HILL COUNTRY MASTER NATUALIST BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Teleconference
June 22, 2020

The meeting was called to order by President Elsa Roberts at 2:40 p.m. after minor difficulties connecting via teleconference.

Members present were: Elsa Roberts, Katy Kappel, Nancy Scoggins, Jeralyn Hathorn, Carla Stang, Vern Crawford, Sheryl Pender, Catherine Gauldin, Frank Garcia, Tom Burke, Lisa Flanagan and Deb Youngblood. All members were present.

**Operational:**

1. The minutes for the May 18, 2020 board meeting were approved on a motion by Lisa and seconded by Frank. The motion carried.
2. Treasurer Nancy Scoggins presented the financial reports. A motion to approve was made by Katy and seconded by Frank.
3. Vice President Katy Kappel initially informed the board that she had nothing to report at the time. During the teleconference she informed the board that St. Mark's has relayed to her that they still can't confirm the use of their facility for the Volunteer Appreciation Party in December. Elsa informed the board that UGRA will not have another board meeting until the end of July at which time we hope to have more information on using the conference room for fall classes. Katy is checking with local churches for an option for chapter meetings.

**Director's Reports:**

1. Membership Director Carla Stang provided her report and informed the board that table outreaches are going well. There is a lot of foot traffic and interest at Herff Farms. She has secured 23 mentors that will meet on July 22, 2020 and will coordinate with Katy to obtain the computer to use at the meeting.
2. AT Director Deb Youngblood presented her report. She had been asked if all 8 AT hours could be earned by webinar due to the difficulties of some members getting out and also for those not able to drive at night. Deb recommended that State be approached about making it possible for all members to recertify with 8 hours of webinar training. Elsa confirmed that it is allowable for initial certifications this year, like for New Class members. For the general membership, no. We still have to have 4 hours in person training (minimum) and can have up to 4 hours webinar training (max) for certification. Everyone can still go to as many trainings as desired.
3. Communications Director Catherine Gauldin presented her report and let the board know that she has plenty of rack cards available for anyone who needs them.
4. Project Director Tom Burke reported about the new Pollinator Garden project at the Boene Convention and Visitors Center. Elsa shared that Nancy Huffman is replacing Reggie Cox as the Project Coordinator at UGRA.
5. In addition to her report, Class Director Sheryl Pender informed the board that it was necessary to replace the "Hydrology" speaker for the fall class. She reported that as of right now 13 chapters will have fall training classes, with 50% of them being face to face. The necessity of purchasing supplies for sanitization will impact the budget. Many venues are unsure of what their restrictions will be. Katy asked Sheryl if TPWD had lifted the ban on meetings. Sheryl responded that the TXMN are under the TAMU re-opening guidelines and that they have been accepted by TPWD.

**Resource Development:**

1. 2020 Class Applications - Two applicants required discussion prior to approval. Elsa and Vern checked with Michelle to see if we had the authority to decide whether to process the applicant for Amy Slater as a transfer versus a new student. Lisa suggested charging her for books and field trips only. Vern suggested processing it as a scholarship and charge her for direct expenses only. Sheryl's opinion was to just use the scholarship because it would be difficult to determine the direct expenses. Lisa felt that we needed to wait and see where the scholarship funds would be needed. Carla requested re-addressing the matter at a later time. The second applicant to be addressed was Mary Ashley. Ms. Ashley had attended the 2004 class but there is no documentation indicating that she completed the initial certification. Elsa expressed a concern regarding her potential lack of dedication towards completing the classes. Vern and most of the board agreed with Deb that she should repeat the whole course. She has not filled out an application as of yet. Katy suggested she fill out an application, pay the fee and the board will consider her for a scholarship. A motion to accept the applications in hand as of the board meeting date was made by Frank and seconded by Deb. The motion carried.
2. Discussion regarding a new chapter advisor was tabled until Elsa could talk to Michelle.
3. The chapter handbook needs some tweaking and it was decided to discuss it at the next meeting.
4. Vote on Class Protocols - Sheryl reported that the most restrictive local practices were taken into consideration when drafting the Practice Protocols and Preparedness Plan and explained that the situation would have to be fluid and may need to be readjusted as restrictions change.  A copy of the Protocols and Plan is attached to the minutes.  Katy inquired as to when the students would be notified of the protocols, expecting that there might be some objection and students would possibly want to withdraw their application.  Carla will prepare an abbreviated version, with Sheryl's help, that will be sent to the approved applicants right away.  Discussion ensued regarding the effectiveness of face masks and whether the plan calls for "masks" or "face coverings".  Elsa reminded the board that we still have time before classes begin and we will make the hard decisions according to the restrictions in place at that time.  Carla will also note that guidelines are subject to change in the document she sends to applicants.  Further discussion took place regarding sanitizing the microphone between speakers.  It was suggested that covering the microphone with a baggie may be the easiest most effective option.  Vern demonstrated what it would be like to cover the microphone with a baggie, and the board unanimously agreed that the baggie did not affect the clarity. Sheryl moved for approval of the proposed Practice Protocols and Preparedness Plan from the June 17 2020 Class Committee as presented to the Board of Directors with the understanding that continuous monitoring of the city, county, state, TAMU Agri-Life Extension and TPWD's revisions to current guidelines may require adjustments to these protocols. Frank seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.
5. Elsa informed the board that Kim Ort is a good candidate to take over the web page according to Kristie. Carla provided additional background information on Kim. Elsa suggested that anyone who knows her reach out and encourage her. Carla indicated that she is working on a program to extract information on membership skills in order to know who to reach out to when an opportunity/need arises.
6. The UGRA contract was updated to only include maintenance of the Wildscape garden. Elsa queried whether we should update the contract to reflect this since it currently says that we are responsible for the entire building. Sheryl felt that since UGRA originated the document we should have them update it. Katy suggested waiting until the room is deemed "available" before approaching them. Elsa agreed to do so. Discussion ensued regarding our obligations according to the UGRA contract and previous discrepancies which have been reconciled. A sign in sheet is being generated in order to provide an accurate accounting of hours worked. Carla suggested highlighting the contractual obligation to the members in order to garner more participation. Tom will reach out to Nancy to see if she needs more volunteers.

A motion to adjourn was made by Lisa, seconded by Vern and the meeting adjourned at 4:15. The next board meeting will be July 27, 2020 by teleconference. It was recommended to consider using WebX for the next board meeting due to the problems we had connecting this time.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeralyn Hathorn
Secretary