

**Northern Plains
Botanic Garden Society**



**2021
Annual Report**

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We have been challenged in 2021 by the Covid-19 pandemic. Family needs, job stresses, and personal health struggles have plagued a number of us. In spite of all this, we have been resilient by helping each other by either stepping up, or stepping in, to do our collective work to sustain and grow the Northern Plains Botanic Garden and our organization.

This was a year of invested sweat equity. We did the physical work of growing the garden, planting new plants, constructing new paths and a culvert bridge, plus there was the hard pounding and digging for support posts, signs, and expanded Rain Garden steps with a handrail. Flagstone now graces the pathway approach to the Japanese Gate and the Dry Garden. The Edible Forest continues to grow with new plants added this past year. All of this was accomplished through the dedicated hard work of our three contract gardeners and volunteers.

Our volunteers stepped up to continue our fundraising events and to work at the West Acres Farmers Market, as well as work to install the beautiful seasonal plants for the West Acres Plantscapes Project. These revenue raising activities helped support and promote NPBGS and the botanic garden.

Visitation to the botanic garden increased this past year, due to our efforts of making the gardens welcoming and inviting through refurbished park benches and patio furniture, and by the beautiful displays of flowering plants. It is a privilege to be a public Place Maker of a botanic garden for the general public, and it is very gratifying to see the joy that it brings to our visitors!

As we say goodbye to 2021, we can take inspiration from the sweat equity efforts of each other. We have exciting challenges ahead for planning for the future. Our master plan, future gardens, and programs will task us to pitch in and seek more help. We are realistic and we know the challenges, but we do have that “can do” spirit.

We are on this botanic garden journey together. Thank you for growing with us!

Jerry Raguse, President



BOARD INITIATIVES

The Board of Directors of the Northern Plains Botanic Garden Society continued to meet in 2021, via Zoom or outdoors at the botanic garden. The Board continued to oversee the function and operation of NPBGS' standing committees, which report to the Board. In addition, there were some key decisions and initiatives that were made by the Board on behalf of the Northern Plains Botanic Garden Society, as follows:

Internet and Technology: The Website upgrade proposal was accepted. Voted to terminate NPBGS' relationship with Ecliptic Technologies and to move forward using Google Suite for Nonprofits for communications tools.

Gardens and Operations: Invited NDSU Landscaping students to share with NPBGS their ideas for a master plan. Decided that the old donated Monsanto Greenhouse (broken down into sections and parts) will be given to a nearby plant nursery owner. Japanese Garden: A proposal was approved to have a storm water retention plan designed.

Membership: Agreed to make no changes in the Membership fee structure until fall of 2021, or later.

Sanford Atrium Location and Agreement: All NPBGS office, public relations, and program supplies were removed from the Sanford Atrium storage area and were temporarily relocated into members' homes. Agreed that future meetings will no longer be held at the Sanford Atrium due to the pandemic. It was decided to terminate the agreement with Sanford Health (for our use of atrium space in exchange for plant maintenance) effective 1 November. Sanford can no longer have living plants in their healthcare facilities. A draft notification letter to Sanford was approved. The Atrium Plant Care Coordinator moved all NPBGS items and furnishings to the greenhouse as of October 30th.

Board Structure:

Jerry Raguse took a 5-month leave of absence as President effective September; he stayed on the Board. Joshua Cook agreed to serve as Interim President, and Fargo Park District Liaison.

Matt Sorenson volunteered to assist Josh as FPD Liaison.

Ann Riley agreed to set meetings arrangements and agendas.

Ruth Morton was nominated and approved to rejoin the Board. She agreed to assist the Treasurer.

NPBGS Storage: A humidity/temperature-controlled storage room was secured by NPBGS for storing office, public relations, and program/events items. Items were relocated by mid- December. A protocol for storage access was established.

