

**WILLIAMSTOWN GARDEN CLUB  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
March 25, 2025 at 3:00 pm  
Milne Public Library and via Zoom**

- A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER: President Karen Parker called the meeting to order at 3:04. p.m. The following Board members were present: Delia Marshall (via zoom), Kathy McKnight, Susan Montiel, Elaine Neely, Carol Oshinsky (via zoom), Karen Parker, Maria Siskind, Pat Wilk, Joan Wright. Also present were Fern Murtaugh and Diane Van Kempen. Absent: Betty Iannitelli, Karen Pellegrini.
- A. CONFIRM QUORUM: a quorum was present.
1. APPROVE MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETING: January 7, 2025 Susan moved to approve, Maria seconded. All voted in favor.
- B. REPORTS:
1. President's Report (Karen Parker):
    - a. We regret losing Lenita Bober as a speaker. We may decide to schedule her next year, but we can't schedule her during the summer months because she is too busy.
    - b. We are excited about new ideas for what we might do with small plots of land at the front of the Williamstown Post office. Fern will share proposals in the Civic Beautification report.
    - c. We talked about ways we could use our April 8<sup>th</sup> Spring welcome meeting to build member support. We need help with the tech committee, additions to work crews, and plant sale support.
    - d. We're very grateful for the team working on the plant sale, but we need to be sure we build broad support among our members as we go forward.
  2. Finance/Website updates (Susan Montiel): There were printed copies of Susan's report updating us on the Williamstown Garden Club website available at this meeting. Matthew Baya, a resident of Williamstown and a staff member in the IT Department at Williams College, has generously volunteered to assist the club with its website and other internet-related IT needs. Because we are now recognized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, we can work with Goodstack.org, a platform that will provide us with a valuable range of tools. Development is ongoing at the new site, which will include a member directory, a calendar, and a new design. We won't be taking the old website down until the new one is more functional. Meanwhile, our new yearbook has the same information that will be posted on the website. When the site is ready, Susan will share the address with members in a newsletter and take the old site down. She hopes that the site will be live by our spring kickoff meeting.
  3. Treasurer's report (Carol Oshinsky via Zoom): Checking account: \$10,393.02. This number includes the recent grant from the Sara Tenney Osbourne Fund at Berkshire Taconic in the amount of \$1504.00. Money Market Account: \$6506.26. Susan reminded us that we will soon enter the budget period. About May 1 we will get an email from her asking for budget requests for next year. Carol and Karen and Susan will draft a proposed budget, and we will have a budget meeting in June, where we will discuss and approve the new budget.
  4. Civic Beautification:
    - a. Containers plans and budget (Delia Marshall via Zoom): Delia emailed each of us a full listing of plans for annual containers and beds at 18 different locations throughout the town, including a description of the containers and their size, a list of the specific plants intended for that location and the quantity of each plant, as well as the caretakers who have promised to plant and tend for those containers. She has also prepared a budget for 2025 annuals: \$3,775 total, including Zema's plant order, Mount Williams' plant order, container preparation, fertilizer, and thank you gifts. We had previously talked about some problems with inadequate container preparation, and asked Delia to get estimates for this job. She recommended Jacob Charbonneau of Charbonneau Landscaping, a local man who is competent and is interested in growing his business. His estimate was also the lowest one. We agreed that we would like to involve some of our new members as partners in taking care of containers. That would build new relationships, make our newcomers feel like they are making an important contribution to the club, and take some pressure off of our reliable volunteers.
    - b. Sally Tenney renovation (Diane Van Kempen): Diane reported that the Sally Tenney Osborne Reading Garden at the Milne Library is badly in need of renovation. She recommended landscape designer Laurie Cochran, who will evaluate our gardens for \$75 an hour. She is also able to help us source the plants not only for the STO garden, but for the Post Office and Field Park. Diane did a soil test in the STO garden; it's low in calcium, the soil needs to be equalized and fed. We will contact STO's niece to inform her of our plans and see if she wants to be involved. The timetable for this renovation project begins next year. Diane shared some ideas for the space—mostly native plants but other things mixed in—and red, white and blue flowers for 2026.

