

**Northeast Horticultural Therapy Network
Annual Member Business Meeting Minutes
November 29, 2022 via Zoom**

In Attendance: Erin Backus, Alan Eddy, Irene Barber, Colleen Griffin, Nora Curry, Kathy Perry, Laura Rumpf, Margaret Glynn, Marianne DiBlasi, Deborah Krause

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 pm by Erin Backus.

Erin shared the agenda for the meeting. Each member of the Board of Directors introduced themselves: Erin Backus (President), Irene Barber (Vice President), Lynn Zeltman (Treasurer, not present), Nora Curry (Secretary), Colleen Griffin (Membership), Alan Eddy (Fundraising), Deborah Krause (Fundraising, not present for introductions), Deirdra Murphy (Social Media, not present).

Old Business:

- I. President's Report (Erin Backus)
 - a. NEHTN Structure, History, and Future
 - i. Erin shared the history and structure of NEHTN, including past presidents and participation in events and conferences.
 - ii. Erin announced that she is planning to step down and is looking for someone to become President in order to share the responsibility. Becoming President does not require Board experience.
 - iii. There is an ongoing question of whether NEHTN will hover around 50-60 members or continue to grow. The organization depends on continued member involvement.
 - b. NEHTN 2022 Accomplishments: development of new logo, virtual happy hours, awarding of grant, massive attendance at AHTA national conference, pop-up events, March Membership Month, NEHTN member granted AHTA Garden Therapeutic Design Award and featured in AHTA promotional video, four newsletters.
 - c. New logo (Irene Barber): Erin shared the new logo. Irene explained that the goal of the logo was to convey an image that symbolized horticultural therapy rather than just gardening. Kathy Perry came up with the idea to show two hands symbolizing the need for help, holding a bouquet. The logo was created by Chad Skillin.
 - d. Virtual happy hours began in July. July had attendance of 2, August more than 3, September 2-3, October higher attendance. The December happy hour will be at a different day and time (Thursday, December 15 at 5:30). Erin encouraged members to send in ideas about what they would like to talk about at happy hours.
 - e. 2022 Grant Recipient Presentation

- i. Erin introduced Laura Rumpf and Colleen Griffin as the recipients of the 2022 NEHTN Grant for the program Cultivating Well-being through therapeutic horticulture: A mental health & wellness initiative for students, staff, and faculty at Southern Maine Community College.
- ii. Presentation (Laura Rumpf and Colleen Griffin)
 1. The Cultivating Well-being program was piloted in Spring 2022 to target college students with anxiety and depression. It began with a couple of sessions per week and developed to include outdoor plots in the campus community garden and use of the hydroponic system. Students, faculty, and staff have all participated, and attendance has included a diverse group, such as immigrants, veterans, and nonbinary people.
 2. The program is designed around specific therapeutic outcomes: increase ability to focus/clarity of mind, strategies to reduce the influence of stress, establish self-care awareness goals, reduce feelings of isolation through social interactions, acquire a positive sense of self, and improve mental health and overall wellness.
 3. The program collaborates with other departments and clubs on campus, contributed to the campus food pantry, and hosted community events such as the Harvest Festival and Botanical Dying Projects.
 4. They are currently working on a project to create a restorative walk, developing their website, and reaching out to the greater community for collaboration.
 5. Cultivating Well-being has been featured in *Maine Women Magazine* and on News Center Maine.
- iii. Erin stated that members can apply for the grant program. Member dues and donations go to scholarships and grants and make these initiatives possible. Past recipients and applications can be found on the website under Education.
- f. AHTA National Conference: Erin stated that there was high attendance from NEHTN members at the 2022 AHTA National Conference in Kansas City and shared photographs and highlights from the conference. She acknowledged member Kathy Perry as the recipient of the AHTA Garden Therapeutic Design Award on behalf of the Monarch School of New England.
- g. Types of events: Erin explained the three types of events that NEHTN hosts. Pop-ups are informal places to contact and network that NEHTN has developed, because it has been a challenge to develop workshops since Covid, due partially to the need for liability insurance. Workshops include a business meeting and provide fundraising. Virtual happy hours are informal monthly gatherings to discuss gardening and HT-related topics.
- h. 2022 Pop-up Review: Erin shared photographs from each 2022 Pop-up event: Bonsai West and Acton Arboretum (July 25th), Strawberry Banke and UNH display beds (August 7th), Mount Auburn Cemetery (mid-October), Coastal Maine

Botanic Gardens (November 19th). More pop-ups will be planned for next year. Erin encouraged members to contact her if they have an idea for a pop-up or would like to host one, which just consists of being the point person for the gathering.

- II. Treasurer's Report (Erin Backus on behalf of Lynn Zeltman): The balance as of October 31, 2022 is \$2,281.74. Expenses this year exceeded income due to lack of workshops. Income was \$960.00. Expenses were \$1,357.60. Erin shared a breakdown of income and expenses in the powerpoint.
- III. Membership Report (Colleen Griffin)
 - a. There are currently 47 members in good standing, which is pretty low for NEHTN.
 - b. 24 members are overdue for renewal (their membership has lapsed within the last 3-12 months). Colleen will reach out to them about renewal.
 - c. There were 11 new members in 2022.
 - d. March 2023 will include an annual membership campaign as part of March Membership Month.
 - e. The quarterly newsletter is a major benefit of membership. Colleen is looking to step down from producing the newsletter. Alan and Nora currently work with her to produce it but are looking for more members to contribute. Joining the newsletter team does not require experience and is not a huge time commitment.
 - f. Members should contact Colleen if membership has lapsed. Information is on the website.
- IV. Fundraising Report (Alan Eddy)
 - a. Alan shared a chart comparing the three booklets that NEHTN publishes for fundraising: HT Activity Guide 2018 (24 activities, 61 pages, 37 photos), Plant Care Manual (61 pages, 9 photos), and HT Activity Guide 2022 (22 activities, 116 pages, 110 photos).
 - b. Alan shared sales statistics for each publication: HT Activity Guide 2018 (32 PDF downloads, 12 print B&W copies, 2 print color copies), Plant Care Manual (6 PDF downloads, 4 print B&W copies, 1 print color copy). PDF copies are always in color. One PDF was sold to a customer in Italy in March 2022.
 - c. Alan shared a sneak peek of sample activities from the HT Activity Guide 2022.
- V. Social Media Report (Erin Backus): Erin shared NEHTN's social media handles and statistics on Facebook (@northeasthorticulturaltherapynetwork), Instagram (@nehtn), and Twitter (@NEhorttherapy). There is a greater presence on Facebook than on other platforms. NEHTN needs help to get the name out there through social media and to see more action on organization sites.

New Business:

- I. Call for involvement: Erin presented ways that members can become more involved with NEHTN: assisting with the newsletter, becoming President of the Board of Directors, sharing and tagging posts on social media, bringing a friend to join NEHTN

- and/or AHTA, sharing the AHTA promotional video, and joining pop-ups, happy hours, and workshops.
- II. AHTA Video: Erin shared the promotional video from AHTA featuring Kathy Perry and the Monarch School of New England, which Erin helped to produce.
 - III. HT materials up for grabs
 - a. Madelaine Zadik has materials available. Members should contact her at mhzadik@gmail.com.
 - b. Erin has materials from Judy Jackson up for grabs that members can contact her at erinbackus@nehorticulturaltherapy.net.
 - IV. The Northeast Disability and Agriculture Conference will be February 4, 2023 in Waterford, CT. The organization sponsoring the Feb 4 event is based in East Haven, CT and their website is www.healingbygrowing.com. Their specialty is rehabilitation from Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).
 - V. Member sharing: Erin shared Irene Barber's photos from the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, including different activities from her programs. Irene shared that 2022 was the first year that CMBG had a horticultural therapy intern. Erin opened up the meeting to members to share accomplishments from the past year.
 - VI. Erin took a moment to acknowledge, in loving memory, member Donna Covais, who passed away in December 2021. The new activity guide will be dedicated to her.
 - VII. Member resources: Erin stated that the minutes and PDF of the powerpoint slides from the meeting will be posted on the Member Resources page of the website.
 - VIII. 2023 Ideas
 - a. Laura Rumpf suggested the possibility of a retreat style conference. The possibility of mindfulness/wellness retreat or forest bathing experience was further discussed.
 - b. Colleen suggested finding an indoor space for pop-ups in winter months.
 - c. Irene recommended participation in the Portland Flower Show. Involvement with events like flowers shows and speaking events was further discussed.
 - d. Irene introduced the idea of collaborating with other therapies, like art and music therapies. There was discussion of collaborating further with other types of therapists and local organizations.
 - IX. Next meeting: There will be a virtual happy hour on December 15, 2022 at 5:30 pm. The theme will be "winter ideas for aging population."

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 pm by Erin Backus.

Respectfully submitted,
Nora Curry, Secretary
11/30/2022