Public Relations and Promotions: Agreed that NPBGS will work with Gia Rassier on creating a geocaching Virtual Adventure Tour for the Northern Plains Botanic Garden. Decided that the NPBGS booth at West Acres Farmers Market will be only on Saturdays. Agreed that Japanese Garden marketing ideas and tools be developed by the volunteer "Good for Nothing" marketing and graphic design team with Vern Hunter. Ideas can be used for promotional materials.

Programs and Events

Determined that the Hina Dolls won't be displayed in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Agreed that the 2021 Annual Meeting would be held via a Zoom Meeting on March 9th. Scarecrows in the Garden fundraising event proposal was approved. NPBGS agreed to get involved with a Baker Nursery/NDSU Ext. Horticulture sponsored local Garden Tour for 2022. Agreed that the Hina Doll Display in 2022 will be hosted by the Rourke Art Museum in Moorhead. It was agreed to ask a FPD representative to be the keynote speaker at the 2022 Annual Meeting and to address future plans for Yunker Park.

Northern Plains Botanic Garden Society
Income & Expense – January through December 2021

Income

Direct Public Support		
Foundations/Grants	1,750.00	
Business Contributions	6,650.00	
Annual Membership Dues	6,550.00	
Memorials	6,970.00	
Donations	7,740.00	
Total Direct Public Support		29,660.00
Investments		
Interest – Savings, Short-term CD	77.81	
Total Investments		77.81
Other Types of Income		
Miscellaneous Revenue	6,193.51	
Recycling	8.40	
Total Other Types of Income		6,201.91
Program Income		
West Acres Contract	14,000.00	
Events – Ticket Sales	0.00	
Events – Revenue	16,367.46	
Events – Donations	1,130.63	
Total Program Income		31,498.09
Total Income/Gross Profit		67,437.81

Expense

Business Expenses		
Dues & Subscriptions	320.00	
Total Business Expenses		320.00
Contract Services		
Outside Contract Services	24,212.99	
Total Contract Services		24,212.99
Facilities & Equipment		
Garden Equipment Rental & Maintenance	8,898.87	
Building Repairs & Maintenance (Inc. accessible picnic table)	740.90	
Rent, Parking, Utilities	2,391.42	
Total Facilities & Equipment		12,031.19
Information Technology		
Stripe Fees	112.00	
Square Fees	65.88	
Website	828.00	
Hardware/Software	454.09	
Total Information Technology		1,459.97
Program Expenses		
Events – Supplies	253.97	
Events – Other Expenses	52.89	
Public Relations & Advertising	625.00	
West Acres Project Expenses	2,049.65	

Gardening Expenses	7,571.08	
Japanese Garden Expense	3,660.00	
Total Program Expenses		14,212.59
Operations		
Postage, Mailing Service	534.32	
Printing & Copying	2,249.10	
Bank Service Charges	5.00	
Supplies	236.31	
Total Operations		2,788.42
Other Types of Expenses		
Insurance – Liability, D and O	2,848.00	
Signage	536.13	
Other Costs	4,728.72	
Total Other Types of Expenses		8,112.85
Total Expense		63,138.01
Net Ordinary Income		4,299.80
Net Income		4,299.80

**Account Balances
As of December 31, 2021**

Assets

Checking		29,465.07
Petty Cash		114.00 (in cash box)
Money Market Savings		
Restricted Savings		
Japanese Garden Fund	8,814.60*	
Garden Intern Fund	1,640.00	
Memorial for Alma T. Tucker	225.00	
Iris Garden-Irene Rust memorial	1,164.00	
Total Restricted Savings		11,843.60

*(Starting Balance; Japanese Garden Fund = \$6,944.60 on 12/31/21)

