

BRIAR CHAPEL GARDEN CLUB
Meeting Notes
March 13, 2018

The monthly meeting of the Briar Chapel Garden Club convened at 7:03. Laurie Leichman opened the meeting by reminding members that the agenda is available in advance on the club's website and to check with Liz Rolison if you have not received club emails. The following club norms were reviewed:

- One person speaks at a time.
- Introduce yourself before you speak.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Stacey Donelan provided a membership update. Currently there are 105 club members representing 70 households. There are six households on the wait list. The cap is set at 75, so membership will be offered to all names on the waitlist.

TREASURER REPORT

Dues have been received from 61 households.

Surplus/Carryover: \$3978.97

Dues Income: \$1500

Expenses to Date: \$292.81

Current Balance: \$5,186.16

Jean Holstein, Treasurer, explained the reimbursement procedure. Members can bring the receipt and the reimbursement form to a meeting and Jean will write a check for reimbursement or members can scan the receipt and the reimbursement form and send them electronically to Jean. Jean will provide reimbursement at the next club meeting.

Laurie asked if there were any questions regarding the proposed Financial Policy. Hearing none, ***a motion was made to approve the Financial Policy. The policy was approved unanimously with no objection.***

PLANTING REPORT

Laurie thanked all members who participated in the garden work days. Ideally, the Planting Committee should be made up of members who have both the interest and the requisite skills. A smaller subgroup met to develop a planting plan for late spring and summer.

Jim Neill and Mike Gorman, Co-Chairs of the Planting Committee, provided the following committee report. Rather than planting several varieties of a plant, the focus will be on increasing the quantity of fewer plant varieties.

Mike tested the soil. The pH is currently 7, a little too high. Adding wood chips to lower the pH proved counter productive as it was learned that seeds could not be planted in wood chips.

Hillary, at Country Home, has become a very valuable resource to the planting committee, providing a wealth of knowledge and useful information. Hillary recommends applying bagged mushroom compost, composted chicken manure (Kickin' Chicken), and pine bark fines to a level of 1 inch. Twenty-four bags are required for a one-inch application to both gardens at a cost of \$493.73. This includes a 5% discount and delivery. Don Simonet had previously indicated that the gardens are low yield because of the soil pH. The soil will be retested in the fall. Sulphur will be applied in the fall. These applications will be applied to the in-ground beds. The raised beds are easier to maintain and will be amended by adding compost and one bag of pine bark fines to each bed.

The committee decided not to plant rye grass as a cover crop this year. Hillary will develop a cover crop blend. Tilling will be decreased since it has been learned that tilling results in increased weeds.

A motion was made to approve the purchase of the soil amendments up to \$550. The motion was approved unanimously with no objection.

The crops that have already been planted in early spring include radishes, Simpson lettuce, Romaine lettuce, snap and shelling peas, spinach, arugula, kale, chard, and bok choy. Beets will be planted on both gardens this week. Potatoes will be planted on March 17. Members are invited to the Briar Patch at 9:30 on Saturday to observe. Sue Pflum, Master Gardener, will provide a demonstration about growing potatoes. A team of 3-4 people is needed to plant potatoes. Fingerlings and another purple potato will be planted. Val will be laying out the children's garden on the 17th at 10:30. Planting at the children's garden is scheduled the following weekend.

The following vegetables will be planted early summer: green beans, tomatoes (Heirloom, Sungold, Sweet One Hundreds, Roma, Better Boys, Juliette), Persian and English cucumbers, sweet peppers (red, yellow green), summer squash and zucchini squash, okra, and eggplant. The herb garden perennials are established; summer herbs will be planted around May 1. The planting plan is on the website.

Past attempts to install row markers have not resulted in the desired effect. Marsha Durniak has taken the lead to develop a more effective row marker and has also offered to provide illustrated signage.

Sue Pflum and Mike Gorman are Master Gardeners and will provide "Come and Learn" lessons in the gardens. Chef Dan will provide a garden tour that focuses on food preparation and recipes. The blackboard by the shed will be used more frequently to communicate messages to members who work in the garden. A reminder that the gate code is 2018. You must hit "clear" first. Instructions are on the inside cover.

Garden maps and planting spreadsheets are found on the website. Dawn and her husband work in the IT field and offer their technical skills to support interactive maps on the club website.

Members were reminded that we live in an area that is home to venomous snakes. Appropriate precautions should be taken when working outside and in the garden.

Jim and Mary will head the Flower Committee. Flowers will be integrated among the vegetables. Companion planting attracts beneficial insects and birds and improves the overall health of a garden. Native flowers that are hardy and do not need irrigation will be planted along the garden perimeter. We will plant flowers to cut and some to dry.

ENGINEERING REPORT:

Larry Pflum will take the lead on drip irrigation. Don Michels will be the lead on everything not related to watering. The short list of tasks to accomplish this season include re-staining the Briar Patch shed, installing bunny barriers, installing enhanced signage, and testing the irrigation system. Management will turn the water on next week. The next planting event after this weekend will be held May 1.

FUND RAISING:

There will be three fund raisers: the Pancake Breakfast held in the spring, the Pansy and Mum Sale held in the fall, and the Poinsettia Sale. Dan Taylor and Jim Neill will co-chair the Pancake Breakfast, Leila McKay and Sandy Friedman will co-chair the Pansy and Mum Sale, and Marsha Durniak and Leila McKay will co-chair the Poinsettia Sale. The order date for the Pansy Mum Sale is September 22; the order date for poinsettias is November 20.

The Pancake Breakfast is scheduled for Saturday, May 5. All members will be asked to volunteer in some capacity. Orders and payments will be taken online and cash will be collected at the door. Suggestions were made regarding how to communicate the purpose of the fund raiser and that it should be marketed as a community-wide event sponsored by the Briar Chapel Garden Club. Don Michels will check with Management regarding the changes made to the electrical system. Alan Rosenfeld will ask John Lunsford for the return of the blueprint of the clubhouse electrical circuits.

BYLAWS:

Members of the Bylaws Committee are Don Michels, Patrick Hamlett, Laurie Leichman, and Billie Baker. Laurie Leichman thanked the committee participants for their service. Billie Baker reviewed the draft Bylaws and highlighted some of the changes.

Bill Sunda questioned the wording of the club's purpose as stated in the club's Mission Statement, Article 1.2 of the Bylaws. He believed the current language did not clearly and accurately articulate that the club's purpose is to grow vegetables for the benefit of its members. Mike Gorman expressed concern about the use of the word "organic." ***A motion was made and approved to table the Bylaws until a "soft" edit could be made to the first sentence of the Mission Statement.*** The revised Bylaws will be sent out to the membership for approval via email.

ADDITIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Laurie Leichman shared Zita Dauler's donation of new holiday lights for the Boulder Park garden and Bonnie Niesluchowski's donation of eight tomato cages. Both club members were thanked for their contributions. The Social Committee will meet this month to begin planning social activities for club members. Currently, there is no club chair.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:21.