**MINUTES OF THE THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF JEFFERSON COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS, INC.**

**MEETING HELD MAY 9th, 2023**

A meeting of the Jefferson County Master Gardeners, Inc. was held in the auditorium at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens on Tuesday, May 9th, 2023.

Forty (40) Attendees were present.

President, Amy Weis, called the meeting to order at 10:10AM.

**First Order of Business: Approval of April 11th Minutes.** President Amy Weis suggested that we delay the approval of the minutes until June 13th, as the Roots and Shoots newsletter had been distributed only yesterday. There was no opposition so this item was carried over.

**Second Order of Business: Announcements.** Announcements were given by Chairpersons or appropriate representatives in alphabetical order as follows.

**ACES Announcements by Bethany O'Rear, as follows:**

Introduction of New Urban Regional Extension. Extension Agent Bethany O'Rear introduced Bronson Lubresky, the new Urban Regional Extension Agent for Jefferson and Tuscaloosa Counties. Ronson previously worked in agriculture in Hawaii and specializes in natural and organic farming. Members were encouraged to reach out to him for any questions or assistance in those areas.

Master Gardeners Class Registration. Registration for the Master Gardeners class will be open from August 1st to August 30th. The class is scheduled to start in February 2024. Bethany mentioned that due to the new system and requirements, once registration is closed, she won't be able to make any changes. She already has a waiting list, and those on the waiting list will receive the information first, followed by others. The 2024 class can accommodate only 40 people.

Professional Organization and Scholarship. Bethany reiterated the announcement she gave in the May Roots & Shoots regarding her request for silent auction items for the upcoming Alabama Association of County Agricultural Agents and Specialists (AACAAS) annual meeting. The AACAAS is the professional organization for Extension agents in Alabama; it is also the state chapter of the National Association of Agriculture Agents. The funds raised from the auction go towards scholarship funds made available for children or grandchildren of

extension agents. The scholarships are not limited to Auburn University but also applicable to junior or technical colleges. Members were invited to drop off items for this cause anytime before the last Thursday of the month.

Advisory Council Minutes. Mitzi Owens and Fletcher Harvey passed on reporting back from the latest AC Meeting on May 2nd stating no new or significant news to report.

Auditing Committee. None given.

Board Meeting Report from April 11th by President, Amy Weis. A Board meeting had occurred on April 11th, immediately following the Members Meeting. The minutes of which were attached to the Roots and Shoots newsletter. Amy reviewed the highlights of those minutes including approved changes to the Bylaws suggested by the Policy and Procedure Committee from suggestions they received from Extension Agent, Bethany O'Rear (via President, Amy Weis) and Vice President, Hana Berres, as well as minor amendments they noted themselves. All changes were minor or on the order of a clarification and thus did not change the intent of the Bylaws, therefore did not warrant a full Membership review and vote. Specific Changes to the Bylaws included, a clarification of the definition of "Active Member" to include the ACES required minimum annual volunteer and CEU hours; moving the Program Committee from Ad Hoc to Standing and adding the Policy and Procedure Committee as a Standing Committee.

Communications Committee Announcements. None given.

Community Service Committee Announcements. Given by Hana Berres on behalf of Communications Committee Members who were absent. Hana highlighted the importance of more members joining the Master Gardeners. She mentioned workshops, community events, and the helpline where Master Gardeners can provide assistance and refer people to. Hana encouraged members to participate in the Grow More, Give More program and offered the opportunity to have their faces featured on the monthly slideshow.

Fundraising Committee Announcements. Given by President, Amy Weis. Amy announced that Master Gardeners aprons were still available for purchase at the sign-in table. Payment could be made by cash or check. She also reminded members that apron, seed ball and seed packet purchases would be considered

donations, as the organization is now a 501c3. Seed balls and seed packets are available in the BBG Library.

Hospitality Committee Announcements. Given by Hospitality Chair, Katherine Ennis. Katherine thanked those who brought goodies for the meeting today and requested members to continue bringing refreshments each month. She emphasized that they are changing things up again and contrary to the Roots & Shoots Hospitality announcement there is now no need to email or call in advance, just please bring something.

