



Virginia Green Industry Council

VGIC Board and Annual Meeting Minutes

Friday, January 5, 2007 1:00-4:00 pm

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm with the following people present: Lin Diacont, Lorene Blackwood, Jeff Miller, Cary Gouldin, Kathy Duncan, Joel Koci, Jerzy Nowak, Dan Young, Doug Hensel, Rick Baker, Candy Lindenzweig, Marlene Larios, Doug Edwards, Dawn Alleman, Bonnie Appleton, Sylvia Wright, Mary Williams, Bill Bonwell, Joyce Latimer, Herman Ellison, Kevin Barnes, Dawn Lurch, Jason Jones, Dean Sharron Quisenberry and Karen Kelly/

Presidents Comments – Lin Diacont discussed the accomplishments for 2006 and thanked everyone for their hard work and support to make the VGIC viable.

Secretary Report – It was moved to approve the minutes as emailed to the board, seconded and passed.

Committee Reports Budget, Cary Gouldin presented the Budget for 2007 and it was approved. (see attached financial reports)

Executive Directors Report: (see attached report of 2006 VGIC Accomplishments) Jeff reported that the hosting company had made some “seamless” upgrades, that weren’t, to the websites during late summer resulting in the loss of usage stats prior to October. 43% of the users are finding the VGIC through Google, 16% through Yahoo, 10% through the VNLA website and the balance through other search engines. He still needs input, information, ideas etc. for the VGIC website and the consumer website viriniagardening.com.

Virginia Tech - Dean Quisenberry reported that they are trying to focus on the things that they can do well and recognized the green industry that has a growing future in Virginia agriculture. She gave a comprehensive overview of the six areas of concentration for CALS including a foundation for agriculture sustainability through bio-design and processing working with food nutrition and dealing with obesity, infectious diseases between animals and humans, and rural community viability. A copy of the Virginia Tech CALS final phase Staffing Initiative was distributed that is now before the General Assembly. (See attached report) The Dean assured everyone that positions won’t be lost in the horticulture department as current staff retires or leaves. If the green industry needs new positions, the industry needs to let her know.

Virginia Agribusiness Council Banquet Decorations – Cary Gouldin is coordinating securing the donations from the Virginia Flower Growers Association. Lin Diacont, Lin’s Landscaping, Gwynn Hubbard and Carol Smallwood will help sleeve the flowers and place them on the tables.

Program and Education, State Fair Update: Curry Roberts, State Fair President, provided an update of the Fair and plans for the new fair site at The Meadow in Caroline County. Road and tunnel construction are underway. The 2007 State Fair will be held at RIR.

The State Fair Student Garden theme for 2007 will be “Red, White and Blue Anniversary Garden” in commemoration of the Jamestown Celebration.

Richmond Technical School won Best of Show for the 2006 competition and \$1,000 in scholarship money. This money was divided among nine students. By being a scholarship winner at the Fair, all of these students are eligible to apply for additional scholarships through the Endowed Scholarships, which has a value of \$17,000. There were six gardens all total.

Old Business

Green Industry Survey –Kevin Barnes introduced Herman Ellison who will be coordinating the efforts to have a Green Industry Survey completed by 2008. He is in the process of designing the questionnaire and determining exactly what to measure. The entire industry needs to give him feedback to assure that the most important questions are asked to ensure that this will be a valuable tool. Please encourage everyone in the industry to participate. It is in everyone’s best interest and will show the true strength of the Green Industry in Virginia.

They also noted that the green industry needs to help determine the following items before the survey is conducted:

1. What do we want to measure
2. Contact lists to send the survey to
3. Questionnaire design and questions
4. Publicity to encourage participants to complete the survey. (It will be the same time as the regular census, which might cause some confusion.)