- c. Field Park (Elaine Neely): \$1700 was budget approved for this year. Plants have already been ordered. We discussed Field Park options and problems. Field Park is a two-season park; there's nothing there in winter and fall. We need some permanent perennials, some hedge material.
- d. Post office proposal (Fern Murtaugh): Fern circulated pictures of that area, and we discussed possible plants and budgeting for Post Office plots. We discussed a yew stump in the plot that needs to be removed: Who is paying for that? Why is it the Garden Club's responsibility? A few years ago, a post office employee asked us for help, and we said yes. Brian, who works behind the counter, offered to dig it out, but yews are notoriously hard to dig out. The plot near the flagpole is an irregular space. There's a piece of sidewalk sticking out towards the flagpole. Dogs relieve themselves in this area. It's very sunny and dry. The soil is very poor. How much maintenance do we want to do now and in the future? Karen suggested that renovating this plot could be part of our 2026 plan—our gift to the town. Diane suggested low-maintenance, pretty perennials for now, and some zinnias. Kathy suggested that we agree to include it in the 2026 celebration, invest thought in the design, and set aside some money of this project. Fern said what we should aim for is a pretty yet low-maintenance space. Her preference would be a variety of evergreens including some evergreens that act as ground cover, and then a splash of color. (Winterberry holly? Dogwood?) Karen asked for a timeline. Diane said now we need to prep the soil and put in some of the bushes, get rid of the red mulch that's there now, and plant some perennials.
- e. We agreed to create a new budget item: America 250 Project. Elaine moved to create this budget item and fund it with \$500 for this year. Diane seconded. All voted in favor.
  5. Membership (Kathy McKnight): We are welcoming some new members into the club: Anne Islan, Mattie Kelly, Sherry Rowsey, Julie Reilly, and Donna Quirk.
  6. Program updates (Maria Siskind): Maria shared her current list of events, including a “short hort” on plant propagation for our fall plant sale at the April 8 welcome meeting, a talk about invasives by Rene Wendell of the Nature Conservancy at the library on May 13, and a tour of the Edith Wharton Garden in Lenox on June 10.
  7. Corresponding Secretary (Joan Wright): She sent a thank you note to Berkshire Taconic for their \$1504.00 grant.
  8. Communications (Susan Montiel): Susan asked us all to send her anything we wanted her to include in the Constant Comment newsletter.
  9. Yearbook (Kathy McKnight): Kathy handed copies of the new 2025 yearbook to each of us, and we all admired and praised it, and thanked Kathy for her efforts. The remaining copies will be distributed at the next meeting and mailed to those who are not in attendance.
  10. Plant Sale (Kathy McKnight): We need to order more houseplants. We discussed specific plants and ideas for distributing and propagating them. We hope to spread out responsibility more. We need more little cows—plant containers the Williams students loved. We need to collect more jars for bamboo. We will have laminated plant care cards and post QR codes linked to plant care information. The sale will run from 8:30 a.m. until the plants are all sold or 12:30 pm, whichever is later. We will hold plants with name and phone number (last year student bought plants on their way to class) if someone pays for the plant.

C. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Standing Rules changes (Kathy McKnight): Kathy passed out copies of standing rules. Standing rules are specific operational rules that supplement the bylaws, and are much more operational. We read and discussed each item. We made one small change: Elaine moved to approve the rules, Joan seconded, all voted in favor.
2. VP/Board Vacancy (Karen Parker): Karen asked us for advice about this opening, which has yet to be filled. It should be someone who has been a member for the club for at least a year. We will have to keep our eyes open and keep thinking about people. We could have co-vice presidents.
3. Job descriptions (Karen Parker): We're still missing job descriptions. At the annual meeting, you will need to make a report to the club, and hand in a written description of your responsibilities of the year.

D. NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, June 24 at 3:00 pm, at the library.

E. ADJOURNMENT: Karen adjourned at 4:57 p.m.

Minutes approved June 24, 2025