



## **Board Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, July 11, 2023, 2:00 pm**

The meeting was held at the home of Margie Gibson, President

**Call to order** 2:00 pm

**Present:** Margie Gibson, President; Betty Spence, Secretary; Don Graves, Past President; Mary Barrett; Beth Leuck (via Zoom); Elroy Limmer, absent but represented by proxy given to Margie Gibson; Rick Lass; Marty Eberhardt, as a guest, reporting for the SCBG Steering Committee

**Minutes:** Minutes of the Board meeting of May 9, 2023, were approved as corrected.

### **Board Reports:**

**President's Report:** Margie announced that Dave Becker had submitted a letter of resignation as Treasurer, but was willing to continue as Acting Treasurer until a replacement could be found. Mary Barrett had resigned as Vice President, but was willing to remain on the Board as a Member at Large until the end of the year. These resignations had implications that could be discussed later in the meeting.

**Treasurer's Report:** Before resigning, Dave Becker had submitted a report in writing. He reported that the Gila Native Plant Society checking account as of 6/30/2023 had a balance of \$3,014.34. The Silva Creek Botanical Garden checking account as of 6/30/2023 had a balance of \$1,338.40, including the Medicinal Garden. The GNPS money market account had a balance of \$15,464.85, and the SCBG money market account had a balance of \$20,599.68. The total asset balance including Edward Jones and other accounts as of 6/30/2023 was \$88,460.35.

**Book Sales:** Rick Lass submitted the following report in writing:

Our website book sales are steady, usually 3-6 books per month. I generally get books in the mail within 3-4 days. We also have the two Beginners' Guides on consignment at four local retail stores: Country Girls Nursery, Bear Creek Herbs, Whiskey Creek Zócalo, and the Grant County Art Guild; the latter has only the guide to perennials, which Jackie Blurton illustrated. I check in with each once a month. I have to say I am not fond of the consignment model, but that is the arrangement we have. In addition, the Mimbres Culture Heritage Site bought several of each book and booklet a few weeks ago and has a nice display of them in their gift shop. It might be worth pursuing other locations, such as the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument

and other state and national parks or monuments, but I have not put any effort into that just yet.

#### Discussion:

Don said that the gift shop at the Bosque del Apache NWR did not seem interested in carrying our books. The people at Cliff Dwellings National Monument had been approached some time ago and had not responded, but it might be worthwhile trying again. Beth said that she would check again with the Chiricahua Desert Museum to see if there was interest there.

#### **Committee and other reports as submitted:**

**Steering Committee Report for June 2023:** Marty Eberhardt submitted the following report in writing:

The Steering Committee of four and two people on a subcommittee put in a total of 45 hours of work. Many Steering Committee members took vacation time in June. However, when in Silver, we were busy trying to get estimates for the fundraising goals for various parts of Phase One of the Master Plan—finishing the Habitat Thicket, the Butterfly Garden (which we want to have finished by the May 2024 anniversary of the three youths’ deaths), the stuccoed wall around the tank, which provides the surface for the Youth Mural Project artwork in 2025, the front entrance, and the signs for the rest of the garden not used in this phase (to save production costs). This work has continued into early July! Susan Campbell also purchased plants for the Habitat Thicket this month. Planning will begin when it starts to rain, which we sincerely hope will be very soon. Planning continued for the August 5th public opening for the Master Plan.

#### **Ongoing Business:**

**Treasurer and At Large Board:** Margie said that, in view of Dave’s resignation as Treasurer, it was important to find a replacement as soon as possible. Wendy Graves had offered to train a new recruit in the Treasurer’s responsibilities. One of the problems that had disturbed Dave was the last-minute receipt of contracts involving large sums to be disbursed. A new process had been put in place to ensure that the Treasurer was kept in the loop earlier in a project.

One other step that could be taken to attract a candidate was to hire and pay a bookkeeper to reduce the amount of work for the Treasurer. Dave had estimated that the work of the Treasurer required about 15 hours a month, and the upcoming fundraising efforts for the garden might make the job more onerous. Betty suggested that some people might find it awkward to be responsible for monitoring someone else’s work.

Margie said the problem remained of how to find a Treasurer. The bookkeeper option might be offered as a negotiating point, as it might appeal to some. If no one had a name to suggest, we could send out a MailChimp soliciting a volunteer. Don said that possibly Cathleen Norman might be interested; and suggested that Margie contact her.

