

WILLIAMSTOWN GARDEN CLUB  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
November 8, 2024 at 2 pm Milne Library and via Zoom

- A. CALL MEETING TO ORDER: Karen Parker called the meeting to order at 2:05 pm. The following Board members were present: Betty Iannitelli, Delia Marshall, Kathy McKnight, Susan Montiel, Elaine Neely, Ca, Karen Parker, Maria Siskind, Joan Wright; also via Zoom: Carol Oshinsky and Karen Pellegrini (ex officio member).
- B. CONFIRM QUORUM: All members of the board were present.
- C. APPROVE MINUTES FROM PRIOR MEETING from June 17, 2024 Board of Directors Meeting. Maria votes to approve, Betty seconded. All voted in favor.
- D. REPORTS:
1. President's Report (Karen Parker):
    - a) Conflict of interest statements: Signed statements were collected from members.
    - b) Job descriptions for board members: Susan shared printed copies of all of the job descriptions— with some notes of hers— for us to consider. We need to revise the descriptions so that they reflect our current needs and responsibilities. What things are no longer applicable? What things should be combined? What do we want to do with these descriptions, and when? We agreed to e-mail revised copies of our own job descriptions to Karen, with our suggestions for revision within next two weeks. Karen reminded us that she has asked members of the board and program heads for end-of-year summaries of their work. Please email these to her.
    - c) Board vacancies: We considered our vacancies—especially the vice-president's slot, which is still empty. We wondered why openings haven't been filled. How can we better meet the needs of our members? Do our board members and leaders have adequate support? Maria said she has called some people to ask if they were interested in serving as vice president but has yet to find a volunteer. Possibly that's intimidating to, because the vice president often becomes president.
    - d) Holiday luncheon update: We all agreed that the Water Street Grill was a great location. We are expecting 30-35 people to attend. We've ordered a special Yule Log, which will be created by Good Night Kitchen, a wonderful bakery on Water Street. We will have a few items from the regular menu available for members to choose from, and we have ordered some outside food as well. We agreed to charge the same price per person, no matter what item a member orders. We decided to charge members is \$30, and guests \$40, although the actual cost to us will be \$45-\$47 per person. The club will pay about \$530 to supplement the cost of this luncheon. We asked Betty to investigate holiday placemats and napkins. We will create holiday table centerpieces at our December greens workshop. Susan agreed to collect payment for the luncheon at the door as people enter: cash, credit card, or Venmo. Membership checks will be handled separately; they should be mailed to Carol.
  2. Treasurer's report (Carol Oshinsky):
    - a) Account balances...not including two outstanding checks., our checking account balance is \$8,376.89. Our money market account balance is \$6,487.08. We have already paid the accountant, who electronically filed the state nonprofit tax forms that are due Nov. 15.
    - b) We discussed our policy regarding the acceptance of in-kind gifts and the related tax receipt. Hank

Art offered to give Garden Club a number of books that he has written. They are mostly about plants that do not grow in the northeast; we have no real use for these books. However, Eja Herein has already accepted them on our behalf. We need to provide him with a document saying we are a charitable organization, and we have received the following. We decided to leave the books out for members to take at a future meeting and give the rest to Chapter Two Books. Joan and Kathy have agreed to research and think about our policy for accepting gifts.

3. Civic Beautification:

- a) Containers (Delia Marshall). Delia is a new member, and reports that she will soon be meeting with Denny, who headed this committee last year, to plan for 2025.
- b) Field Park (Elaine Neely/Betty Iannitelli): New tools for the Field Park team were approved in our 2025 budget. Do we need to fund labor as well?
  - a. Approving the appearance of Spring Street: Elaine Neely, who is a member of the finance committee, recently completed a walking tour of Spring Street with some town officials who have formed a committee to improve the appearance of our downtown. She agreed to join this committee as a representative of the Williamstown Garden Club, and represent our interests and our willingness to contribute to downtown beautification. Currently, our options are limited. We discussed private planters already on the street, in front of the mediterranean restaurant and the Williams College Bookstore. We agreed that we cannot privately fund hanging baskets on lamp posts.

4. Membership (Kathy McKnight). We will have people at the Penny Social this year (that will happen on Saturday December 7). Joan and Maria volunteered to help with this. Kathy reminded us that we need to recruit new member on an ongoing basis and invite them to our meetings and events. We talked about the idea of assigning a mentor to each new member and placing them on a committee that matches their interests and abilities, so that they immediately feel included. We talked about the need for younger members who can contribute to the work we do. We could afford to hire help; do we need to do that? We talked about scheduling our events at different times to attract members who are working during the day and cannot attend afternoon meetings. Our evening talk by Ken Gooch at the library this summer was well attended. Perhaps we should schedule some of our events in the late afternoon or early evening. Susan looked up our mission statement and reminded us of our purpose; it's threefold: beautification, education, and conservation. As we move forward, we should keep these three things in mind.

5. Programs Report (Maria Siskind)

- a) Semi-quintennial celebration for 2026: This is an idea suggested by Diane Van Kampen. The 250th anniversary of the United States will be in 2026. Let's investigate what we can do to mark this for our community. Maria is researching a trip to Naumkeag for their annual tulip show. We talked about the possibility of Morgan Hartman, new owner of the farm at Five Corners, teaching us about regenerative farming. We need a variety of programming, to appeal to a broad range of members. Kathy reminded us that because our yearbook goes to print February 1, it would be good to know our scheduled programs for 2025 in January.

6. Corresponding Secretary (Joan Wright). Joan submitted a list of the Garden Club correspondence she has written. She is going to send a note to Rita Watson (a key member for many years who has recently moved out of state and is facing serious medical setbacks) to say we are thinking of her.

7. Communications (Susan Montiel)

a) Website update: The website is broken. Susan has been working on it for some time. We previously used a resource who was unable to remedy the issues but it is being worked on. She will notify us when the website is back online. Meanwhile, she is communicating with our membership via regular Constant Comment emails.

8. Publications (Kathy McKnight)

a) Kathy reviewed the schedule and timing for the 2025 Yearbook. We want to have the booklet available to hand out at our first meeting, Susan: News about any of our members. "member update" section at the bottom of the newsletter, please send.

9. Committees and projects (Karen)

a) WCMA and impact of Field Park: she spoke to the head of the construction project for the new Williams College Art Museum. This project will not interfere in any way with Field Park and the work of the Garden Club there.

b). Walley Bridge completion update. According to the Town, the bridge will be finished in May of in May 2026. The old flower planter we had maintained there will not work with the new bridge. We need to research new planters.

D. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Bylaws and Standing Rules: We tabled this discussion for our next meeting.
2. Bench on bike path: we decided to scrap this idea; the Town will not allow us to place a sign of any kind on a new bench saying it was donated by the Williamstown Garden Club.

E. NEXT MEETING DATE: Tuesday, November 12, there will be a general meeting at the Harper Center, at 1:00 p.m., with a presentation called "Inspired Flower Arranging." Regular meetings are held monthly April-December, at 1 p.m., on the second Tuesday of each month. Board members agreed to meet six times a year in 2025, on Tuesdays at 3 p.m.

F. ADJOURNMENT: Susan moved to adjourn, Carol seconded, and Karen adjourned the meeting at 4 p.m.

Submitted by Pam Wilk, Recording Secretary

Minutes approved, January 7, 2025