

DeWitt Macon Piatt County – Unit 17 Extension Council Meeting

May 9, 2022

The May 9, 2022, Unit 17 Extension Council meeting was held via Zoom.

The May 9, 2022 meeting was called to order by Doug Harlan at 6:30 p.m.

Those present at the meeting: Sonya Anthony, Nancy Derby, Kathy Drozs, Jerry Edwards, Merry Lanker, Megan Murphy, and Dave White.

Staff present at the meeting: Jamie Boas, Doug Gucker, Doug Harlan, Louise Hyneman, Caitlin Mellendorf, and Sarah Vogel.

There were no public attendees or comments.

Minutes from the March 14, 2022 Extension Council were presented. There were no corrections or additions. A motion was made by Sonya Anthony to approve the minutes and was seconded by Jerry Edwards. Motion passed.

Doug Harlan reported that the State is paid in full for FY 2021. We are waiting for the first County Match payment. Doug is confident the money is coming. March Income/Expenses were under budget for the year to May. Doug asked if there were any questions or comments on the report. There were none.

Personnel Update presented by Doug Harlan. Doug announced that an offer has been extended for the Macon 4H Youth Development Educator, but is unable to say who the individual is as of this time. The Consumer Economic Educator search is a failed search. Interviews were held and an offer was presented to an individual however, they declined due to salary. The position has been reposted. Julia Duncan will be moving into the Master Naturalist EPC position. Will be posting the Macon Master Gardner EPC position. Lindsey Burden has resigned from the DeWitt 4H EPC position and Kendra Wallace has moved into the position. The Piatt 4H EPC position is open and posted. We also will be trying to open and fill a SNAP Ed position later this summer. There were no questions.

Doug asked the council if they had any new programming needs that the staff could address. A discussion was held on the possibility of collecting plastic caps. Sonya Anthony was going to send more information to Doug. Possibly a 4H club would want to pursue. Megan Murphy provided information on the Roots and Shoots Program as a neat way for a community or individual to get connected with a national or international system for environmental or conservation ideas.

Program Highlight on Agriculture/Local Foods was presented by Doug Gucker. Avian Flu 2021/2022 is looking to be the worst year for this flu. While Illinois has had its share of cases it does not appear to be as widespread. Over 5 million Turkeys have been depopulated and 29 million laying hens have been depopulated. Either take down bird baths and feeders or clean them on a weekly basis. If more than 5 dead birds found in a grouping, call and report. Sarah Vogel had a question on IDNR keeping feeders down until the end of May. There were no other questions.

Doug had nothing to report for the County Director Update.

Doug Gucker provided a report on fruit tree pruning, 14 were in attendance. Conducted farm visit, home visit, WCIA AG Answers and collaborating with RCC on cover crops. Graduation of 9 new Master Naturalists. Busy winter with programming.

Jamie Boas provided a report on Teen Teachers programming. Foods eaten throughout history went over very well. Working with a 6th grade teacher in Cerro Gordo programming will begin there. Jewish religion and Jewish culture will be highlighted. Using a video on Jewish literature and culture and preparing a Jewish dish, went over very well. Feedback from kids was positive, many had never met anyone who was Jewish. Conservation management class planted over 25 trees. Shout out to 4H SCREAM for making it to Worlds, they were ranked 20th in the Jemison Division and were finalists for the Connect Award.

Caitlin Mellendorf presented a report on Nutrition and Wellness. Fifth graders in Monticello have been learning about food and cooking through history. Students learned about dehydration and campfire cooking. The Deer donation program will be kicking off in the fall to 12 counties. Still getting processors in place. New programming with Baby Talk of Decatur, the first topic was family meals and attendees made and sampled salsa.

Louise Hyneman presented a report on SNAP Ed. Wrapping up school programming and preparing for the summer. Able to resume programs like Jr. Chef school. Hopeful that with the passing of a house bill eliminating the requirement for schools to opt for the lowest bid, school food choices will improve. She talked about the Second Saturday program to increase volunteers to work on gardens. Salvation Army working with food pantries to make healthy choices. Working with local growers to provide fresh food. Megan Murphy had a question on where the garden was located. The garden is in Decatur. Megan also shared some information on the school lunch program in Mount Pulaski, they are trying to implement a local food hub to sell directly to the school. Louise will look into this model for the Decatur program.

Sarah Vogel presented a report on Horticulture. Master Gardeners had Educational Outreach programs in February and March that were very well attended. Many summer programs are planned, like garden tours. A terrarium workshop with Piatt County Mental Health was held and fun was had by all. This program was a great way to reach an underserved audience. In March, April and May educational sessions on gardening for butterflies and hummingbirds were presented to local Home and Community Education groups. Master Gardeners continues their online training this spring with 2 new trainees. Help desk continues to be a resource staffed by volunteers.

Thank you to the following members for serving on Extension Council; David White, Jennifer Suckow, Ben Suckow, Nancy Derby, Karen Halicki, Brett Brown and Morgan Drozs.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Sonya Anthony and seconded by Merry Lanker.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Next meeting will be held on September 12, 2022 at 6:30p.m.