Town & Country Garden Club Membership Meeting Minutes

Community/Senior Center

September 13, 2023

**Social gathering** with refreshments 5:30 to 6 pm

**Business meeting** 6:01-6:38 with 25 members present. President Chris Lincoln welcomed everyone to a new year and thanked Holly Walczak for a job very well done on the 2023-2024 handbook that had just been distributed to members.

Judy Beers, co-chair of Ways and Means, announced the evening’s raffle of a gift certificate to Caraluzzi’s.

**Minutes** from the May 10th and June 14th were called for approval. Motion to accept was made by Emi Lydem and seconded by Josie Schmidt and approved without correction.

Chris said that Sal e Pepe Restaurant and Shakespeare’s Garden had both renewed their sponsorship of the club and reminded members to promote them in the community and patronize them in return for their support. She also noted our new entry way through the back door of the gathering room, which is much more convenient for members, but also asked members to keep their eyes open for an even better place for our meetings.

 **Announcements:** Thanks to the evening’s hostesses and to Jane Vouros for refreshments. Members having a birthday in September include Gail Friedman, Nancy Azzaro, and Teri Doern. - The club has a new service called Ask the Expert, allowing members to email Barbara O’Connor, a Town & Country member for the last 47 years, with gardening-related questions. The Brookfield Garden Club has invited us to their first meeting of the year on October 21 when our own Peggy Townsend will present “Understanding Flower Shows and Exhibits”. The FGCCT Awards Luncheon will be held October 25th at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville, CT. Members are encouraged to attend. Those planning to do so should email Chris Lincoln by October 14th or sooner.

**Treasurer** Teri Doern reported that our current bank balance is $7,071.51. At the request of Margareta Kotch, and with concurrence from other members, the 2023-24 budget, which was completed and approved by the Executive Committee over the summer, will be attached to the September newsletter for review by the membership.

**Handbook:** Holly Walczak took members through the contents of the new handbooks, emphasizing the importance of knowing when each member has hostess duties and noting that Jane Sharpe was omitted in error from the “Club Members” section. She asked that any other corrections or omissions be brought to her attention.

**Ways and Means**: Judy Beers reported that the committee netted $114.78 on Earth Day, selling a few different items despite the rain and introducing some residents to our club. At the Duck Race, the committee sold member plants and netted $279.03. Judy also asked that members submit ideas for future fundraising events.

**Newsletter** editor Josie Schmidt drew our attention to guidelines for writing an autobiography for the newsletter and also requested member pictures or other items of interest for the September newsletter.

**Conservation:** Nancy Azzaro explained the threat that the spotted lantern fly is posing to our state’s fruit trees, ornamentals, and other trees. She described the cocoons as looking like a bit of mud and explained that the flies spread by catching a ride from place to place. She passed around pictures of the destructive insects in various stages of life and discussed ways of killing them or destroying their cocoons.

**Horticulture**: Elaine Sullivan distributed a September Checklist for Gardeners which came from the UConn Extension Service and discussed several of the items on the list. She also asked members to let her know what horticulture subject they would like to hear about at future meetings.

**Hospitality**: Jane Vouros reminded everyone to check the meeting date that you are assigned as hostess. If you are unable to participate for that meeting, please swap dates with another member. Jane also polled the membership about coffee, tea, and cold drink preferences so as not to make too much or too little. Wine or beer brought by the member is also an option.

**Scarecrow**: Teri Doern passed around a sign-up sheet to form a committee for this year’s scarecrow contest and also reminded us with a picture what last year’s contest entry looked like. The committee chairs have chosen a lamppost and a theme already. Voting will take place the week before Halloween, and the winner will be announced on Halloween Day.

**Publicity**: Hillary Goldstein explained how members can access our Facebook page now that we have one. She encouraged us to “like” the page, which will spread the word about our club through the Facebook community.

**Outreach**: Gail Dominico handed out a list of outreach events coming up soon. She asked people to let her know of any other opportunities we may hear of. Josie Schmidt reminded everyone that she and husband Bob will be performing at the Octoberfest on October 4th from 5 to 9. "The event will be held outside, under the tent."

**Exhibits:** Judge Barbara O’Connor discussed the horticulture exhibits and praised everyone for using a clear glass container. She noted the very good condition of each entry and expressed the hope that many members will bring horticulture displays each month. Peg Townsend and Margareta Kotch critiqued the creative line design arrangements, highlighting the differences in design and materials, the containers, and the arrangements as they relate to the display boards around them. Creative line design uses a small amount of material, lots of space, variety of plant material, and a dominant line. Peggy handed out cards explaining features of this design to the members.

Peg Townsend showed members an example she had created of next month’s artistic challenge, parallel design, and she provided a card with the important points of the design to help members create their own for October.

Barbara O’Connor presented members with sprigs of the jade plant from Rosalie Newman’s plant as our next “challenge plant”. Each member should put a sprig in soil after removing the bottom leaves and tend it over the winter. At the May meeting, the results will be judged.

**Program:** From 7 to 7:45 pm Michelle McKinnon made a Zoom presentation called The Perfect Pollinator Garden, including questions from the audience.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joy Kopesky, Recording Secretary