

University of Wisconsin Education, Extension and Agriculture Committee
Thursday, June 18th, 2020
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Members Present: Tom Snider, Steve Binder, Tom Borchart, and Mike Brunn.

Members Absent: Karen D. Powers.

UW-Extension Staff: Chris Viau, Dana Berger, Mandi Dornfeld, Todd Wenzel, Kim Miller, and Sarah Thompson.

Others Present: Mike Domke (Winnebago County Fair Association President).

Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Tom Snider.

Comments from the Public related to items on the agenda: None.

Approval of Minutes: Brunn moved to approve the 5/21/2020 minutes; seconded by Binder. Motion carried 4-0.

Winnebago County Fair Association: Domke reviewed the Fair Association's decision to cancel the 2020 Winnebago County Fair. This decision was influenced by availability and the cancellation of vendors in addition to public health concerns. A press release was shared. The Fair Association is collaborating with Berger to showcase youth projects and performances. A press release will be shared once details are established. The Fair Association is working with the Meat Animal Board to connect buyers with sellers. Negotiations with vendors are underway to rebook for 2021. Snider expressed his appreciation for the Fair Association's decision and work toward showcasing youth projects and performances in coordination with the cancelled fair. Domke will share an article written by the Secretary of the Wisconsin Fair Association. Membership passes are still available on the website or through Fair Association members.

Program Reports: Viau directed the committee to the June 2020 Extension Winnebago County in Review document for additional summaries of educator program updates. He briefly reviewed the staff updates.

Finances: Wenzel has been conducting Money Matters certifications. 9 individuals referred from the District Attorney's office have completed the course so far. Habitat for Humanity has made Money Matters a requirement for their participants, with 13 participants referred so far. Several Rent Smart workshops have been cancelled due to the pandemic. A make-up session has been scheduled in Oshkosh for early August; another workshop is scheduled for August in Menasha. Wenzel is collaborating with the state team to develop and implement an online version of Rent Smart in July for participants who had registered for classes that were cancelled. Future online Rent Smart classes are expected to be open state-wide. Wenzel has completed requirements to teach Rent Smart at the Oshkosh Correctional Institution. Participants are scheduled for release within 6 months and are chosen based on numerous factors. He completed one class in February and looks forward to doing more classes there in the future. Wenzel has been collaborating with the Winnebago County Eviction Prevention Taskforce. Focus has been on crisis management since the pandemic began. Wenzel has been updating and sharing available financial resources on the Extension Winnebago County website. Wenzel highlighted that the pandemic has not reduced workload but has changed how it looks. There is still a great deal of need for education in the community.

Horticulture: Miller shared the diagram of the final layout of the Community Gardens. The gardens have opened; gardeners have experienced issues planting due to the recent rain. Currently policy allows one plot per gardener to allow as many people to garden as possible. Gardeners are allowed to purchase additional open plots this year only to take advantage of open plots. The Highway Department is still completing work at the gardens as equipment is available. Miller is closely monitoring expenses to determine which options for facilitating water drainage will work best within the budget. Binder shared his knowledge regarding what the Highway Department is required by the DNR to complete. He encouraged Miller to contact him if the remaining clean up work is not completed in a reasonable amount of time. Miller and Viau will communicate if any additional funds are needed to complete work at the gardens. The old sign will be update and reused at the new site once a name has been chosen. The Master Gardener program has been restricted in their volunteer work due to the pandemic. They have been assisting with newsletter articles and plant health calls from home. Miller will be submitting some project requests for the Master Gardener program to the state for approval. Miller is collaborating with the state to update training for the Master Gardener program to be online in the Fall.

Committee Chair Report: Snider had no report to share. He expressed his appreciation for the continued updates by Extension Winnebago County staff.

UW-Extension – Administration:

Staff Updates: Some staff are returning to full-time hours beginning the first full week of July. Viau will partner with staff to determine schedules according to childcare needs. Viau will be completing return to work plans for both state and county employees; plans must coordinate with each other due to sharing the same facility. When Extension staff do return to work in the office, there will be limited office occupancy to ensure physical distancing.

Facility Updates: The county is in the planning stages for reopening buildings to the public. End of July or early August may be on the timetable; no date is set yet. Meeting Rooms in the JPCC are currently only available to county departments. Technology is currently not available for check-out and tech support is limited. Ashley Rolph is managing meeting room reservations to ensure compliance with county recommendations. Viau reviewed meeting room seating limitations and cleaning requirements. Binder noted that the Expo Center may be available for larger groups that cannot be accommodated at the JPCC.

Department Activities: Viau and Hendrickson are collaborating with the I.S. Department to purchase additional laptops to allow for more flexibility with telecommuting as needed.

Area/Region/State Updates: Division of Extension is in Phase 1, allowing staff to consider in-person meetings with prior authorization. Programming is still primarily limited to no-contact. Phase 2 is expected to begin no earlier than July 15th. This will include limited, small group, and physically distanced educational opportunities by staff, preferably outdoors. Phase progression will depend on trending health conditions and recommendations by various authorities. Viau briefly reviewed the Badger Smart Start plan for on-campus, in-person instruction in schools. Viau drew attention to a message sent to all Area 10 committee members sharing Extension's stance regarding race and inclusivity.

Comments by Committee Members: None.

Next Meeting: Next regular committee meeting will be held Thursday, August 20th, 2020.

Adjourned: Borchart moved to adjourn; seconded by Brunn. Motion carried 4-0, 10:22 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Amy Hendrickson