

District 10 Fall Executive Workshop Minutes

Saturday Nov 5, 2022

Hosted by London Horticultural Society
London Civic Garden Complex, Springbank Drive London ON

District 10 (D10) Board: Dian Chute (Thorndale) Director, Agnes Burroughs (Dorchester) Assistant Director for Oxford; Linda Holtby (Ingersoll) Assistant Director for Elgin; Bernice Barratt (Stratford) Assistant Director for Perth/Lambton Shores; Pat Graham (London) Assistant Director for Middlesex; Joyce Schlegel (Strathroy-Caradoc) Webmaster /Electronic Reporting; Samm Okolisan (West Lorne) Treasurer, and Jennifer Prgesa (Thorndale) Secretary. **Absent with regrets:** Shelley MacKenzie (St. Thomas) Past Director.

Business Meeting:

Welcome & Introductions: The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by District 10 Director Dian Chute (Thorndale). Dian welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.

Roll Call:

D10 Societies roll call was made by Secretary Jennifer Prgesa (Thorndale). Representatives from Sixteen D10 Societies were registered and represented with a total of 44 attendees:

Aylmer: 0	Belmont: 0	Dorchester: 1	Dutton-Dunwich: 3	Glencoe: 0
Grand Bend: 2	Ingersoll: 2	Kirkton: 4	Lambeth: 4	London: 3
London-Fanshawe: 3	Parkhill: 1	Port Burwell-Bayham: 3	St. Marys: 0	St. Thomas: 1
Stratford: 3	Strathroy-Caradoc: 3	Tavistock: 0	Thorndale: 4	Tillsonburg: 0
West Lorne: 4	Woodstock: 3			

Director Presentation: Dian made a presentation on ‘What Ifs Instead of What Is’ regarding thinking outside the box when it comes to traditional roles on the board. Assigning activities based on strengths of individuals in the group, and spreading traditional activities associated with a role amongst more than one person, are potential ways to address board membership struggles. Full details of the presentation are found in the attachment ‘What Ifs Instead of What Is.pdf’.

Comments and suggestions from attendees:

- Pat Graham (London) shared that to reduce the load collecting volunteer hours at the end of the year, they distribute volunteer forms to all the members at the beginning of the year to have them track throughout the year.
- Grand Bend Horticultural society explained that they had a board meeting to decide how to move forward without a president. The two vice-presidents got together and decided how to split up the tasks and reported back to board. Going forward they are looking at how to split more tasks to others e.g. split membership across three people. People were recruited as directors by nominating committee using the high touch method. e.g. invite them for coffee.

OHA President's Message: Dian indicated that the OHA report has been circulated to all societies via email. A copy of the report can be viewed here: [OHA Presidents Report 2022](#)

OHA, OMAFRA, and District Reports: OMAFRA reports are mandatory to receive funding and the society AGM must be completed before reports can be submitted. Maureen Cocksedge (Stratford) shared that their society does all their reports in December to consolidate the effort because their fiscal year ends in Oct. Stratford also publishes their AGM minutes as part of their fall newsletter. Societies should check if their constitution has a requirement to post AGM minutes; constitution or bylaws may need to be amended. People reported still struggling with downloading the report form and attaching documents in the correct format that the website expected. It was noted by several people that MAC computers in particular can be problematic. Our District OMAFRA contact Margaret Templeman can send the form offline if downloading cannot be accomplished:

District #10 - Elgin, Middlesex, Oxford, Perth, Lambton Shores OMAFRA Contact
([Horticultural Societies - OMAFRA Regional Contacts](#)):

Marg Templeman

Phone: (519) 440-8388

Email: margaret.templeman@ontario.ca

Newsletter sharing: A list was circulated for societies to sign up to receive and share newsletters across the district. The district will share the list amongst societies as a one-time request, once all societies not in attendance have been contacted, but will not maintain this list going forward.

Grants & Awards:

Tips & Tricks:

- There is a great book online describing all available grants and awards: [OHA Awards & Grants](#)
- Grant Forms are available here: [OHA Grant Forms](#)
- **Seedy Saturday/Sunday Grants** – must be submitted by Nov 15th. Societies can apply for this grant even if they have received it before
- **Tree grant** – the tree grant was filled 1 min after midnight this year, therefore send the form right away (first come first serve)
- **Technical advancement grant** – this grant cannot be submitted before Jan 1. Software license (e.g. Zoom license), or electronic hardware are considered eligible expenses. This grant is awarded on a first come first serve basis. There are 6 available grants of \$250 each.
- **District Service Award** – this award must be submitted to the District Director by Jan 20th. The nominee should have hort society involvement as well as community involvement that supports horticulture (e.g. involved in youth groups outside of horticulture, outside flower shows, fairs).

- For first come first served grants make sure that you have everything ready to go as soon as registration opens. The technique of scheduling an email to be sent automatically at the required date and time if the grant can be submitted via email can also be used.

