MASTER GARDENER ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES August 18, 2021

The meeting of the Extension Master Gardener Advisory Committee was called to order at 2:00 pm, by Candice Hart. The meeting was held via Zoom. Also in attendance were: May Bach, Bruce Black, Debra Fearn, Sally Cook, Heather Coyle, Barb Dalhbach, Sarah Fellerer, Jennifer Fishburn, Pat Gunnerson, Brittnay Haag, Jenny Lee, Austin Little, Judy Panico, Gwen Podeschi, Sarah Vogel, Jana Waite, Jane White, and Vicky Wyffels.

- 1. Introductions were made.
- 2. All open Advisory Committee spots have been filled.
- 3. The state awards process was discussed. No changes have been made to the previous process. There is no limit to number of Outstanding or Sustained Excellence award nominations per county. The Team Work award is limited to one nomination per county per year. The Outstanding and Sustained Excellence awards are not earned for one year's contributions but rather for cumulative work across projects/years. We agreed pictures should be submitted for Team Work awards but not necessary for other awards. County offices will get lawn signs for Outstanding and Sustained Excellence award winners again this year.
- 4. The annual State Master Gardener conference will be virtual again this year. Registration is now open. Conference will kick off on Wednesday evening, September 8 with a panel discussion. The keynote address will be held on Thursday. Nine breakout sessions (with separate Zoom links) will be held across Thursday and Friday with all sessions recorded and uploaded to private youtube page. Videos will be available for 30 days.
- 5. The 2022 state conference is planned for in-person in Tinley Park in Will County. Nancy Kahedja is working to identify possible field trip destinations. The 2023 state conference may be held in Peoria.
- 6. Other business: We briefly discussed how client emails are handled in several counties; some counties have a designated team or individual

respond to all emails, while other counties have the MGs in the phone room also respond to emails.

- 7. The question was raised whether there is any plan to reduce the number of MG training hours/volunteer hour requirements to match surrounding states. Although we feel the longer training results in a stronger MG program, a year end survey may be done to obtain feedback. Across the country, most states require 40 volunteer hours during the training year and 20 hours in subsequent years, while Illinois Extension requires 60 and 30 hours, respectively.
- 8. The volunteer time tracking tool (VCMS) is being replaced but probably won't be available until early 2022. The new system will provide more options, better reporting, more categories and maintain flexibility.
- 9. The next meeting will be held on November 3, 2021 at 9 am. This meeting is typically held in person but Candice has recently decided to hold it as another Zoom call.

Meeting adjourned at 3:09 pm. Respectfully submitted by Judy Panico, secretary.