VDACS/USDA Block Grants – Rick Baker

New Grant Application Process:

- Apply-January 2007
- Selected—March 2007
- USDA Review
- Awarded- Summer 2007
- Grant Value-\$5,00/\$10/000 (total of \$110,00 to be awarded)
- VGIC Request—FSMIP grant continuing support of projects until Virginia Garden Festival is fully established (Jim May gardening column, newsletter, website, promotional and educational materials and the Virginia Garden Festival)

Membership-Mary Williams gave a membership report and provided a membership list. She everyone is encouraged to help generate more membership.

- 2005 Membership: 43 members and \$3,593
- 2006 Membership: 48 members and \$3,152

Exhibit ay 2007 Maymont Flower Show (under new management) Thursday, February 22-Sunday February 25 - Rick Baker reported that they have provided one “free” exhibit space for VGIC which is a great opportunity to showcase the green industry. The purpose will be to promote recognition and activities of VGIC, the Virginia Garden Festival, association members, certification programs and the industry in general.

Volunteers are needed to man the exhibit. To volunteer: contact Lorene Blackwood at 804-569-3217 or lblackwood@StateFairVA.org or Rick Baker (301-776-7147) Rick.Baker@vdacs.virginia.gov

Be at the head of the line and get the hours that you like.

The following have volunteered to work the VGIC Booth:

Thursday, February 22

- Sylvia Wright
- Lin Diacont
- Mary Williams
- Karen Kelly

Friday, February 23

- Bonnie Appletton 10-12
- Gwynn Hubbard 2-4

Saturday, February 24

- Joel Koci
- Cary Gouldin

Sunday, February 25

- Time slots available

2007 Virginia Garden Festival

Date-Saturday, September 22, 2007—9:00am-5:00 pm

Location- Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens

This will be a VGIC Stand alone event, not held in conjunction with the LGBG Fall Plant Sale.

Purpose-The primary activity to promote causes for the industry, bring a growing positive recognition and attention to the organization and the industry, create positive cash flow that will support expanded programs and make “GO GREEN” –Champions of the Environment” the “branded ideal” we work toward.

VGIC Committee- Rick Baker, Bill Bonwell, Karen Kelly, Sylvia Wright, and the VGIC Board –All members organizations will be contacted to participate with an exhibit and volunteers. Everyone needs to be involved and all members will be contacted to participate.

Primary Requirements: We need support in the following areas.

- Promotion
- Sponsors
- Vendors-plants, education, hard goods, landscape, service, crafts, food, other
- Speakers
- Demonstrations
- Logistics-set up, take down, traffic control, general assistance

New Business-

America’s Anniversary Garden Contest—Bonnie Appleton reported that to help maintain the momentum for the 2007 Anniversary Celebration there is an Anniversary Garden Contest that will be open to the public across Virginia. This will be a Red, White and Blue Anniversary Garden. The winner will be presented at AgDay at the Fair.

Bonnie Appleton will check to see what came of the filming that VT did of the Student Gardens at the 2006 Fair.

Educational Opportunities-

Marlene Larios from Telamon Corporation along with Doug Edwards of VDACS gave a brief overview of the Telamon Training Standard that provides free training for pesticide management for anyone in the industry. There is no charge for this service. See attachments

Dawn Allman , Mid Atlantic Short Course Program Coordinator and asked that the industry help her identify special educational needs for the Industry. There are two tracks for Short Courses: training for staff/workforce and a Home Gardening Day to address tree needs for the public. Maybe this can help eliminate “crepe murder”. Please contact her if your company has special educational needs.

Forestry in Virginia- Joel Koci reported that the TreesVirginia.org is holding a round table discussion to promote better stewardship for urban forests on February 9.

Arbor Day: Any school that is interested in participating in Arbor Day, please contact Joel Koci. Jeff Miller reported that the VNLA will be requesting Governor Kaine to issue a proclamation officially designating Virginia Arbor Day as Friday, April 27 and the VNLA will be coordinating a tree planting ceremony for Arbor Day on April 27 at the Capitol. He also suggested that this would be a great opportunity for all the groups and businesses who are conducting tree planting events to coordinate their activities and publicity through the VGIC.

