

**St. Charles Master Gardeners
Steering Committee Minutes
March 14, 2025**

Attendees: President: Laura Steimel Demo Garden Leads: Cindy Platzer, Bekah Davis
Vice President: Jackie Johnson Education/Hortline: Patti Kolek
Secretary: Sandra Newsom Plant Sale Coordinator: Donna Lindsey
Treasurer: Rebecca Poon * line through indicates absence

MU Program Coordinator: Eli Isele

Invitees: Kevin Lynch (Membership), Joe Walker (Immediate Past President)

Call to Order: Laura Steimel called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Quorum and Attendance: Sandra Newsom verified Quorum and Attendance.

Secretary's Report: Sandra Newsom | Minutes of the February 14, 2025 Steering Committee meeting were distributed to the committee members on 3/12/2025. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2025 Steering Committee meeting as presented. The motion received unanimous approval.

Treasurer's Report: Rebecca Poon | The financial position as of 2/28/2025 was reported as \$25,356.33 in the checking account and \$8,078.28 in the savings account. The treasurer's report also included the Statement of Financial Position as well as the Statement of Activity for February 2025. Discussion was held about Office Expense line item (8080) of the Statement of Activity. A motion was made and seconded to approve the financial report. The motion received unanimous approval.

MU Horticulturalist Specialist/Coordinator: Eli Isele | Farmer's market *Lunch and Learn* events and grafting seminars are scheduled. The first Master Naturalist training session has been held.

The Master Gardener Core training class is going well. There were some early difficulties with the quiz testing. Participation has remained steady with attendance close to 40 at the weekly classes. The final class meeting will take place on April 24. The Steering Committee will host a brunch at the final class and Laura and Patti will plan the program. Cindy will host a Demonstration Garden tour.

Extension Engagement Specialist: Deana Dothage | Laura provided an update on the ongoing review of the Memorandum of Understanding (2016 version) by the UM Extension Council. The status of liability insurance coverage for St. Charles Master Gardeners Association was in question because of the association's 501(c)3 tax status. It appears that the Association is not eligible for liability insurance coverage offered by the University of Missouri and the MU Extension.

Quotes for liability insurance coverage were solicited, and coverage for three months was obtained so that the upcoming public events already scheduled could proceed. Laura reported the results of insurance quotes to the Steering Committee on 3/5/2025. A motion was made and seconded on March 5, 2025 to pay for 3 months of liability insurance coverage (\$151.24 for 3 months). The motion received unanimous approval.

The revision of the Memorandum of Understanding remains with the UM Extension to clarify the impact of the 501(c)3 tax status on the St. Charles Master Gardener association. This review and rewriting of the guidelines will take some time, possibly another year. Insurance quotes will continue to be evaluated, and it was recommended that coverage be obtained for 12 months.

The insurance quotes will include coverage for liability, crime and dishonesty (president and treasurer) and Officers & Directors liability coverage for the board members. Laura will proceed with completing the necessary application forms. A proposal and request for funds will be presented to the Steering Committee at the April Steering Committee meeting.

President's Report: Laura Steimel | The MU Extension Council approved the Marsha Brown Memorial Bench project.

Jackie Johnson will lead the audit of the association's financial records as required by the ByLaws.

Standing Committee Reports

Membership: Kevin Lynch | The annual membership report has been submitted to MOMGA and annual dues have been paid.

Cynthia Menscher and Neal Menscher have requested Emeritus membership status. The committee reviewed the report of the Menscher's annual volunteer hours from 2014 – 2024. A motion was made and seconded to approve Emeritus membership status for Cynthia and Neal Menscher. The motion received unanimously approved.

Commemorative bricks recognizing 1,000 cumulative hours of volunteer service have been ordered for Phebe Martin, Kim Barylski, Cynthia Menscher and David Romig.

The badge ordering process was discussed. Kevin Lynch is working to get caught up on badges that are currently owed to active members. Kevin will record badge orders on a spreadsheet and submit the orders to Eli by the first of each month. Eli will forward the orders to MU Extension Horticulture Specialist Debi Kelly who is scheduled to submit orders on the 5th day of the month. The badge orders will be mailed to the Brown Road Extension office. To mitigate the extra time required to process the badges, it was suggested that the Master Gardener certificates could be presented in a timely manner.

