

Minutes-CEC Meeting at Virginia GSC – June 8, 2022

Present: Jim Takala, Mark Baumann, Frank Jewell, Keith Nelson, Richard Pierce, Doug Hoffbauer

Other: Mary Tennis, Keri Cavitt, Bob Olen, Troy Salzer, Stacey DeRoche

Chair Jim Takala called the meeting to order. Roll call was taken. Agenda was approved. Minutes from April 25th were approved as printed.

Horticulture and agriculture program

Welcome to Bob and Troy.

Bob presented an overview of the spring horticulture programs.

- Bob said that Mountain Iron and The Depot had very good attendance. The programming was budgeted to try to cover all the expenses. They came out net positive on both events. He also related that people are coming in from adjoining counties as they don't have the same Extension programs.
- Bob passed out the Spring Gardening Extravaganza (SGE) reference book emphasizing how much content was included. Speakers provided content as well as educators. Content emphasized pollinators, bee lawns, and managing lawns. Resource material is a net revenue for the county after the programs.
- Keith mentioned that a piece on lawns is long overdue and should be share with planning department to hand out to property owners, particularly for property with lake shore.
- Bob said the whole concept for SGE was to create an eco-friendly integrated landscape. This topic is very popular right now. He said much of the content is what we generated ourselves. Bee lawn info had come from southern MN but mixes being sold weren't appropriate for this area. SLC educators did the research to find what mixes worked. Bob said that No Mow May was endorsed in Superior but that Duluth didn't want No Mow May but wanted a more comprehensive plan.
- Questions: Doug asked if there is there research out there on late season fertility which Troy answered. Frank asked if heat led to good pepper production last year. Bob discussed different methods of planting and said that warmth helps for better yield.
- The SGE book contains vegetable and fruit variety lists just for SLC. There is a pepper fact sheet in the book. Senior Reporter has an article about the pepper research.

Bob presented an overview of his applied research trial for growing ripe roasting peppers in northern Minnesota. Trials were held in three locations and included 13 varieties. Saw blossom rot at all three locations. This trial helped them develop a better growing technique for peppers.

He and Troy are still doing a great deal of media work, public television, radio.

- Lots of content in print media: articles in the DNT including links in the articles to better serve the public and reducing follow-up calls, in the Senior Reporter with the fall edition receiving a second place national award.

Bob said the Extension Master Gardener (EMG) program now has 80 volunteers with 14 new volunteers.

- He is raising the standards and looking to have quality volunteers and said that paying \$300 to volunteer helps lead to really committed volunteers. He said that EMGs have a certain amount of rigor to their training. In the past the North volunteers were scattered and no one drove to meetings. Now we do have clusters in north communities. The pepper project brought in more people. Now we have a cluster in Ely and he is working on micro-clusters throughout the Range. The EMG program has a model that is working for the first time.
- Bob gave an overview of Clara's Trail progress—the volunteers opened up areas for new path. It was all done with volunteers and volunteer equipment. Clara was able to use the path for first time in her stroller.

Now they are working on sensory garden and a trial area for fruit trees and Canadian varieties. The project will have a major educational component.

- He is looking for the EMGs to complete projects that have a long-term community impact.

Troy presented his report on paper.

Administrative update

- Mary said that they are digging into these (hort) workshops re: costs but the message has been to reinvest and make them better. Keith said people don't see the value unless there is a cost to them but we don't need to make money as it's a resource for the county residents.
- Mary talked to Troy about a podcast so we can expand the impact. Keith said a podcast might alleviate consumer calls. Troy suggested a YouTube videos on specific topics. Doug said that Michigan state puts out a lot of podcasts at university level. Troy said that they produce many videos now but there could have one SLC YouTube channel. Keith said it must be specific to our area. Frank asked if they are talking about charging for videos. Mary answered that these would come after the program and would be free to the public but there may be some revenue there in having a YouTube channel.

Discussion: Frank said he is part of a community garden with many new people under 40, learning from each other. It is fun to see young people participate but many won't "survive" unless they get support. CEC discussed their hope that the new person on CEC after Frank will have an appreciation for Extension. Mary said she would be happy to present to the Board anytime. Keith said the future of Extension in SLC is solid. Frank said that there is definitely good energy with everything Mary and team are doing at the Depot and with Extension.

Civil Rights—Part II

Keri said that in talking about charging fees, she wondered if the CEC could have a conversation about this as it relates to equity.

Discussion: Keith recounted that what SLC does at Camp Esquagama is if someone asks, we pay it. He said we should do the same for our horticulture programs. Invite them in. Create a scholarship program and use as needed. He said we do out of home placement at Camp E and no one knows that we do that and the youth are all treated the same at the Camp. It costs less than other out of home placement. Frank said there might be an opportunity that these programs could be offered at no charge and attract a different group of people. He said this would take some outreach and cited the example—of only attracting kids from areas like Lincoln Park to certain programs is some serious outreach. Keith—I would like to see what level of scholarship we can establish for hort and ag programs. We should have that conversation as a commission. Mary—I could work with Troy and Bob on some sort of system and bring it back to the CEC. Frank—Patrice Bailey from the MN Ag Department is doing work getting populations involved that don't usually have utilize ag and hort programs. Bob added that we do a lot of programming that is free—SR, library program, etc. Keith said that if someone asks we should have a way to yes. Frank—AICHO is doing fun stuff with food, community garden run by POC. He said we have to be better with connecting with those folks that are doing things in the community. Keith said he doesn't want to lose the core of what we are doing in SLC by doing what is popular now.

Keri presented the St. Louis County Compass Data Comparison

- Survey results—bring home that parity is really important and what staff represents and what this group represents of the community. We would ideally like to have representation from other race and ethnicity groups. When we have an opening on CEC to have a goal of having parity. Survey shows what the opportunity is to work towards.
- Keith said that he does not have to be Native American, or African American to represent those populations. He said we have to be inviting to other groups but that he does represent those groups' issues and that we don't have to have them at the table. He is not a big believer in forcing those numbers for

parity. We need people who are interested. Doug said that having young people would not have the same perspective as older members.

Membership Conversation

Mary said that she and Keri have been talking about this issue. She created spreadsheet of attendance. We do have one member that has not made it to any meetings. It would be great to have someone who would attend. She asked how CEC would like to take action. Frank—does it make sense to send a letter thanking them and asking if they can attend and if not, we would like to fill your spot. Mary agreed and added that without that seat filled by an attending member it's harder to make quorum. Frank and Keith agreed that the time of the meeting can create a conflict for participation of young or for older members. Jim asked if Mary could compose that letter. Mary said it should come from Jim but they can work on putting it together. Mary said she would send Jim the record of attendance.

Keith let the CEC members know that he trying to get mileage rate adjusted on at least a temporary measure. He will bring something in front of the board soon.

Jim asked for a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned.