

## **LCMGA Meeting Minutes**

**10:00 AM, January 7, 2026**

**Harris Center**

**425 Perry Street, Auburn, AL 36830**

**Welcome**—Doug Deason, President, called the meeting to order at 10:02 am. He thanked Becky Large and her team for setting up the meeting and providing the program and stated that he would ask for updates on her program area as part of the agenda. He expressed a need for volunteers for several program areas.

He called Carolyn Plott to present a gift to Past President Charlot Ritenbaugh. Carolyn told Charlot that the members had collected over \$800 to provide items of thank you for her four years as president of the Lee County Master Gardeners. She was presented with a raised bed and a Saint Fiacre statue, the patron saint of gardening, as well as gift cards to the Potting Shed and Ace Hardware for plants or other supplies. Doug thanked Charlot for her leadership and mentioned that he is finding the job of president a bit overwhelming but thanked all who have helped him acclimate to the position.

Carolyn also stated that the Christmas gifts collected for the Passages program at the Lee County Development Youth Development Center were very much appreciated. She had brochures from the LCYDC and anyone who is interested in participating in providing items for those children at other times during the year can contact Carolyn to help in other ways and on other holidays. Charlot mentioned that she contacted a faculty member in sociology at Auburn University who intends to have her students will work with the Passages group as well.

**Approval of Minutes**—Emily Myers moved that the minutes of the November meeting be approved as presented and Judy Jones seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as presented.

**Treasurer's Report**—Treasurer Debbie Murphy spoke about the budget activity for the last month which was minimal because the organization is in between garden tours. Income for October through December totaled \$570 in dues and contributions. Demonstration garden expenses totaled \$1200. Expenses year to date total \$3200 while income totals \$2600, leaving a negative balance for the year thus far. However, the organization has \$56,788 in both bank accounts and Debbie encouraged members to spend some of this money on projects. Doug asked to hear from leaders and teams what other financial resources are needed, reminding the group that the funds in the treasury are for the express purpose of outreach to the community and the group needs to consider what else can be done in that regard.

**Regional Extension Agent Report**—Regional Extension Agent Dani Carroll informed the group that members do not have to sign the MOU every year if the MOU has not changed, but interns will sign it. She will review the MOU at the February meeting with State Master Gardener Director Kerry Smith. The MOU is available on the Lee County Master Gardeners Members Only web page. The new class of interns include 10 from Lee, Macon, Tallapoosa, and Russell counties and perhaps one from Georgia. Interns will be organized into groups of 3 to 5 to prepare PowerPoints, articles, and presentations at the August meeting. Dani had mentioned the possible development of a speaker's bureau. She would like to provide classes on how to do presentations.

Dani then asked who had been involved in Harvest for Health earlier with three responding. She discussed a similar program that will take place in five major urban cities and five rural counties in Alabama. Macon County is one of those counties and five families that will be identified with low access to food will get supplies. The scope of the project to begin in March/April will be six months to a year. The master gardener involved can volunteer to work with a nutrition educator and would make one visit a month for six months with some phone calls with the purpose of studying how garden education helps with the improvement of nutrition. Families will all meet to discuss. Several members volunteered to serve. Beth Dorman suggested that it would be good to have two persons per family and garden.

Lynne Peer then asked about a gardening and kids committee that she was supposed to be on but had not heard anything. Dani wants to have teacher workshops across the state or in counties, but she did not know anything about a committee for gardening and kids.

There were questions about the intern class orientation which will occur on January 22 and at that time interns will be informed about counting hours. Doug mentioned that he and John Sewell will develop a schedule and provide lunch and snacks. There will be a SignUpGenius for volunteering to help with that purpose. Lynne also asked if someone from the senior gardening group could talk to the interns and was told yes.

#### **Reports from Board Members and other Leaders:**

**Membership**—Annie Hinson thanked all who paid their dues and input their hours. The list has already been compiled for badges and stars. A member's accrued hours are on their My Page available from the extension webpage. Doug reminded the group to input their hours promptly. It is still possible to pay dues with Annie or online.

**Programs**—Joan Jacobs provided all with a poster listing the year's programs and which are now being called Lunch and Learns and are open to the public from 11:00AM to 12:00PM. Programs team leader Becky Large recognized her team and went over the list of programs for the year. Pop-ups, workshops, and field trips are being spread out over all 12 months with the aim of four workshops, three field trips, and three pop-ups.

**Educational Outreach**—Lowe's and Ace Hardware have provided seed packs. Fred Schlich is the keeper of the mostly vegetable seeds. The group needs ideas about where those might be distributed. Some will go to the seed library at the Auburn Public Library and will also be given out at all farmers markets.

The group was reminded of the Kiwanis plant sale February 27th and 28th and March 1. John Sewell will be the lead. Empty Bowls will be February 28 and Terri Bisanz will get the information out on SignUpGenius.

There will be a plant rescue at the Opelika Public Library on March 7 from 10:00AM to 11:30AM.

**Demonstration Gardens**—Betsy Akins reported on work at the Caroline Dean Wildflower Trail and explained that is a woodland garden in Opelika covering 4 acres and composed of native plants including a lot of ferns planted last year. The first workday will be in March and workday times are Thursdays 9:00AM to 11:00AM twice a month. Permanent signs and an upgrade to the irrigation are needed as well as constant repair to the fence. Betsy mentioned that the group always needs hole diggers.

Jan Holt described work at the Keisel Park Garden. It will start up in February with pruning of muscadines. Because of the sun the group usually meets early on Tuesday mornings. Members wanting to volunteer can email her to be put on a text list.

**Other information to share or matters to discuss**—Doug reminded the group to contact him at his regular email or phone listed in the master gardener directory.

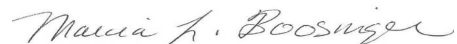
John Sewell reminded members to sign up for the helpline.

Doug discussed that Grow More, Give More will be forming a committee with Dani. Last year 1500 pounds of food from the O Grows garden was provided to consumers. Seedlings were repotted and over 900 seedlings were donated to the Community Market. There is some thought about starting seeds in greenhouses this year.

The next meeting will be February 4, 2026 at 10:00AM at Lee County Extension Office, 600 South 7<sup>th</sup> St, Opelika with a program at 11:00AM on Plant Propagation with Trace Donald from Plant World.

**Adjournment**—Doug adjourned the meeting at 10:53 AM. The monthly program on “Gardeners Master Conservation” with Patrick Thompson of the Davis Arboretum followed.

Respectfully submitted,



Marcia L. Boosinger  
Secretary