

CVNLA Board Meeting Minutes

September 9, 2020

In attendance: Elizabeth Fogel, Cambridge Mattice, Laura Schumm, Matt Brinckman, Alec Selz,

Reviewed responses to the Winter Symposium survey:

From Phyllis: 89 respondents

80% of respondents would be interested in a virtual symposium

57% selected 1 – 2 hour programs over a number of weeks

33% selected 3 full, 5-hour days

26% selected hybrid programs

15% selected no symposium at all

94% are comfortable with technology

88% have used Zoom or another online meeting app

72% have laptops

69% selected real-time lectures with Q&A

62% selected pre-recorded lectures that can be accessed at any time

63% would prefer to pick up materials, if provided, at a location at the Garden (I should have not included this question, unless we decide to offer book sales)

ACTION NEEDED- Discussion at next meeting with Phyllis Ed, Laura and Elizabeth:

- Check in with Ed about validating attendance for continuing education credits
- Did/Can Ed send the survey out to any group email distribution list he has?
- Discuss speaker ideas: people far away and bad weather areas,
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Certified Hort Review Class:

Our regular classroom through VCE is not available, we think all of the VNLA exam dates are postponed due to COVID, it might be best to not hold the review classes this year due to these factors related to COVID-19.

ACTION NEEDED: Laura reach out to Shellie to see if the exams are really postponed before we make a final decision about cancelling the review classes for this year.

Meetings for the rest of this year:

Will discuss tonight with attending members, but as weather gets colder, it will be harder to have meetings due to COVID-19, so potentially October might be our last meeting for the winter.

We will try to have an October meeting at the outdoor LGBG venue, will ask Shellie Archer if she would agree to be the speaker to present on changes that have been made to reporting procedures for Certified Horticulturist continuing education and other info from VNLA.

We probably won't have a Christmas party due to COVID-19.

ACTION NEEDED: Cambridge will contact Shellie Archer to see if she would be available and able to be the speaker at our October meeting on Wednesday, 10/14/2020

Insurance: Laura finally got in touch with our insurance company and discovered that our policy was terminated. We are unsure of what exactly happened, the bill was paid in March 2020 with check #2826, but for some reason they cancelled the policy and issued a refund check. Laura has started the discussion to get our policy renewed.

ACTION NEEDED: Laura will follow up with Erie Insurance to finalize the renewal and forward the bill to Elizabeth for payment.

Website: Laura has just now been able to get in touch with Sarah who manages our website and sent her the changes we need made. Sarah will send any invoices to Laura who will forward to Elizabeth for payment.

Banking Update:

ATM card is up and working, the board agreed that we should get a second card with Laura Schumm's name so that she is able to make purchases and deposits as needed. Elizabeth has started a new Excel spreadsheet to track our account.

The CVNLA cash box is still locked in the Colesville safe.

ACTION NEEDED: Elizabeth will get back in touch with the bank to request a card for Laura and to work out issues with getting online banking up and running.

Cambridge to bring cash box to next meeting.

The following information covers the dinner meeting attendance and topics discussed by the member group:

John Richmond, Taylor – 3 guests, paid cash

Jim Hassold – paid check

Warner Winthrop, Kate Leffler, Cambridge not paid

Matt Brinckman , not paid

Joe Donchez and guest, not paid

Alec Selz – paid cash

Karen Merica and Tom Smallwood – not paid

Sean P. – not in attendance, plans to mail a check to the PO box

Monit? No show? – emailed that she will send payment

Laura Schumm, comped

Discussion Session with Members led by Alec Selz:

How is business for everyone given COVID-19:

For many companies, business has been great because so many people are home all day and wanting much more work done. The labor market is now an issue, many companies having trouble hiring enough staff. One member suggested that folks should make sure you budget well for a possible decline next year when the pandemic is behind us, people return to office work and there is a decrease in the current high demand.

On the other hand, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden (as with many other similar organizations) has been hit hard, losing all revenue for almost 6 full months. While the garden has reopened, visitation and rentals remain much lower than normal.

How are your precautions for COVID-19 going?

Everyone generally reported things were going well. Precautions have remained in place, but some have been relaxed some since the original phase of quarantine.

Trucks have been a limiting factor for Davey with efforts to limit occupancy to one staff per vehicle SiteOne: they extended registers out closer to the door and have to keep reminding customers to maintain a safe distance inside.

Colesville has taken precautions very seriously and also have continued to adapt precautions as needed. John Richmond also spacing staff out in trucks more than normal, their Hispanic employees have been hit harder with the virus which has made for a labor challenge. Available labor pool has been picking back up since the extra unemployment ended.

How do you feel about meetings for the next 6 to 9 months, acknowledging that the meetings do provide CEUS for Certified Hort standing?

People seem to feel good about continuing meetings with a cap on the number if they have to be inside, especially if we have speakers worth coming out for, though most people seemed to indicate their primary reason for attendance was networking/social.

It was acknowledged that this might not be a great time to grow membership, but that we want to make sure we are still offering member benefits and support. CVNLA has the best membership in the state, let's make sure we continue this trend!

It was suggested that if we have a small cap on attendance, some participants might worry about taking slots from those who need the CEU's and therefore would not attend.

We noted that the Winter symposium and certified hort review class are up in the air at this point.

The members are not aware of what scholarships were given out this past year since there was no summer picnic. It was suggested that we send out to our members what we did with proceeds from the year. The idea of posting our meeting minutes on our website or in the monthly newsletter was suggested.

What else do we want to discuss?

Fall is for planting! Promotional effort to increase fall sales, Cambridge has some extra banners, promotional materials if anyone wants some? John Richmond requested some.