

BRGC September 18th, 2024 Zoom Board Meeting

Members Present: Mary Babbitt, Marie Caracuzzo, Malia Shorts, Martha Anne Gilliam, Mary Horsman, Kathy Medosch, Elmyra Morris, Lynda Steele, Lise Jenkins, Susan Sweet, Mona Johnson, Joyce Zellner

Mary Babbitt called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m..

Secretary's Report: Martha Gilliam asked if there were corrections to the August 21st minutes. There were none, however, later there was one correction to the "Members Present" list. Joyce Zellner made a motion to pass the minutes. Mona Johnson offered a 2nd and the minutes were passed.

Treasurer's Report: Malia Shorts said that \$175.00 had been collected in dues, \$105.00 in donations, \$105.00 from logo sales, and \$60.00 from bingo ticket sales, for a total revenue of \$445.00. Expenses were \$61.55 for hospitality and \$48.00 for the website cost, for a total of \$109.55. Our checkbook balance is \$15,173.39. Joyce Zellner asked Lise Jenkins about the dot org site cost, noting it was actually less than our previous dot com site. Lise explained that we now have a simple version of the site and we can add more capabilities later as needed, such as the use of QR codes. Our dot com site actually had more capability than we had been using. Joyce said that we should build the website costs into our treasury budget for next year. Malia noted that \$300.00 previously budgeted for the dot.com site was actually for two years.

President's Report: Mary B. thanked Elmyra for her great work in organizing the September BRAHM community event and bringing Ron Cutlip in as our speaker and as a new member. She also gave a shout-out to Ineke Thomas and Alice Roess for allowing us to tour their lovely gardens. Mary said Evenlight was in a Master Gardener class and was unavailable, but had met with Ron Cutlip who has offered to help with the Memorial Garden. Mary also thanked Marie and Marilyn for their help with

the J. McLaughlin “Sip and Shop.” She said that Pat Collins will do our officer installation at the October 2nd meeting.

Vice President’s Report: Marie Caracuzzo said that she, Alice Roess, and Marilyn Green had helped in the J. McLaughlin sale and that the club had earned a total of \$2,039.00, 15% of the store’s sales. Marie hopes to repeat this event next year. Marie said she would write a thank you to the store manager, Kitty.

For our upcoming September 26th wildflower bingo night, Marie said there will be a workshop at Peggy Appleton’s home on Tuesday the 24th from 10 a.m. until noon to assemble the raffle baskets. She said that Susan Sweet had obtained a cute antique childrens’ bench decorated by “Elise”, an artist who paints in the Elliott Dangerfield style. The bench originally was for sale for \$1400 in a local shop and is an antique original to the Blowing Rock Methodist Church. Susan suggested a minimum bid of \$300.00. Also, *My Home* has given a home edit service. The Embers has donated a \$100.00 gift certificate. Evenlight was given a \$100.00 donation from a community member who appreciated her sharing some bulbs from the Memorial Garden. Susan Wright of Shady Gardens wants to make a donation for Bingo night. She offered either dahlia bulbs or flowers. Board members want to use her flowers for table decorations which could also be raffled off at the end of the evening. Susan Sweet is donating a crystal vase from Village Thrift. Joyce Zellner offered her hydrangeas for decorating, as well. Marie C. said that she and other members have some tickets available and that they are also for sale at Village Thrift, My Mountain Home, and Wild Birds Galore. Lynda Steele is also donating a lovely container she got from the Farmer’s Market.

Membership Report: Kathy Medosch said that we have 89 paid members and 7 unpaid members. The decision was made to remove them from the list if they have not paid by our final October meeting.

Horticulture: Evenlight was at a Master Gardener’s class, but is excited that Ron Cutlip will give her ideas about how to improve the garden as well

as input about our planned garden addition, whether it be a statue or some type of water feature.

Website: Lise reported that the new website has already had 36 visitors in the last seven days and 416 in the last 30 days. She offered two ideas for feedback:

1) Now that we have two websites (the old dot com and the new dot org), the dot com site will redirect users to the new site. She said we could possibly get a small refund if we shut down the dot com site. There may be some confusion with two sites. The decision was made to leave the dot com site up until the end of October (the end of the club's year) going totally to the dot org site; Joyce made the motion and Susan Sweet offered a second. All agreed.

2) Lise said that she could promote events of interest on the members only site such as the upcoming author Leigh Ann Henion's "meet and greet" promoting her book, "Night Magic." She said we should think about adding links to events such as this in terms of ramifications. If we use the website to publicly connect with our supporters, we risk appearing biased by endorsing certain businesses and inadvertently leaving others out.

