

**Master Gardener Association of Bergen County
Board Meeting Minutes – April 16, 2024**

President Schneider called the meeting to order at 5:38 PM.

Present: Hosting – Theresa Schneider, Lisa Yoler, Jean Friedman, Keith Mazanec, Miriam Taub, Arnie Friedman, Chris Kozar, Janet Stofkoper, Donna Dorgan, Liz Gil, Suzanne Danzig, Herb Arbeiter, Karen Riede, Cesar Coy, Alison Bloomfield

Absent: Joseph Cooper, Melody Corcoran

President Schneider opened the meeting by introducing Ruth Carll, State Program Leader in Consumer Horticulture and Master Gardener Programs, Rutgers NJAES.

Ruth gave further information about her background and her role in her new position with Rutgers. One of her goals is to develop cohesiveness in the Master Gardener program and bring together commonalities throughout the different counties across the state.

Ruth led a discussion focusing on the pros and cons of being a 501(c)(3), non-profit, independent organization, which is what the MG of BC currently is. Rutgers would like us to consider coming under their stewardship, which would offer us liability protection and make us subject to Rutgers programming. Should we choose to remain a 501(c)(3) organization, then we should follow best practice's, which include purchasing Director's and Officer's insurance. Ruth suggested that the board come up with a cost/benefit analysis and then decide whether to continue as a 501(c)(3), independent organization or join under Rutgers stewardship.

There was also a discussion about the development of a state-wide policy manual incorporating addendums specific to each county.

Up and coming new educational programs were also discussed, which are focused on being goal oriented. Ruth also recommended that master gardeners take a "Protection of Minors" course.

Theresa stated that our priorities right now will be to finalize the 2024 budget and review our insurance and liability coverage. She, Arnie and Liz will review the insurance issues and will then probably call for a Zoom meeting with the board prior to the May, in-person meeting.

Meeting concluded at 7 PM.