Rotation Schedule for Fall Workshops:

St Thomas volunteered to host the 2023 Fall Executive Workshop.

Announcements:

- The 2023 D10 AGM will be held on April 29th, 2023 hosted by Kirkton
- The 2024 D10 AGM will be hosted by Woodstock, date TBD
- The OHA is hosting quarterly share the wealth fundraisers: [OHA Garden Ontario 50/50 Fundraiser](#). Funds raised by the raffle will support education for youth and adult members, environmental programs, awards and grants, community beautification and post secondary scholarships.
- The 2023 OHA convention will be held July 21-23rd in Ottawa hosted by District 2. The convention will be held at the Brookstreet Hotel in Ottawa. Convention rates have been negotiated for stays ahead of and after the conference dates.
- The OHA youth newsletter is a good source of information however not all societies have a youth group. If a society wishes to receive the youth newsletter, but does not have a youth group, they are advised when filling out the OHA reports to choose "yes" to having a youth club and entering an email address to receive youth information via email. All other fields can be noted as N/A.
- Visit the OHA website frequently notably the resource section as it is often updated with new material: [GardenOntario Garden Resources](#)
- Every society should have a presence on the OHA website: [OHA Garden Clubs and Societies in Ontario](#)
- Due to the success of the use of the colour red for Year of the Garden 2022, the Canadian Nursery Landscape Association and Communities in Bloom has chosen purple as the colour for 2023.

Treasurer's Update:

Samm Okolisan, D10 Treasurer (West Lorne) reported the bank balance at Nov 4, 2022 as \$3,998.18.

Keynote Speaker:

Dian introduced the speaker, Agnes Burroughs (Dorchester), who presented a comprehensive presentation prepared by Rosemarie Szalich, from the Master Gardeners of London, on invasive species. A quick reference guide on invasive terrestrial plant species was distributed to all attendees. Agnes also highlighted that the Ontario Invasive Plant Council website has additional great information especially the [Grow Me Instead](#) section. A donation was presented to Master Gardener's to thank them for the presentation.

New D10 Website:

Joyce presented the new D10 website [District 10 Thames Valley](#) that she created and explained the concept of search engine optimization (SEO). Key areas of the website were reviewed including Links to key OHA resources under Files & Resources. Also under Files & Resources are valuable financial tools such as the society checklist for year-end financial review, bus trip waivers forms, awards & grants info, society annual reporting, and social media tips. The Life's A Garden section has a collection of interesting information.

Joyce has already linked one site for each society based on what was available (Facebook or other). Societies should let Joyce know if they want to have the linked site changed from the current configuration. Societies should send Joyce information on all events that they want advertised on the website.

Joyce provided some additional advice for creating website and posting resources to website:

- Put a copyright symbol on the bottom of pages
- Beware that photos from the internet may require royalties – be sure that copyrights are paid and advertised as appropriate if not using free images
- If putting people's faces on your website, especially for children, ensure waivers are signed.

Questions from attendees:

Dian addressed questions that were submitted by attendees via the registration process.

1. How can reporting be made easier?

Reporting was addressed in the business meeting. Unfortunately, OMAFRA has a certain format that is required. Dian reiterated that there is nothing the district can do about the TPON process since it is a common system used by any organization that receives money from OMAFRA. There is now a recorded session for TPON training posted on YouTube for additional support. More information can be found on the D10 website in the section on reporting: [Society Annual Reporting](#).

2. Since COVID, attendance at general meetings is down. Is this the same for other societies?

Some societies were up and others down.

3. How to increase attendance at meetings, recruit, and retain members?

Ideas shared included:

- A presentation on Attracting New Members can be found on the D10 website (slides 31- 40): [DISTRICT 10 Virtual Fall Executive Workshop 2020](#)
- Share details of every meeting and topic on social media several times leading up to the meeting

- Organise workshops which bring out more members. Dian will put an input field on the district reports to collect ideas for workshops and then distribute the ideas once collected.
- Advertise in the local paper calendar of events or other free advertising channels
- Drop an invitation in mailboxes, if not community mailboxes, or advertise using bright coloured paper flyers and post in local businesses
- Encourage members to bring a friend to meetings as a guest
- Write one copy of advertising and re-use that in all social media and advertising by cutting and pasting the same content. Carol Henshall (Woodstock) shared that she produces posters in Microsoft Office Publisher, saves as a JPEG, resizes it to 4x6 so that it will upload easily to sites. She also keeps a running Word document for easy cutting and pasting. Information included in the minutes package: 'Woodstock Advertising.pdf', 'Woodstock Meeting 1.png', 'Woodstock Meeting 2.png'.