**Garden Management Budget:** On behalf of the Garden Management Team, Margie submitted the Team’s operating budget for the period July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, totaling \$6,420. The itemized budget had been circulated to the Board members by email. The items were all for materials and tools, except for \$3,500 for elm trimming. Mary asked whether there was any conflict or overlap with the budget for Phase One of the Garden Master Plan, and was assured that there was not.

**Motion: The Board approved the Garden Management Budget as requested with six yeas and one nay.**

**Annual Native Plant Sale:** Don reported that he had volunteers to distribute posters in Silver City, Mimbres and Hillsboro, and he would see if he could identify members in Deming and in Cliff/Gila who would put up posters there. He would also see if he could get an interview on GMCR/KURU radio. Betty said that she was working on placing ads for the plant sale and would ask SkyWest media about public service announcements.

Don noted that, since the Farmers’ Market was going to be displaced to a site on Main Street between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets, there was a possible conflict because they were encouraging the use of the parking lot on 12<sup>th</sup> and Pope for parking for their customers. He would write a letter tactfully pointing out that the parking lot had been reserved for our plant sale on the 12<sup>th</sup> and probably other events on other dates as well. It shouldn’t be a major problem, and the proximity of the Farmers’ Market might turn out to create a useful synergy for both the Market and the plant sale.

**Hummingbird Festival:** Don reported that the Education Committee would have activities for kids “of all ages.” Since Steve Blake would be away, Don would take responsibility for rounding up volunteers for the kids’ activities. The Blurtons would, as usual, set up and take down the booth. Don and Elroy would be presenting a talk on bees and the plants that depend on them. Betty would help with selling books and answering questions and would send out a MailChimp soliciting other volunteers to fill other time slots.

**New Business:**

**SCBG Open House and Fundraising/Website:**

Marty Eberhardt was invited to explain the plans of the SCBG Steering Committee with regard to implementation of the Garden Master Plan. She reported that the Steering Committee had planned an open house for the public at the Silva Creek Botanical Garden on Saturday, August 5, 2023, to reveal the Master Plan to the community. The public would be invited to tour “stations” throughout the garden from 8:30 to 11:30 am, when volunteers would be on hand to answer questions and explain the plans for individual elements.

The Open House would be the kick-off to a fundraising effort for Phase One of the Master Plan. Phase One would involve completion of the Habitat Thicket, the creation of a wall around the

water tank to provide a surface for a Youth Mural Project, the expansion of the Butterfly Garden, the restructuring of the front entrance and the creation of interpretive signs. She gave the following explanation for the choice of these elements for Phase One: The Habitat Thicket was chosen because it was already in progress. The expansion of the Butterfly Garden needed to be completed by May 2024 to commemorate the 10-year anniversary of the deaths of the three youths to which it was dedicated; the Heart of the Gila organization, which had established the area, wished to be involved in the re-design and the fundraising effort for the project. The wall around the water tank would not only eliminate a safety hazard but would provide the surface for a decorative mural by the Youth Mural Project, which was applying for a grant for the summer of 2025. Redesign of the Front Entrance was chosen for Phase One because it would give cohesion to the whole garden. Interpretive signs were needed for individual projects but, to save money through bulk production, materials for future signs were included in the Phase One budget.

Marty had previously circulated a breakdown of all the costs for Phase One, which totaled \$71,136. The Steering Committee was proposing a total fundraising effort of \$75,000 to provide some margin. The Steering Committee was asking the Board to approve the Phase One plans and the fundraising effort.

### Discussion

Rick questioned why the wall around the water tank was considered a priority, as opposed, for instance, to working on some of the undeveloped areas. Marty responded that there were two reasons: 1) The current situation around the tank was not very safe for the general public and should be addressed; we needed, for instance, to prevent children from crawling under or climbing on the tank. 2) There was a deadline for the mural, which would also provide a place to acknowledge donors and special volunteers.

Mary asked whether the tank needed remediation. She had observed something like tar leaking from it. Was it a liability issue? Marty said that Elroy had been in contact with the Town about the safety of the tank, and that issue would be followed up. Board members generally agreed that the issue of the safety of the tank should be resolved before work began on a wall.