Kevin met with the Master Gardener Core class trainees to explain the volunteer hours reporting system.

Continuing Education/Advanced Training: Bonnie Winkeler | No report.

Education: Patti Kolek | The Education Committee will meet on March 27, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. prior to the General membership meeting. The Speakers Bureau will be reorganized. Speaker requests are being declined because of the lack of volunteers on the Speakers Bureau. The final *In The Garden* class is scheduled for April 12, 2025. The Scavenger Hunt has been put on hold for the time being. With the temporary liability insurance solution, Patti will proceed to schedule farmers market events. Flyers advertising *In the Garden* events, plant sales and Speakers Bureau will be available at upcoming events.

Plant Sale: Donna Lindsey, Catherine Ebone, Cindy Heider
Greenhouse: Laura Steimel, Nancy Torke, Jeanne DeBold
Hoop House: Donna Lindsey

The last seeding party was attended by 53 volunteers, including many from the current MG Core class. The Hoop House is full of potted plants.

The Propagation Garden team will handle watering duties in the Hoop House and an evening watering schedule will be implemented soon. The Cool Season Plant Sale of vegetables and pansies will be held on March 15-16, 2025. The next seeding and transplanting party is scheduled for Wednesday, March 19, 2025.

Communications: Melanie Elick | Jackie Johnson, Sydney Reynolds and Patty Heiningner have joined the Communications team. Other volunteers need to be trained on tools such as Constant Contact and the website platform. The photos of pansies growing in the greenhouse recently shared via social media generated a lot of interest.

Demo Gardens: Cindy Platzer, Bekah Davis | The Herb Garden renovation was scheduled to start on March 15. The funding grant application was approved with the caveat that the proposed wooden beds would be replaced with galvanized steel structures. A new renovation schedule will be proposed when the necessary supplies are obtained.

Hortline: Patti Kolek | A training session is planned for Hortline volunteers on April 1, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in Conference Room B. In-person staffing of the Hortline will resume on March 17.

Farmers Markets Table Update: Patti Kolek | St. Charles Master Gardeners will host a booth at the Plant Expo in Weldon Springs on May 17, 2025 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Participation in the St. Charles County Farmers Market has been confirmed.

Upcoming Speakers and Meetings: Val Mertz | The schedule for upcoming general membership meetings is:

March Ben Davis, a Public Land Forester for MDC, will speak on Exotic Invasive Plants in St. Louis Region

April Rosanne LeBaige will focus on the impact of light pollution.

June Nicholas Krekler will speak on Landscaping the Arch grounds. He will explain his work as general manager, and landscaping and planting the Arch grounds with Site Systems. This intricate project included bio-remediation of the soil and hand-picked specimens.

August ReLeaf

Eli reported that honey gathered by Heroes to Hives (a Veterans bee keeping program) will be sold at the UM Extension offices. Gifts of honey have been suggested for speakers who decline the honorarium offered to speakers at the monthly meetings.

Field trip suggestions included the Danforth Plant Science Center and the Lavendar Farm.

Other status and information reports: Details of the 2025 Missouri State Fair Horticulture Contest were shared. MOMGA is looking for volunteers to serve as secretary or treasurer. Travel to the meetings is not required because of the Zoom meeting option.

A recommendation coming from the March 2025 MOMGA quarterly meeting was: the term “certified” should not be used to describe membership status. The correct term is “active.”

Old Business

Records Retention and Disaster Recovery: Some discussion was held on the topic of a central storage plan for spreadsheets and other operating documents that are maintained by the Garden Leads and MG Association officers. Volunteers should be identified to join a committee to develop a records retention policy that identifies a permanent file storage solution for important documents.

New Business: None

Good of the Order: At the March MOMGA quarterly meeting, Debi Kelli reported that volunteer time recorded by Master Gardeners had a value of \$5.3 million. The hourly rate used to calculate that amount is approximately \$33.00 per hour. It is important for all members to record their volunteer hours.

Adjournment: A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the March 14, 2025 Steering Committee meeting at 10:04 a.m. The motion received unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Sandra Newsom". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sandra Newsom, Secretary

Next Steering Committee meeting date is Friday, April 11, 2025.