Unrestricted Savings	16,901.47	
Total Money Market Savings - Other	54,039.72	
Total Money Market Savings		82,784.79
Martha Lee Memorial Fund, Bank CD		4,303.45
Total Checking/Savings		116,667.31
Total Current Assets		116,667.31
Fixed Assets		
Depreciation		-7,012.00
Furniture and Equipment		52,590.00
Total Fixed Assets		45,578.00
Total Assets		162,245.31
Liabilities & Equity		
Opening Balance Equity		-570.00
Unrestricted Net Assets		158,515.51
Net Income		4,299.80
Total Equity		162,245.31
Total Liabilities & Equity		162,245.31

FINANCE

Our fundraising efforts this year included the *Spring Plant Sale* on May 15th, the new *Scarecrows in the Garden* event at the Northern Plains Botanic Garden, held on September 18th, and the weekly Northern Plains Farmers Market at West Acres that is held annually from mid- June through October. In addition, we also sent out a Fall Fundraising Letter, which is part of our annual end of year fundraising campaign. We promoted our appeal for donor support via social media, e-mails, and our Fall Newsletter. The West Acres Plantscapes Project and vendors fees from the Northern Plains Farmers Market at West Acres provide NPBGS with additional support income throughout the year. We did not actively solicit foundation grants this year, but we are grateful for the two unsolicited grants which we received. We thank everyone who contributed their time, talent, and treasure to NPBGS.

This list summarizes our 2020 income sources.

Fundraising Events:	Dollars
<i>Spring Plant Sale</i>	4,569.81
<i>West Acres Farmers Market Vendor Booth Fees</i>	4,895.00
<i>West Acres Farmers Market NPBGS Booth Sales</i>	1,381.49
<i>Scarecrows in the Garden</i>	3,068.60
Total Net Dollars, Fundraising Events:	13,914.90
Individual Donations:	
Fall Fundraising Letter: 29 donations	5,330.00
Individual Donations, Other:	7,420.00
Total Individual Donations:	12,750.00
Memorial Donations: 32 donations	6,970.00
of these, 21 Memorial Donations (\$5,620) were donated for the Japanese Garden	
Memberships: 92 New or Renewing Membership payments	6,625.00
<i>Five Legacy Lifetime Memberships + 92 = 97 Current Memberships; 126 Current Members</i>	
Corporate Support:	
West Acres Development, LLC	2,500.00
Bell Bank: <i>Edible Forest Project</i>	2,000.00
Microsoft Corporation: <i>Employee Match Program</i>	1,450.00
Bell Bank: <i>Pay It Forward, from Employee</i>	250.00
BNSF Railway Foundation: <i>Employee Match Program</i>	100.00
Total Corporate Support:	6,300.00
West Acres Plantscapes Project:	14,000.00
Grants:	
William and Anna Jane Schlossman Fund, FM Area Foundation	1,000.00
Fargo South High School Philanthropy and Youth Committee, The Barry Foundation	750.00

GARDENS and OPERATIONS

Several garden projects were completed in 2021 that helped to enhance existing gardens and to bring a sense of connectedness throughout the gardens.

New blooming plants and shrubs were added to the Woodland Garden, the Rain Garden and the Edible Forest pollinator gardens. This project was made possible in part by a grant from Fargo South High School students' PaY program through the Barry Foundation. Also, many more plants were added to the Dry Garden, including compact Juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis*) and Mugo Pine (*Pinus mugo*).

All paths were refurbished throughout the gardens. New connecting paths were built between the Japanese Dry Garden and the Woodland Garden, and between the Rain Garden steps and the Edible Forest gate. A small culvert bridge was constructed to create the path to the Edible Forest. The Japanese Dry Garden path was further enhanced with paving stones. Gravel was added to the dry streambed. The Rain Garden steps leading down from the greenhouse were widened and railings were installed. Gravel for the dry stream and paving stones were donated by Davis Scott in memory of his wife, Hazel Moritz Scott.

A decorative sign was installed above the fence in the Children's Garden to highlight the location of the Fairy Garden.