Mary said she was also unclear why the Butterfly Garden and the wall had been chosen as priorities, and Rick agreed with her. Betty noted that those projects must have been chosen because they involved other groups and definite deadlines; she recognized that the Steering Committee had put in many hours of work in coming up with their plan. Don said that the current Butterfly Garden was not a very effective pollinator garden; once expanded, it could include larval host plants. Beth said that she was in favor of the fundraising effort and felt that the Board should not try to micro-manage a very active committee. Mary and Rick said that they appreciated all the work that had been done by the Steering Committee and were not opposed to the fundraising effort, although they still questioned the priorities.

**Motion: The Board approved the SCBG Steering Committee’s proposal for Phase One of the Garden Master Plan and the fundraising goal of \$75,000 by a vote of five yeas and two nays.**

Proposed Donation Levels:

Marty had circulated a paper suggesting how different donation levels for the garden might be acknowledged. After some discussion, the following was decided on:

All donors would be listed in the Bulletin, and donors giving over \$500 would have their names added to the donor wall.

The levels:

\$5-99 Scarlet Bugler

\$100-249 Golden Columbine

\$250-499 Claret Cup

\$500-2,499 Soaptree Yucca [later changed to Wood’s Rose for website design reasons]  
over \$2,500 Gambel Oak

Margie said that work would begin on setting up a donation page on the GNPS website, including a check box for donors who wished to remain anonymous.

**The Commons Gala:** The Board had agreed by exchange of email to donate \$500 to The Commons’ fundraiser event, Gala in the Garden, on Saturday, July 22, 2023, with the theme “Bees and Blooms.” The question at hand was what to contribute to the silent auction at the event. It was agreed that an appropriate contribution would be a copy of *Bees in Your Backyard*, two of our Beginner’s Guides and a copy of *Common Southwestern Plants*.

**The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 pm.**

**Motions adopted by exchange of email since July 11, 2023**

**Motion adopted by exchange of email on July 13-14, 2023:** The Board approved the purchase of two more boxes (16 to a box) of *Common Southwestern Native Plants* at a cost of approximately \$200 per box.

**Motion adopted by exchange of email on July 17, 2023:** The Board approved the President’s nominations of Cathleen Norman as Treasurer and Marty Eberhardt as Board Member at Large.

Explanation: Because of the resignations of Dave Becker as Treasurer and Wendy Graves as Board Member at Large, the Board required a new Treasurer and Board Member at Large. The

President reported that Cathleen Norman had agreed to serve as the new Treasurer. She therefore nominated Cathleen as Treasurer. She also nominated Marty Eberhardt as Board Member at Large, since it would be advantageous to have closer ties with the SCBG Steering Committee in anticipation of increased activity in the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. The Bylaws call for the Board to approve these nominations by the President and for the Board to be between 7 and 11 members. These nominations bring the Board to nine members.

### **Other Decisions**

**The Board accepted the resignation of Mary Barrett as Board Member at Large on July 24, 2023.**

Explanation: Mary's resignation leaves the Board with eight members.

## **Appendix II: Motions adopted by email exchange since May 9, 2023**

### **Motion adopted by email exchange on May 21-22, 2023**

**The GNPS Board unanimously adopted a policy for reimbursing the travel expenses of speakers who drive to Silver City to give GNPS presentations, namely, to reimburse mileage at half of the current IRS business-use reimbursement rate, rounded up to the next whole cent.**

Explanation: The situation arose when it was desired to reimburse Dr. Hannah Marx, who drove to Silver City from Albuquerque to give a presentation on May 21, 2023, but it was clear that there was no policy in place. The IRS mileage reimbursement rate for business use of a vehicle is 65.5 cents in 2023 (and it can vary from year to year). The reimbursement rate for charitable use of a vehicle is 14 cents (this has been fixed, by statute, for years). The President and Treasurer proposed a compromise solution of about half of the business rate - more specifically half of the current IRS business-use reimbursement rate, rounded up to the next whole cent, which met with approval.

### **Decision adopted by email exchange on June 25-26, 2023**

**The GNPS Board agreed to donate \$500 as a sponsor (Pollinator level) to The Commons' fundraiser event, Gala in the Garden, on Saturday, July 22, 2023, with the theme "Bees and Blooms."**