

MGAPC General Meeting Minutes - Tuesday October 24, 2023

Our Lady of Consolation Ministry Center - 1799 Hamburg Tpke, Wayne NJ 07470

7:00 PM Gathering and Sign In

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order by Jo-Ann Pituch at 7:05pm and introduced Bert Sebastian to lead us in the Pledge of allegiance. Bert is now the acting president when Joe D'Errico resigned from the role as of October 23, 2023. He is still a member of MGAPC.

Continuing Education: Bert Sebastian introduced guest speaker Mary Jo Sichak to speak on "Art, History, and Benefits of Indoor Gardening." Mary Jo is a Passaic County Master Gardener, Naturalist, and Photographer. She spoke on the history of indoor planting, presented photos of her personal indoor garden and decoration, advised the group to aerate potted plant soil and recommended indoor plant types to try and why. Mary Joe brought a few small plants to give away in a free raffle for any hopeful members who signed up.

Recess: Short Recess at 7:48 and plant raffle was called.

8:06 PM Meeting minutes

Jo-Ann called the meeting to restart and introduced Amy Rowe.

Reports:

County Agent, Amy Rowe, reported that they are close to hiring a new coordinator and the candidate is now being reviewed by Human Resources.

They are working to recruit students for the 2024 class. Essex, Passaic, Bergen, and Burlington Counties will teach classes together via Zoom with a couple in person meetings. Last year's Passaic county class was 6 people. Next year's goal is 20-25 people.

Members asked if they could attend online classes they are interested in or missed during their term. They were instructed to contact Amy Rowe via email with the request so she can share the schedule and log in information!

Jo-Ann Pituch requested all members log their 2023 hours on the Better Impact app and website. She emphasized that this log helps the county collect statistics on our community involvement. If someone needs help please call or come to the helpline office. She requested everyone to send payment for membership dues adding a cute comment: "send me your money honey!"

Michele Savvides updated the website: <https://mgapc.org>

She encouraged members to check out the "Member's Section" for meeting minutes and forms. Please reach out with suggestions. Jo-Ann P thanked Michele saying her work was phenomenal!

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Treasurer Report:

Pete Tomasi reported the total funds are approximately \$13,000 and there is about \$150 in outstanding checks (qty 3.) Peter hopes to make a MGAPC branded merchandise display for the next general meeting. A small discussion started about the display and sizing options. Anne Reyna suggested presenting items in the Green Times. Payment using a credit card is now available; for orders please email Pete at: pete.tomasi@gmail.com. He asked members to purchase and wear branded shirts, hats, etc to events/when volunteering.

Pete shared a local Little Falls/Totowa NJ newspaper article about Anne Kahwaty's volunteer work. In the article she mentions the MGAPC and how to become a Master Gardener! He is sharing to celebrate Anne and to suggest the group, helpline, and projects could benefit from seeking more mentions in news print and online. Group conversation started and the idea of an Executive Communications group was proposed to seek publicity, keep members informed (e.g. the redesigned website,) and attract new members.

Nominations for Board:

Katie McEwan reported the nomination deadline will be extended to October 31st.

Nominations as of meeting:

President: Kamala Anupindi

1st Vice President: Bert Sebastian

2nd Vice President: Ritika Gandhi
Patricia Lang

Treasurer: Pete Tomasi

Recording Secretary:

Executive meeting Michele Savvides

General meeting Rebecca Walter

Corresponding Secretary: Katie McEwan

Peter reported that the Board is proposing an amendment to the bylaws to allow a current board member to continue in their role for an additional year (beyond the maximum allowed 3 year limit) if there are no nominations for that position leaving the position uncontested. This amendment was presented to the Board and approved. An email regarding this change will be sent to all members in advance of the next General Meeting (November 2023) when the amendment will be voted on. Kamala Anupindi added that if no one nominates themselves for this coming year, the people on the board will stay the same.

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Project Leaders:

Clifton Library at Main Memorial and Allwood report by Kathy Sauerborn

They will be planting bulbs on Friday October 27nd, starting at 9:30am for those looking to volunteer.

Sunny's Garden report by Linda Franco

The red Canna bulbs multiplied many times over. They have so many they are offering them to members on Tuesday October 31st, from 9:30am-12:30.

During the winter some bulbs will be stored at Linda Franco's and the rest will be stored by Jessica Willert MD at the NJBG Skylands greenhouse. Next spring Skyland's will keep 25% of the stored bulbs, 75% will return to Sunny's Garden and for the Spring Plant Sale.

Also DPW cut down all the grasses (this note was mentioned later in the meeting)

Linda Franco reported on MGAPC Christmas Party

Party is scheduled for December 5th at The Brownstone (Patterson, NJ.) Ann Kahwaty is helping plan the event. A reminder email with details will be sent to all members. We need 70 people to attend to book the glass room. She requested members rsvp and pay by November 21st and it will be \$45 per person. The menu will be the same as last year with a new "better" dessert! Mail Jo-Ann Pituch a check or contact Pete to pay by credit card.

Holiday Open House report by Jayne Ross

Nov 30th through Dec 3rd.

They are finishing decorations at her house/project homebase on Thursday mornings. This year's theme is "Holiday in the Highlands" Scottish Heritage. Jayne requests volunteers for docents during the 4 days, and to help bring items to the event Sunday after Thanksgiving.

They still need donations for the silent auction; currently the package includes Walker cookies and they want to include christmas mugs, glass flutes, a bottle of scotch and champagne.

Bert Sebastian shared that the next General Meeting will be November 28th, the 4th Tuesday of the month, after Thanksgiving. Meeting to be held at Our Lady of Consolation at 7pm.

Green Times report by Anne Reyna

Deadline for next month's Green Times is November 10th. She requests all members email project photographs.

Adjournment 8:36 PM: Bert reminded everyone to sign in and called to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Linda and Jayne.