The Park District helped to clean up the site by removing the unkempt compost pile beyond the Edible Forest. A new, working compost has been started in a different location. The purchase of a shredder will help to break down garden waste into usable compost for mulch and soil enrichment throughout the gardens.

The earth mounds were lowered and smoothed to facilitate mowing, for a neater appearance, and the Living Fence was stabilized with three large support posts.

We wish to thank our contract gardeners Don DuBord, Gail Wanek, and Lou Worner as well as our frequent volunteers Lisa Brown, Maurie Degrugillier, Suzanne and Kyle Fibelstad, Vern Hunter, Mary Leff, and Ruth Morton for all their work to keep the gardens looking beautiful.

PROGRAMS and EVENTS

It was unfortunate that, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we were unable to host our annual *Conversations and Cocoa*, *Tea Time at the Atrium*, and *Hina Matsuri – Hina Doll Display* events.

We did host NPBGS' 23rd Annual Meeting on March 9th virtually via Zoom Meetings. See: *Minutes, Annual Meeting* at the end of this report for details.

We were able to host a few fundraising events outdoors at the Northern Plains Botanic Garden.

The *Spring Plant Sale*, our annual spring fundraiser, was held on May 15th at the NPBGS Greenhouse. As for 2020, our volunteers worked to create a physically distanced and safe outdoor sales event, complete with clear directional signage, customer spacing markings, wide-spread display tables, face masks and hand sanitizer. Plants sold included annuals, perennials, vegetable plants, herbs, and small shrubs.

We held our first *Scarecrows in the Garden* fundraising event at the botanic garden just before the autumnal equinox, on September 18th. Unique scarecrows were created by donors and displayed for sale throughout the botanic garden. A fall market with baked goods, jellies, jams, canned grape juice, house

plants and botanic themed hand-crafted items, was held in the greenhouse. Donated pumpkins were sold and kids were encouraged to paint and decorate their pumpkins. *Heart 'n' Soul Community Café*, a non-profit organization, brought their food truck with delicious picnic style food for sale, which included a vegan option. Partnering with *Heart 'n' Soul Community Café* provided them with a north Fargo venue, and NPBGS benefitted from the attendance of the café's community following. Through this partnership, new people visited the gardens before and after their food truck meal, and enjoyed the scarecrow displays and shopping at the market. We received many positive comments, and people shared how they truly enjoyed their botanic garden and scarecrow festival experience. About 300 people attended. We thank the Programs and Events Committee for their work on creating this new fundraising event, and we thank Joyce Pettinger and Cynthia Herfindahl, in particular, for their vision and leadership.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

WEBSITE: We created a new website in 2021 that is easily navigable using various digital devices and with a nonprofit designation. The new website address is: www.npbgs.org. This year, through October 12th: www.npbgs.org has had 3,310 unique visitors each spending an average of 2m and 43 seconds, from 47 States, and 18 International Countries. The top 8 pages visited are: Homepage, Visit, Gardens, Hours-Directions, Explore, Events, About, and Visitor Guidelines. Top 8 Traffic Sources by Session: Google (2,316), Direct Search (1,151), Facebook (438), Bing (142), TripAdvisor (91), FargoMomCollective (75), DuckDuckGo (43). There have been 31 website transactions: 28 Memberships, 3 donations. Of the 554 email contacts, 354 are active contacts. The website was created, updated, and Administered by Audrey Cook. Links to our Facebook and Instagram accounts are at the bottom of our home page.

SOCIAL MEDIA: This year, through October 12th:

Facebook Group: We have 526 Members. Content includes NPBGS Programs, Events, Garden Updates, and shared events/content from other gardening, horticulture, natural science, etc., groups and posts. This is a group to which members can post/share content, and facilitates broadening our community contacts (virtually and in person). We often share content with other garden groups. Created by Lisa Brown; Administered by Lisa Brown and Barbara Vilella.

