

University of Wisconsin Education, Extension and Agriculture Committee
Thursday, January 17th, 2019
James P. Coughlin Center – Volunteer Room

Members Present: Tom Snider, Mike Brunn, Steve Binder, Karen Powers, and Tom Borchart.

Members Absent: None.

UW-Extension Staff: Kimberly Miller, Dana Berger, Mandi Dornfeld, Jessica Beckendorf, Ashley Rolph, Mia Ljung

Others Present: None.

Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Tom Snider.

Comments from the Public related to items on the agenda: None.

Approval of Minutes: Borchart moved to approve the 12/20/2018 minutes; seconded by Powers. Motion carried 5-0.

Program Reports:

Horticulture: Miller distributed the brochure for the Commercial Landscape Professionals Workshop that is on March 5th and 6th of this year. She gave a brief history on the background of that program and how it evolved from the UW- Extension Landscape Short Course that was held in Brown County. The workshop is now a partnership of multiple Extension offices and the Wisconsin Landscape Contractors Association. Last year was the first year for the workshop and it was held in late March. Everything went great- the weather was idea and the attendance was perfect. Since last year, it has expanded and there will now be a whole day preconference workshop instead of just a half a day. This year, the workshop committee was able to bring Dr. Gary Johnson, from Univ. of Minnesota as a speaker.

Miller distributed the Annual Report for the Master Gardener program in Winnebago County. She gave a brief overview of the program and what the Master Gardener program entails. Volunteers are trained in a 12 week class and then they use what they learned to give back to the community through horticulture education. As of this year, Winnebago County has 99 certified Master Gardener Volunteers. Master Gardener Volunteers are required to complete 24 hours of community service, along with 10 hours of continuing education to remain certified. As of right now, Winnebago County has 18 long-term projects, which are projects that MG volunteers have been committed to for several years. Miller explained the importance of these projects and how they benefit the community. She has been working on an effort to help show the importance of projects within the community by creating one page information sheets that highlight and summarize the projects which are then given to the partners. The first successful project description was with Shattack Park in Neenah.

Miller also gave a history of the Master Gardener Program statewide and an update of all the changes that have been occurring due to the restructure and transition. One of those changes was that all volunteers are required to have a criminal background check conducted every four years. Going forward there will be efforts to provide statewide direction aligning the program with new policy, procedures, resources, and requirements due to the merger with UW Madison and to address the changing local needs of volunteers and staff.

Miller provided a Community Gardens update. Efforts are still being made to inquire about the fields in the Ken Robl Conservation Park. As of this week, the county was contacted by the Netzer family. The Parks Department will be working towards getting the approvals to place another bid for purchase of the 20 acres. If purchased, a portion of the property could be used for community gardens.

Community Development: Ljung introduced herself and gave a brief description of her personal and educational background, along with her previous work experience. She explained her new position as the Community Development Educator for Outagamie and Winnebago County.

Ljung went over some of the things she has started working on in the community. She recently met with Diana Hammer, the CED in Fond du Lac County UWEX, who focuses on People of Color business development. Ljung learned that people of color business owners do not adequately receive or are able to access the kind of business development support as their white counterparts. If they did, the economic impact would be much greater in this area.

Other projects Ljung has started working on include Corridor 41 on transportation, economic development, housing,

and urban/rural connection, Neighborhood Partners with Julie Filapek from Goodwill NCW, the Land Stewardship Committee in the Town of Greenville, Local Government Education with Lynn Markham, the Center for Land Use Education, and teambuilding with Future Neenah.

Committee Chair Report: Snider shared a Winnefox Library usage document and briefly went over what the memorandum was about.

UW-Extension – Administration:

Staff Updates/Area Updates: Beckendorf reported that she will continue her temporary AED position through January. Final interviews for the AED position were conducted on January 7th and a decision should be announced very soon. Beckendorf updated the committee on the AG position. Preliminary interviews will be conducted tomorrow, January 18th, with the final interviews date waiting to be announced. The Associate Educator position is just about ready and waiting to be posted, then will be sent out to all public platforms. On January 4th, our office said farewell to one of our full time Administrative Associates, Carol Hollmaier. Jody Bezio has taken on the position temporarily for the next three months while Amy Hendrickson is on maternity leave. The position for a permanent Administrative Associate will be opening in the next three months. Melissa Haight was also hired as a temporary backfill for Administrative Associate duties while Hendrickson is out on leave, which should be very soon.

In the midst of all the new hiring in the office, staff have been moving into new offices. Dornfeld will be moving in to Neiswender's old office, Ljung is in Neiswender's former CRD office and Kris Soper will be moving into Dornfeld's old office. Beckendorf stated that the office is looking to purchase some additional safety equipment after the recommendations of an officer who conducted an active shooting training. Dornfeld and Hendrickson have been the leads on that effort and working with facilities.

Department Activities: Beckendorf gave a brief budget update, sharing that Rolph has stepped up to take on Hendrickson's financial role while she is on leave.

State Activities: Beckendorf shared that the new branding and logo has been shared with us this week. All county websites have been updated with the new logo and colors. We are now a part of UW Madison- Division of Extension. The state office has said it is fine to start using logos in staff signatures, but to keep the changes minimal as off now until it is more widely known. Beckendorf also explained that Extension is working with WASAC on roles and responsibilities.

Comments by Committee Members: Binder asked Berger about working with diversity in the 4-H program. Powers works on another committee in Madison and offered to take things down to Madison for Winnebago County educators if they would like.

Next Meeting: Next regular committee meeting will be held Thursday, February 21st, 2019.

Adjourned: Borchart moved to adjourn; seconded by Binder. Motion carried 5-0, 10:14 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Ashley Rolph