

MINUTES OF THE HORTICULTURE STANDING COMMITTEE
Meeting held at Fellows Riverside Gardens, Thursday, January 25, 2018

Present: Deby Clark, Ellen Speicher, Doug Pezzuto, Kelly Bowell, Pam Garver and Andrew Pratt
(two positions on committee are currently open and awaiting replacement)

Meeting was called to order at 4 p.m.

First order of business was a 45-minute tour of Fellows Riverside Gardens to review condition of trees and landscaping. New security cameras were also discussed.

Minutes from November 27 meeting were read and accepted with the following corrections: Doug Pezzuto was absent and under New Business one sentence was extended to read "...with the exception of wild areas which are not professionally landscaped or have no trails or buildings."

Old Business:

Kelly Bowell will continue to collect and review pesticide data. She will report to the Committee when all data has been reviewed.

Concern was expressed that new Horticulture Committee members have not been assigned yet with the positions open for a number of months. Deby Clark reported that MCMP Board President Lee Frey has been contacted about the need to assign new committee members and he is currently working on filling the positions.

Deby Clark reported that at the January 8, 2018 MCMP Board meeting it was announced that all meetings of the MCMP Board of Commissioners will now be Board Meetings, instead of alternating with Work Sessions. Also all members of the public wishing to address the board will need to first state the subject that they will address along with the action that they wish the Board to take.

Friends of Fellows Riverside Gardens has agreed to donate \$25,000 to MCMP toward the construction of a second high tunnel to be constructed in the FRG Service Area. MCMP will cover all costs over \$25,000. When the money has been received from the Friends, the MCMP will put into place the plans for construction. Andrew Pratt estimates construction will occur in July 2018 and is satisfied with this construction date.

New Business:

At the December 18, 2017 MCMP Board Meeting, the Commissioners put forth a proposal from MCMP staff that the arborist position be filled by training current staff people who have expressed interest. The Horticulture Committee has concerns over this proposal, as opposed to the direct hiring of a full-time experienced arborist. These concerns include the length of time the training will take, that training may not be completed but be allowed to "fall by the wayside" over a period of time, and that this plan does not enable the staff to work with and learn from an experienced, knowledgeable arborist on a daily basis.

With the understanding that the Board prefers to follow the staff suggestion, the Horticulture Committee recommends the following procedure for staff arborist training:

1. First, completion of Basic Arborist Training from ACRT, Inc. in Akron. The Advanced Arborist Training course is also highly recommended for any staff training to become arborists. The Electrical Hazards Training and the Basic Arborist Training courses are highly recommended for all staff performing tree work in the MetroParks.
2. Second, completion of the Certified Arborist Preparation Course with a passing grade on the exam.
3. Ideally, these classes and training courses would be followed by on-the-job training with an experienced arborist. The Committee is concerned that this on-the-job training will be lacking with the currently proposed method of training current staff to become an arborist.

The Committee voted unanimously to recommend this course of action for arborist training. Ellen Speicher will present the Committee's recommendation to the Board of Commissioners at the next Board Meeting.

Also at the Dec 18, 2017 MCMP Board Meeting, Ellen Speicher suggested to the Board that training on recognizing and managing the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid be given to all MCMP staff involved in tree work so that staff will be able to identify this serious invasive pest which threatens Eastern Hemlock trees and has been found in nearby OH and PA counties. Andrew Pratt reported that a training session was held with 12 Operations Dept. staff and 1-2 Gardens staff in attendance. Staff were instructed in ID of HWA, HWA lifecycle and treatment options. MCMP staff were instructed to report any sightings to MCMP management of their respective departments.

The next MCMP Board meeting will be held on Monday, February 12 at 6 p.m. at the MCMP Farm.

The next Horticulture Committee meeting was set for March 8 at 5 p.m. at Pioneer Pavilion.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Submitted by Ellen Speicher