Election of Officers:

Karen Kelly, submitted the slate of officers for 2007: Lin Diacont, President, Cary Gouldin, Vice President, Lorene Blackwood, Secretary. The motion carried.

REPORTS

Public Relations—Sylvia Wright (see attached report)

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 13, 2007 at 1:00 pm at the State Fair Office.

Adjourn 4:30 pm

Respectively submitted by Lorene Blackwood

Accomplishments in 2006

New VGIC promotional display banners were created and are available to use at conferences, shows, conventions, the State Fair and other meetings as needed. They are versatile and can be targeted to the consumer as well as the professional.

Virginia Agribusiness Council Appreciation Banquet: Provided centerpieces for the tables at the banquet and other decorations and each piece had signage with the VGIC logo along with information about the Green Industry, which helps make our industry more visible to our legislators and their aides.

Arbor Day – Co-sponsored the Virginia Arbor Day Ceremony at the Governor’s Mansion, which was well attended with the First Lady Ann Holton attending to accept the tree for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Virginia Agribusiness Food Festival: Plant material was provided by members to enhance the Festival setting and then donated to the Horticulture Pavilion during the State Fair. The “Ask the Experts” booth was also staffed at the Virginia Agribusiness Food Festival.

The Virginia Garden Festivalsm: The State Corporation Commission approved a “service mark” application for “The Virginia Garden Festival” (file #7926) which provides exclusive use protection of the name in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Virginia Garden Festivalsm: The VGIC successfully completed its first annual Virginia Garden Festivalsm on Saturday, September 16 at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, Virginia. 35 exhibitors for the **Virginia Garden Festivalsm** blended nicely with the 30 (+/-) plant sale vendors for the LGBG fall plant sale. It was a good fit and made a very nice presentation. We estimate that there were approximately 3,000 people in attendance. The VGIC had sales of \$2,868 from donated plant material from Virginia growers.

State Fair Horticulture Gardens: The VGIC members provided a bountiful supply of plant material to provide and enhanced color landscape for these gardens during the State Fair, which were then sold at the end of the Fair, generating additional revenues for the Council.

Quarterly email Newsletters and monthly Bulletins on current events and updates were continued this year by Sylvia Wright.

Gardening News Releases: The VGIC released 38 seasonal news releases that were used, reaching over 565,413 readers in non-daily newspapers.

Monthly gardening articles were written by Jim May, Virginia Certified Horticulturist, and submitted to newspapers statewide.

Dr. Bonnie Appleton appointed as VGIC educational liaison from the VA Tech Department of Horticulture.

www.VirginiaGreen.org (the trade website) continues to be the “go to” website for the most extensive green industry calendar of events, as well as industry information and resources.

www.VirginiaGardening.com (the consumer website) continues to grow with resources and information for Virginia Gardening information from all segments of the green industry.

Publicity – Sylvia Wright provided extensive array of news releases and articles promoting the VGIC, resulting in coverage of the VGIC and events in numerous state, regional and national publications.

VGIC Public Relations Report

- provided Nov and Dec VGIC bulletins
- created and distributed Jan bulletin and winter 2007 newsletter
- created for Steward of the Streams symposium theme for 2007 newsletter, distributed to Mid-Atlantic Grower newspaper as an article and as part of my professional publication, included in my Feb VA Gardener column and Mar VA Gardener feature, VA landscape trends
- created for Green Profit magazine a feature, Women of the Green Industry, which included VA GI women professionals
- have scheduled with Green Profit magazine a feature on the topic of the value of Green Industry groups such as VGIC, VGIC will be my main example
- am scheduled to teach a communications workshop for the U of R/LGB landscape program and plan to use VGIC colors, symbols, etc as examples of industry communications

THANKS! Sylvia Wright, The Wright - consultant, lecturer, & wordsmith, www.TheWrightScoop.com