Official Facebook Page: 1,571 "Like" NPBGS. This page often shares original content from our Group Page; Group Page reciprocates sharing official NPBGS posts. Created by Jackie Williams, Updated by Brandi Malarkey a few years ago, and now updated and Administered by Barbara Vilella. This page is LINKED to our Instagram account.

Instagram: We joined Instagram this year. There are 119 Followers, and NPBGS follows 111 other accounts. Photo "Stories" can be created in Instagram and simultaneously shared with our Facebook Page. These same photo montage stories are also accessible on our website via the Instagram Icon (camera box image) at the bottom of our Website Home Page. Account created and Administered by Audrey Cook. Audrey, Lisa, and Barbara have access.

SIGNS: We now have a portable, double sided, *Poster Sign Board*. It has been used to promote Edible Forest Tours, Our Events via our Website, and as a Welcome Sign for the *Scarecrows in the Garden* fundraising event. Vern Hunter had a professionally designed sign created to illustrate the future *Japanese Garden Plan*. This sign is displayed just north of the Japanese Gate. *QR Code Signs* have been created and posted to promote the Donation Portal on the website, and our *Edible Forest Guide*: https://www.npbgs.org/_files/ugd/f427fb_73df2bdab4e04d9197af1cee937019b4.pdf?index=true. Also, Gia Rassier developed a self-guided, geocache *Northern Plains Botanic Garden Virtual Tour*, which is

accessible via QR Code signs at the botanic garden. As a result, we had a number of geocache visitors to the botanic garden. We thank Gia for creating the tour and donating the QR Code tour signs.

EVENTS PROMOTIONS: The *Spring Plant Sale* and *Scarecrows in the Garden* fundraising events were promoted through social media, e-mails, onsite with printed flyers, and via posts on community calendars.

WEST ACRES: The Market at West Acres and West Acres Plantscapes Project: The Market at West Acres is a hybrid fundraising and promotional event for NPBGS. Thanks to Barbara Vilella, Lou Worner, Matt Sorenson, Ruth Morton, Judy Maxson, and the other volunteers for continuing our presence at this public farmers market. West Acres gives us all the Vendors fees, which is a significant amount. Our vendors increased to 17 this year. Barbara Vilella was NPBGS' Market Coordinator. Also, the West Acres Plantscapes Project, originally proposed to West Acres by Dollie Becklund, and begun by Jackie Williams and John Zvirovski, provides NPBGS with public signage and a few display racks at West Acres Mall (JC Penny's fountain), plus a substantial donation from West Acres Development LLP, in exchange for NPBGS' seasonal plant display services.

BOTANIC GARDEN: This is our big public relations venue. Almost every visitor has positive comments, and we have gained more visitors this year. Gia Rassier informed visitors at the FM Convention and Visitors Bureau about the Northern Plains Botanic Garden. A number of Edible Forest Tours were hosted by Jim Walla. Two groups toured the botanic garden (master gardener group from Staples, MN; small high school reunion group), and there have been some student portrait and wedding photo shoots.

An onsite reservation calendar was initiated to reserve use of the patio and pergola areas. We had two small arts workshops hosted by a local artist and a federal employee held her retirement party at the botanic garden in late July (about 40 people). Some groups, including the Red River Watercolor Society and the FM Visual Artists, hosted their organizations' social gatherings at the botanic garden.

PRINT Materials: We updated and printed more Membership Forms (card version). Also, more business cards were printed. We published and mailed two newsletters (Spring and Fall editions).

VIRTUAL Garden Tour: *Be More Colorful* came to the botanic garden on September 20th to take more 360 degree photos to update our virtual garden tour. The online link is here: <https://tours.bemorecolorful.com/v/3pzO9X6JqM2> .

MEDIA Contacts: A Google Photo Album of botanic garden landscape photos was shared with the FM Convention and Visitors Bureau in response to their photo request made on behalf of AAA Magazine. Also, written responses were sent to Fargo Moms group, for an interview they published on their online Fargo Moms Blog. Joyce Pettinger gave a TV interview early in September to promote *Scarecrows in the Garden*.

