

## **Williamstown Garden Club**

### **Annual Meeting**

**October 14, 2025**

#### **St. John's Church, Lower room**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER:** President Karen Parker called the meeting to order at 1:20 p.m., after members had enjoyed a potluck luncheon and social time. There were 25 members present.

**WELCOME:** Karen thanked members for organizing today's meeting and contributing to the pot luck luncheon. She noted that our club had a very successful year. We have seven new members. She congratulated Delia Marshall and the knowledgeable group working on our annuals, as well as Betty Iannitelli and Fern Murtagh and others who created the beautiful new Post Office garden. She complimented Kathy McKnight and Diane Van Kempen on the creative thinking which resulted in our most successful plant sale ever. She praised the club's work on the Town Hall plantings, the Field Park's gardens, and the Sally Tenney Garden at the library. She thanked Susan Montiel for creating today's Power Point presentation, and Maria Siskind for planning a wide range of interesting programs for our members.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Diane Van Kempen moved to approve the minutes from our October 2024 annual meeting. Katie Lanoue seconded, and all members voted in favor.

**APPROVAL OF BYLAWS:** The Club bylaws were revised and unanimously approved by the Board in June. A committee of the Board was asked to review and propose amendments to the bylaws. The committee member were Joan Wright and Kathy McKnight, who asked for assistance from Susan Montiel. Joan explained that and Kathy consulted the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, and the National Association of Garden Clubs, before making some changes that more accurately reflect the work of the club. Key changes involved the clarification of titles for club positions, and a prohibition against floor nominations. Joan Wright moved to approve the revised bylaws, Diane VanKempen seconded. All were in favor.

**Election of Officers:** Karen nominated the following slate of officers: Karen Parker, president, Pat Wilk, Recording Secretary, Joan Wright, Corresponding secretary, and Carol Oshinsky, Treasurer; Civic Beautification: Annuals, Delia Marshall, Perennials (Field Park), Betty Iannitelli; Communications, Susan Montiel; Membership/Outreach,

Kathy McKnight; Programs, Maria Siskind. Susan moved to accept this slate of officers. Katie seconded. All members voted to approve these positions. We are still in need of a vice president, and Karen encouraged anyone who would like to make a greater contribution to the club to apply. She also announced this year's committee chairs: Finance, Susan Montiel; Horticulture, Diane VanKempen; Hospitality, Louise Rutland; Publications, Denny Meneghelli. Scholarships, Kathy McKnight.

**CLUB ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND REPORTS:** Karen presented a powerpoint presentation of the Club accomplishments over the year. There were 45 slides reflecting the work of the club this year and our activities, as well as reports from the committees, including the following:

- We discussed challenges and options for the flowers on the new Walley Bridge. We are re-using our old planter boxes, which are stainless steel, and are exploring ways of attaching them to the bridge, because we are not allowed to attach metal to metal. We have applied to the Flynt Foundation for a \$4,000 grant for this project, which will help with this significant investment.
- Carol Oshinsky reported on the current balances in our accounts. We have \$6,838 in our checking account, and \$6,521 in savings. Our income was \$13,034 this year, and our expenses totaled \$15,632, leaving us with a negative cash flow of \$2,593. However, the balance in our money market investment fund increased by \$11,695 this year. Susan Montiel, Finance chair, described our budget process: the finance committee makes recommendations, and then at a meeting of the board, board members discuss each line item, vote to make changes if necessary, and vote to approve the budget.
- Joan Wright, corresponding secretary, listed the people who had received flower arrangements and thank you letters for our club during the year.
- Betty Iannitelli explained the work that was done at Field Park, and said that Fern Murtaugh had agreed to be her partner on this assignment during the coming year. Diane talked about the need for red, white and blue plantings next year, and talked about new additions to the Sally Tenny Osborne Garden. Delia Marshall reported on the successes and the problems of the town's container gardens. She said finding caretakers was difficult, and we agreed that eliminating some and focusing on quality rather than quantity was a good idea for next year.
- Maria Siskind recapped our programs this year and encouraged everyone to attend the "flower Show School" presentation next month.

- Susan discussed changes to the dues collection process, explained how the “Stripe” app works and suggested that we raise the regular dues from \$35 to \$36, and associate dues from \$55 to \$57 in order to cover the fee charged by Stripe. Motion was made and seconded and unanimously approved.

G: HONORARY MEMBERSHIPS: An honorary membership is granted as a sign of gratitude and respect to members selected by the Club for distinguished service to the Club or for outstanding contribution to gardening. Today, we awarded an honorary membership and presented a gift to Stephanie Johnson. Also granted honorary membership, but not present to receive their awards in person, were Marilyn Faulkner, Elaine Neely, and Karen Pellegrini.

The text of Karen’s commendation follows:

Stephanie was active in our club from 2003 until 2021, when she moved to south county. She served as club in 2012 and 2013 and she likes to write. For the past 16 years, her email address has been SLJwrites.

Marilyn Faulkner was an owner of the Williams Inn with her husband Carl. She joined our club in 2015, joined the membership committee in 2015, and then served as treasurer for eight years, from 2017 until 2024. Through it all, she and Carl have maintained their own orchard and gardens in a peaceful setting overlooking Mount Greylock, with family nearby. We know Marilyn for her intelligence, wit, kindness, smile, reliability, and love of the community.

Elaine Neely has resided in Williamstown for many years, overseeing healthcare professionally. She has been a member of our club for 22 years. She has served as both Vice President and President, and also was on the programs committee. She has served as a member of our board for the past nine years. She found her club niche through overseeing the Field Park gardens starting in 2015 and was joined by Betty Iannitelli in 2022. Her passions are gardening, grandchildren, horses, dogs, service on town boards and her keen awareness of landscaping and town history. She is a faithful attendee of July 4th parades.

Karen Pellegrini served as Garden Club President for five years, starting in 2018—longer than any other member in our more than 90-year history. She set ambitious goals for our club, and we responded. She led a fine roster of event and even fed us once we finished potting and pricing for plant sales. Energetic, precise, accountable, organized, and giving are the words I associate with her tenure.

G: NEXT MEETING DATE: On Tuesday, November 11, Vana Nespor, Accredited Flower Show Judge, will give a presentation called “Flower Show School” at 1 p.m., in the lower room of St. John’s Church. Maria Siskind has arranged for this speaker. Our

holiday luncheon will be held on Tuesday, December 9 at the Williams Inn, with a social beginning at 12 noon, and lunch served at 12:30.

H: ADJOURN: Susan Montiel moved to adjourn the meeting, and Joan Wright seconded. Karen adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Submitted by:

Pat Wilk

Recording Secretary