Lise also mentioned some new capabilities we have not used before such as "search engine optimization" (S.E.O). This would help promote our club to the public. She has added a three page PDF on the website which has all the plants in our garden, organized by color. Lise suggested that committee chairs should directly communicate with her to let her know how she can help and what they want to see on the website. The capabilities are great, but again, we need to anticipate consequences. For example, if we have ticket sales online, this will impact work flow and money collection. However, if money is paid online for Mile of Flowers (MOF) tickets, we have the money in hand even if it rains and people decide not to tour the gardens. We can also put our membership form online. Mary B. thanked Lise for her hard work and expertise.

Hospitality Report: Mary Horsman said that several members had volunteered to set and decorate the tables for the October pot-luck

meeting. Those decorating tables are: Mary Horsman, Susan Sweet, Susie Robinson, Dena Lutz, Joann Mitchell, Mary Babbitt, and Marie Caracuzzo. That will be enough tables to seat everyone easily. Since no one had signed up for raffle items for the October meeting, Mona Johnson, Mary Babbitt, and Susan Sweet volunteered.

Field Trips: Mona Johnson is excited that Melaine Campbell is to be co-chair and they have already been working on a great year. Several fun trips are already planned. They visited the Dahlia Patch Festival in Sparta and Mona said the town itself is adorable and perfect for a field trip. They have completed planning for May through October, 2025. They do not have exact dates for everything yet. They also have some back-up plans. She also mentioned the Garden Jubilee in Hendersonville May 24th - 26th. This would be an overnight trip and would also include Asheville Botanical Gardens on Sunday. Reservations for the hotel and dinner would need to be made. Mona also mentioned the Carolina Native Nursery in Burnsville, N.C. which could be a May field trip. June 21st is the Rhododendron Festival in Bakersville. In July, they plan to go to the lavender farm and the blueberry farm, both in Lansing and both past favorites. August 23rd, there is a Harvest Farm in Valle Crucis which is a "you pick" type of place. They have flowers, a corn maze, and pumpkins. The September trip would be the Dahlia Patch in Sparta. In early October, we could tour Arborcrest Garden to see it in fall. Mona also invited us to her home this December 6th for an afternoon Christmas gathering from 1 to 3 o'clock.

Special Program: Elmyra Morris is planning next year's BRAHM event with the Reynolda Gardens director. The gardens have been totally refurbished. She is hoping to tie a field trip in with the museum program. She hopes we will get a private garden viewing with the director. The gardens are about 1.5 hours away in Winston Salem.

Mile of Flowers: Susan Sweet announced that there is a MOF meeting tomorrow (September 19th) at 2 o'clock in her home. She says things are going well and that there are some good gardens lined up to view. Not all are finalized yet, however.

Newsletter: Lynda Steele, thanked Lise and Martha Anne and says she incorporates their information into her newsletter. She also thanked people for sending their pictures.

Facebook: Marilyn Green's link to the meeting did not work and she was unable to join.

Past President's Thoughts: Joyce said that Crystal Miller, who has agreed to be our Vice President next year, had sent a nice thank you for the new members' tea. Joyce said that Marita Higgins had spoken with Shelley Pendleton. They have a connection to the sculptor, Charlotte artist Cantey T. Kelleher, who did the statue "Jessie" outside the library. Cantey would be a good candidate for a speaker for next year. Joyce added that we might think about three additional board positions for the future: someone to write thank-you notes, a person who might head a "sunshine" committee reaching out to members with needs, and a community outreach chair, although she noted that the newsletter, our Facebook page, and our website already somewhat cover "outreach."
Joyce presented the slate of board members and committee chairs for the 2025 year:

President - Marie Caracuzzo

Vice President - Crystal Miller

Secretary - Martha Anne Gilliam

Treasurer - Malia Shorts

Membership Chair - Kathy Medosch

Co-chair - Ann Perley

Horticulture - Evenlight Eagles

Hospitality - Mary Horsman

Co-chair - TBD

Programs - Marita Higgins

Special September Program - Elmyra Morris

Field Trips - Mona Johnson

Co-chair - Melaine Campbell

Website - Lise Jenkins

Facebook - Marilyn Green

Newsletter - Lynda Steele

Mile of Flowers - Susan Sweet and Mary Babbitt

4th of July Parade - Joyce Zellner and Amanda Lugenbell

Past President - Mary Babbitt

Mary Babbitt thanked Joyce for her hard work. She thanked us all for attending and adjourned the meeting at 11:09 a.m..

Respectfully submitted,

Martha Anne Gilliam, secretary