SPEAKING Engagements: Jim Walla participated in First Fridays by Food of the North: *For the Love of Trees* Zoom webinar on April 2nd. Discussion included fruiting trees, NPBGS' new Edible Forest, and the Edible Forest Guide. Vern Hunter participated in a virtual panel discussion about New Japanese Gardens at the North American Japanese Garden's Association's annual meeting.

MEMBERSHIP

This past year NPBGs focused on membership renewals of former/lapsed members and we are pleased to report that, due to our continued efforts, our membership has increased. We are happy to see renewals being received along with positive comments about the Society's good work, especially at the Botanic Garden. Acknowledging new and renewed memberships was done in a timely manner either by email or a note sent in the US mail. Several renewing and new members utilized the Membership portal on the new website for dues payment. The current membership levels were reviewed and discussed with various options proposed for increasing amounts of some membership categories and possibly eliminating one level. This process for revising membership levels and notifying our membership, with the approval of the Board of Directors, will take place in 2022. Also, we hope to have an automatic annual renewal option feature on our website.

TOTAL MEMBERSHIPS: 97

TOTAL MEMBERS: 126

VOLUNTEERS

The Northern Plains Botanic Garden Society functions through the efforts of its volunteers. We greatly appreciate, and acknowledge, the many work hours contributed by our volunteers. We appreciate those who work at the Botanic Garden, as well as those who prepare the newsletters, maintain the databases, meet with officials, and take care of the general work of the organization. Upon receipt of volunteer inquiries via website or e-mail, we endeavor to match a volunteer's interest with the appropriate committee or task. In the future, we would very much like to see more volunteers for our Committees. The West Acres Farmers Market unfortunately had a limited number of volunteers. We hope this coming year that we will be able to identify several volunteers to help throughout the 5 months when the market takes place. Information about volunteering for the Farmers Market can be found on our web site.

Below is a snapshot summary of some of the volunteer efforts. THANK YOU, VOLUNTEERS!

Our total documented volunteer time was **2,958 hours**.

Edible Forest Project: 2 Volunteers, 203 hours

Northern Plains Botanic Garden: 15 Volunteers, 745 Hours

Atrium Plant Care Project at Sanford Neuroscience Clinic: 2 Volunteers, 90 Hours

Northern Plains Farmers Market at West Acres: 5 Volunteers, 474 Hours (estimated)

West Acres Plantscape Design Project: 17 Volunteers, 165 Hours

Board of Directors Meetings: 9 Board Members + 5 Volunteers, 138 Hours

General Administrative Support, Finance, Membership, Public Relations: 7 Volunteers, 871 Hours

Programs and Events: 11 Volunteers, 272 Hours

NPBGs needs volunteers for Finance, Public Relations, Membership & Volunteers, and Programs & Events Committees, plus administrative help, and for major fundraising. Anyone who is interested in volunteering, please contact us at info@npbotanicgarden.com. Your help is needed!

NPBGS COMMITTEES IN 2021

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Joshua Cook, Interim President; Jerry Raguse, Past President; Teresa Jesten, Secretary; Mary Beyer, Treasurer; Ruth Morton, Fiduciary

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Lisa Brown and Ruth Morton

TEA TIME AT THE ATRIUM (Ad hoc, Finance Committee)*

Ann Riley, Chair; Lisa Brown, Ruth Morton, Joyce Pettinger, Lou Worner, Sue Poitras

**Due to the pandemic, a Tea was not held. A future Tea fundraiser might be planned.*

GARDEN AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Ruth Morton and Jerry Raguse, Co-Chairs; Lisa Brown, Joshua Cook, Maurice Degrugillier, Bill Fradet, Vern Hunter, Jim Walla, Lou Worner

ARBORETUM (Ad hoc, Garden and Operations Committee)