4. What are ways to market our societies?

Ideas shared included:

- Explore a co-op student from local high school, college, or university to help you develop a marketing program via volunteer or paid project
- High school students could be approached via the guidance counselor with a letter. An example of a request letter from Lesli Fisher (Woodstock) is included in the minutes package 'Student Volunteers Wanted.pdf'.
- Think about targeted, or micro-marketing, by looking for people who garden or enjoy gardening and target them with a door hanger or invitation to a meeting. Information on micro-marketing from Lesli Fisher (Woodstock) is included in the minutes package 'Plant Auction Anecdotal Report.pdf'.
- Create a bookmark with yearly activities Linda Holtby (Ingersoll)
- Can print on the back of the OHA postcards (they go through a printer).

5. How to create and manage social media for the society?

- [Facebook](#) is for an older demographic, while [Instagram](#), [TikTok](#), and [Twitter](#) are the social media platforms younger people use. See [Social Media Tips](#) on the D10 website for more information.
- Here is some additional information on posting across social media platforms:
<https://prettylinks.com/blog/effective-linking-on-social-media/>
<https://www.sharelinkgenerator.com/>

6. Where are more details regarding arrangements in judge's newsletter?

On the OHA website there is a contact for the OHA judging committee.

7. How often should bylaws and constitution be reviewed?

Ideas shared included:

- OHA recommends bylaws and constitution be reviewed minimum once every 3 years
- Bylaws and constitution should include a provision an indemnity clause for the board
- Bylaws and constitution should include the provision for virtual meetings (government will be mandating this).

8. How to increase transparency in boards?

Transparency is key for financials. Society bylaws should cover most transparency issues.

9. How much does your society pay for meeting space?

Responses included:

- \$64 including tax (monthly) for 3 hours
- Free if gardens are developed and maintained
- \$125 per night including setup and A/V equipment
- \$32.77 per meeting for community center
- \$35 per meeting
- \$25 per year for kitchen use
- \$600 per year for workshops, storage, and meetings (considered donation/rent)
- \$50 donation per meeting
- Negotiate! Remind people that societies are not-for-profit organizations
- Make sure you have insurance certificate or request that insurance company fill out the form required by vendor/operator.

10. Who does the watering for your society?

Responses included:

- Municipality/Township
- Pays \$5000/year for watering gardens. Municipality waters where resources are close, and for where they are not, the society waters.
- Each garden has a separate team who have both weeding and watering responsibility. A landscaper with a water tank on back of truck does the watering. His time is now donated whereas it was paid before.

11. What are some suggestions to address disengaged board members?

Responses included:

- Change their position to director at large
- Bestow them with an honorary member or honorary advisor and ask them to step away from the board
- Check the bylaws on maximum term for board member positions and enforce or implement a maximum term for board members.

Assistant Director Pins:

Assistant Director pins were presented to Agnes Burroughs (Dorchester) Assistant Director for Oxford and Linda Holtby (Ingersoll) Assistant Director for Elgin.

Lunch: Refreshments were provided by London Society members. District Draws and Share the Wealth Draw tickets were available.

Demonstration:

Dian introduced Bernice Barratt (Stratford) who demonstrated how to create two fresh seasonal arrangements. Bernice used agra wool, self-sourced greens, a floral bouquet, rose hips, and grass tassels.

Tours & Plant Sale:

Attendees were split into two groups and everyone enjoyed an extremely informative tour of the conservatory as well as the opportunity to purchase plants in the greenhouse.

Draws and Winners:

Door Prizes:

- Choice of Arrangement #1: Joyce Schlegel (Strathroy-Caradoc)
- Choice of Arrangement #2: Wendy Rush (Grand Bend)
- Choice of Grape Ivy + Greens (Donated by Bernice Barratt) or Table Cyclamen:
 - Julie Henley-Kapeleris (Dutton Dunwich)
 - Bob Crowhurst (London Fanshawe)
 - Bernice Barratt (Stratford)
 - Gail Dimson (Lambeth)
 - Lorrie McFadden (Stratford)
 - Ann Larkin (London Fanshawe)
 - Jennifer Prgesa (Thorndale)
 - Helen Peternel (Lambeth)
 - Jean-Marie Steward (St. Thomas)
 - Agnus Burroughs (Dorchester)
 - Eva Norman-Vestergaard (London)

District Draws:

- Santa Claus: Jim Hathaway (West Lorne)
- \$50 Gift Certificate (from nursery of choice): Linda Holtby (Ingersoll)
- Bird House: Jocelyn Armstrong (Lambeth)
- Monstera Plant: Jocelyn Armstrong (Lambeth)

Share the Wealth (\$100):

- Corrie Bachmeier (Dutton Dunwich)

2022 District AGM: Invitation was extended to the 2023 District AGM hosted by Kirkton on April 29, 2023 at the Kirkton Community Centre.

Acknowledgements: Dian thanked the London Fanshawe Horticultural Society for graciously hosting the workshop and the Friends of the Garden Complex for the tours and plant sale.

Closing remarks: Dian thanked everyone for attending noting how exciting it was to see everyone in person again.

Adjournment: The workshop adjourned at 14:45.