

MINUTES OF THE HORTICULTURE STANDING COMMITTEE
Meeting held at Birch Hill Cabin, Thursday, April 12, 2018

Present: Deby Clark, Ellen Speicher, Doug Pezzuto, Pam Garver, Monica Parkhurst, Janice Arch and Andrew Pratt

Absent: Kelly Bowell (excused absence)

Guests: Rob Chismar

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Minutes from the March 8, 2018 meeting were approved with no additions or corrections.

Old Business:

It was reported that at the 4/9/18 Board of Commissioner's meeting, Aaron Young stated that there are 2-3 MetroParks staff interested in the arborist position. It is our understanding that no MCMP-sponsored training has been offered yet and interested staff are studying for the arborist exam on their own time. The hemlock wooly adelgid threat was discussed to inform the committee members. Andrew Pratt stated that no HWA sightings have been reported in the MetroParks.

Andrew Pratt stated that he has provided the information on expenses for the high tunnel construction that the Friends of Fellows Riverside Gardens have requested and is awaiting receipt of the check. He stated that work will not begin until the funds are received. A suggestion was made that the Friends may be expecting a more detailed estimate of expenditures before making the \$25,000 donation.

High Drive is now open to vehicular traffic. The leaning tree is still there, among other trees with significant leans. Doug Pezzuto will check the trees now that the road is open.

Deby Clark has been informed that the handicap-accessible meeting sites in MCMP are Birch Hill Cabin, MCMP Farm, Fellow Riverside Gardens and Yellow Creek Park. Deby will get clarification from the Board as to whether we can hold a meeting at an accessible site with a walking tour scheduled at the end of the meeting.

New Business:

Monica Parkhurst recommended that the plastic on the high tunnel at the Fellows Riverside Gardens service area be replaced. It is now six years old and showing signs of deterioration. Also, the ropes on the high tunnel are fraying. Also, the lean-to production house is in poor shape and may become unusable, per Andrew Pratt.

It was reported that Dennis Penner, former Gardens Supervisor, has volunteered to help build the new high tunnel. Dennis built the original high tunnel with help from other staff and volunteers.

Deby reported that Kelly Bowell will be bringing information on invasive plants to the next meeting. The situational invasives in the Metroparks which escape from homeowner's yards and invade the wooded areas of the park were discussed. These plants, which include English ivy and vinca, carpet the natural areas in the MetroParks adjacent to these homes and prevent the growth of native species and can be damaging to trees.

A discussion on coppicing was held. Coppicing is an ornamental horticultural practice unrelated to the practice of leaving stumps from cut trees. The weak growth that sprouts from stumps is not worth encouraging. Tree stumps and felled trees provide food and shelter for many forest organisms as they decay. It was agreed that no stump grinding is needed in natural areas.

The suggestion was made that it may be helpful to the Board of Commissioners if the committee develops a policy on invasive plants for the MetroParks. The committee will wait for the new Natural Resources Steward to be hired, in order to discuss this issue with the staff person who will oversee invasive plant removal.

A walk-through of the Lily Pond area was done. The numerous patches of iris will be observed to see if they are the invasive species, *Iris pseudacorus*. The numerous fallen trees, cut branches and brush on the north side of the pond and behind the donation bench on the west side are eyesores. The sight would be improved if the brush and smaller tree pieces were spread about more naturally. It was noted that tree work could be done on the trees leaning over benches around the pond. In the past, the Forestry Crew cut logs with smooth tops and laid them in the pond to create habitat for turtles. More logs could be added to the few that are in the pond at this time to increase turtle habitat.

The next MCMP Board meeting will be held on Monday, May 14, at 6 p.m. at the MCMP Farm.

The next Horticulture Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, May 30, at 6 p.m. at Yellow Creek Park. A walk-through of areas of Yellow Creek Park will be conducted at the end of the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Submitted by Ellen Speicher