Jim Walla, Vern Hunter, Maurice Degrugillier, Don DuBord

JAPANESE GARDEN (Ad hoc, Garden and Operations, and Finance Committees)

Vern Hunter, Chair; Mary Beyer, Minami Klinkhammer, Lisa Sluke, Marilyn West

SPRING PLANT SALE (Ad Hoc, Garden and Finance Committees)

Don DuBord, Chair; Lisa Brown, Maurice Degrugillier, Ruth Morton, Lou Worner, Barbara Villella

MEMBERSHIP/VOLUNTEER/NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Ann Riley, Chair; Jackie Jones, Darlene Rogers

PROGRAM AND EVENTS COMMITTEE

Bill Fradet, Elly Heinz, Cynthia Herfindahl, Joyce Pettinger, Denise Quick, Lou Worner

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Matt Sorenson, Chair; Lisa Brown, Audrey Cook, Marissa Gapp, Rhianna Grote, Barbara Villella

NPBGS thrives through the support of its volunteers. New members for our committees are very much welcome! For Volunteer Inquiries, Contact: info@npbotanicgarden.com .

BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN 2021

Jerry Raguse, President (2018 – 2021; elected President, 2020; 2021-2024) *

Joshua Cook, Interim President (2020 – 2023; elected Vice President, 2020) **

Teresa Jesten, Secretary (2020 – 2022; elected Secretary, 2020)

Mary Beyer, Treasurer (2020 – 2023; elected Treasurer, 2021)

Ruth Morton, (2009 – 2014; 2018 – 2021; elected Treasurer, 2018; 2021 - 2024) ***

Marissa Gapp (2020 – 2021; 2021 - 2024)

Barbara Vilella (2019 – 2022)

Matt Sorenson (2019 – 2022)

Ann Riley (2001 – 2007; 2018 – 2020; 2020 - 2023)

*Took a 5-month leave of absence as President but remained on the Board, September, 2021

**Vice President assumed role as Interim President, September, 2021

***Treasurer Departed Board at end of term in March, but rejoined Board as Fiduciary, Mid-Year, 2021

Board Members are elected by the Membership in March at the Annual Meeting.

Officers are Board-elected. Vacant Seats not filled through the election can be Board-appointed.

NORTHERN PLAINS BOTANIC GARDEN SOCIETY
P. O. BOX 3031 FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA 58108-3031
info@npbotanicgarden.com * www.npbgs.org

Civitati Faventes Horti
The Mission of the Northern Plains Botanic Garden Society is
to establish a botanic garden, conservatory, and arboretum in the Fargo-Moorhead area.
...Promoting Community through Gardening Since 1998...

MINUTES of the ANNUAL MEETING
NORTHERN PLAINS BOTANIC GARDEN SOCIETY
March 9, 2021
via Zoom Meeting

NPBGS Members Participating: President Jerry Raguse (presiding), Vice President Joshua Cook, Secretary Teresa Jesten, Treasurer Ruth Morton, Board of Directors Ann Riley, Barbara Villella, Mary Beyer, and Matt Sorenson (Zoom Meeting Host), and Members Rebecca Augustine, Lisa Brown, Audrey Cook, Theresa Gross, Patrick Gross, Susan Heidenreich, Mary Leff, Joyce Pettinger, Tom Pettinger, Denise Quick, Jen Walla, Jim Walla, Gail Wanek, Marilyn West, and Linda Worner.

President Jerry Raguse welcomed guests and members in attendance and explained the changes that will occur during the zoom meeting due to COVID. There will be no guest speaker this year and the board is hoping that we will be able to resume in person meeting next year. He called the 2021 Annual meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2020 Annual Report was mentioned and produced via link on our website.