Policy and Procedure Committee Announcements. Given by President, Amy Weis reported on the recent meeting with this committee and the work in progress to develop the new Policy and Procedure Manual. Still planning to circulate that to the members this summer.

President's Announcements. Given by Amy Weis as follows:

New Helpline Coordinator. Susan McNamara is taking over for Kate Musso as the Helpline Coordinator now that she has permanently moved to Vermont. Amy noted that we missed our opportunity to say farewell to Kate as an Association at the last monthly meeting and encouraged members to send Kate a card; Bethany O'Rear can be contacted for her new address. As Susan was not present at the meeting, Amy announced on her behalf that there is still a need for volunteers to work on the MG Helpline. There were a couple of dates in May and June that needed to be filled. Any interested members should reach out to Susan McNamara whose contact info is available in the directory. Amy also mentioned that Susan was also working to fill the calendar for July through October.

Board Liaison with Community Service Committee. This is a new position that has been filled by Hana Berres, Vice President. Amy stated that the new post was to ensure a direct line of communication with the Board and Community Service Committee as this committee is very busy keeping tabs on all the many projects we support in Jefferson County members. This position will also help to promote our community service outreach in a variety of ways, and that we would be seeing some of that today and more of that in the newsletter and at meetings in future.

Remaining Vacancies. Amy is looking to fill the following positions:

*New Archivist Position. Amy repeated this announcement from last month that this was a position we needed to have to better keep track of our important records i.e., minutes, especially now that we are a 501(c)3.

Grants Committee. Amy repeated this announcement from previous months as well, reiterating that there is a need to revive the grants committee now that we are a 501(c)3 and that we may need to consider renaming it as the Project Funding Committee to better reflect the intent of monetary awards that the Association intends to give.

Newsletter Editor and Constant Contact Editor. Amy repeated this need for these roles to be filled as soon as possible.

Amy stated that she is actively recruiting members for these posts and would like to fill them as soon as possible. Interested members should contact her to learn more.

Financial Report. Given by President, Amy Weis, on behalf of Treasurer Cindy Funderburk who was absent. The total amount of funds in all of our accounts is $44,669.38 including the Checking Account Balance of $11,638.05; the Operating Reserve Money Market Account Balance of of the organization are $28,104.97; and the Grants Money Market Account balance of $5526.57. The JCMGA's current liabilities are just under $1,162.64. **Point of Clarification on the Operating Reserve Balance, given herein but not stated in the meeting, $10,000 of these funds are held separately as they were donated to the Association in Bethany O'Rear's name to be doled out at her discretion. She has asked that we give $1,000 each year toward intern projects.* Amy mentioned that the organization had been able to reduce its Paypal since obtaining 501(c)(3) status, and that the organization was able to reduce its fees in Constant Contact through the reduction of obsolete emails as one result of the Membership Drive.

Program Committee Announcements. Given by Vice President, Hana Berres as follows.Next month's Education Program will be "Fall Planting" by Jessica Hill of Jones Valley Teaching Farm. Hana encouraged members to give talks and presentations on their favorite gardening topics throughout Jefferson County. She also announced that she is recruiting for members to take up a position on the Program Committee; please contact her if interested. This will be a new Standing Committee that will learn the process for putting on the educational component of our monthly members meetings, i.e., finding good topics and speakers, booking

rooms through Annette Drummonds in the ACES office, who is our liaison to the BBG; setting up the room for the speaker in advance of the meeting, etc. Members would serve on the Program Committee for several years so that it's not such a steep learning curve for anyone from one year to the next. Hana also announced her desire for this Committee to plan outings for members, such as a visit to Jones Valley teaching farm in November that she is working on. Finally, Hana mentioned that the cocktail party and reunion would be held in the Ireland room again this year on September 19th in the evening.

There being no further business, the members business portion of the meeting was adjourned at 10:19 AM. The Plant Swap followed, led by Hana Berres and Ken Hall. Plants were organized by Sun, Shade, Indoor Plants and so on. Hana walked by each table to identify what plants were on offer. Tickets were handed out as members arrived that day with plants to swap. Two rounds of ticket numbers were called at random. The plant swap concluded when all plants were taken.

ATTEST BY:

Richard Smith

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Secretary

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Chairman of the Board