspondence.
  - e. Programs – Robyn reported that everything is on track. The Fells program was well-attended and successful. The upcoming workshop has about 25 people registered. Gretchen reported that 6 out of 26 haven’t paid yet. Valerie Canale will be the speaker for the winter wreath making event. We are paying \$25 per person for a net cost of \$10/person.
7. Other Business. Johane brought up that Wednesday mornings are a challenge for several board members and asked if Mondays are a possibility? It was agreed that the next Board meetings will be on Mondays. January 3<sup>rd</sup> at Lauren’s house and February 7<sup>th</sup> at Johannes.

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy Betchart  
Secretary