2020 Annual Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the March 12th 2020 Annual meeting were reviewed. A motion was made by Ann Riley that they be approved as written. The motion was seconded by Mary Beyer, all were in favor.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer, Ruth Morton, presented the 2020 income and Expense statement. The report showed total assets liability and equity. We have a positive balance and despite COVID had a great year. We held the BEST plant sale to date and the Farmers Market was a HUGE success especially with the fresh cut flowers grown by the society. They were a big seller! We also came in strong with our end of the year donation drive. A motion was made by Mary Beyer to approve the financial report as presented. The motion was seconded by Teresa Jesten with all in favor.

President Recap of 2020

It was quite a year with lots of adjustments but the Gardens had a successful year. Board meetings were held in person at the Gardens following distance guidelines and then via Zoom when the weather turned cold.

We hired another contract gardener bringing us to 3 total for the gardens.

With a grant we were able to add new pathways in the Children's Garden that are ADA accessible as well as a gazebo in the Edible Forest. The Fairy Garden was relocated and planting in the Dry Garden has progressed wonderfully.

The Farmers Market was held all summer long and saw much success. Thanks are extended to Marilyn West for securing the donation of a fridge from Bell Bank which will be amazing for storage of cut flowers and other items needed for the Farmers Market.

Presentations from the students in the College of Architecture at NDSU were given to the society as a part of our Master plan. Decisions on that will be held in the upcoming year.

The Society hosted a breakfast in the gardens for members of the Fargo Park District giving them the opportunity to come see the progress and additions to the Gardens. It was a successful event and there

were many positive comments from those in attendance. We appreciated the opportunity to reestablish our connection with the Fargo Park District personnel.

There was a call out for volunteers at the gardens this summer both through financial donations and work hours in the garden or on our committees.

Jerry Raguse mentioned the new website and that it has seen a MAJOR facelift. There is a place for volunteer hours, events and a whole lot more!

We are looking forward to a fun and amazing summer.

Recognition of Departing Board Member

Ann Riley recognized Ruth Morton whose term as treasurer has expired. Ruth has been a charter member since 1998, served as a board member and Treasurer from 2009-2014 and again from 2018-2021. A big thank you was extended for her volunteer hours at all our events, time on our committees and appreciation for all she has done. We look forward to Ruth continuing to be an important member of the gardens.

Call for Nominations

Board nominations and elections were made by Ann Riley. There are 2 open positions on the board. Jerry Raguse's term expired in March 2021 and one unfilled position still remained. Ann Riley made a call for nominations from the floor 3 times. There being no nominations made, the nominations ceased. Jerry Raguse will continue on as president. Marissa Gapp will also be serving an additional term and we will still have one open position on the board.

Awards

Jim Walla was named 2020 Volunteer of the Year. Ann Riley displayed the plaque for all to see and mentioned that it will be presented in person at a later time with a photo op. Jim has put in many volunteer hours at the gardens with work on the edible forest and many tours of our space. Jim thanked everyone and said it was a privilege to help out.

Open Discussion

Jerry announced upcoming programs. The plant sale will be held again this year with a date of May 15th 2021 at the greenhouse. Volunteers from the Society will set up the Farmers Market at West Acres starting Saturdays in mid-June and continuing until mid-October. Keep checking the new website for updates and events. The meeting was opened up for discussion and questions.

Joyce Pettinger asked who would be replacing Ruth Morton as Treasurer on the board and Jerry Raguse announced/clarified that Mary Beyer would be taking over that role and has already been training and learning from Ruth this year. She also asked when the board will resume in person board meetings and that will be a discussion for our next board meeting.

Marilyn West inquired as to the number of lifetime members we currently have and Ann Riley stated there are currently five lifetime members.

Jim Walla reminded everyone of the Food of the North Event at which he will be presenting on Friday, April 2nd. Jim said he will note the need for volunteers and membership opportunities at the gardens.

Adjourn

There being no further business a motion to close the business meeting was made by Ann Riley and seconded by Ruth Morton. Meeting concluded at 7:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Teresa Jeston, Secretary