

BLOOMING BOULEVARDS
4TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 27, 2022
Via Zoom

1. Welcome and Introductions - Jeanne McRight
2. Call to order and Declaration of quorum
Approval of 2022 Agenda via poll.
3. *Approval of 2021 AGM Minutes via poll.*
4. President's report - Jeanne McRight. Report found at [Appendix A](#)
5. Treasurer's report- MJ Kucerak. Report found at [Appendix B](#)
Motion to approve Treasurer's report.
Carried.
6. 2022 Financial Reviewer/Waiver approval –Jeanne McRight
 - Blooming Boulevards is not required as a not-for-profit with revenue of less than \$100,000 to hire an auditor.
 - The Board has recommended hiring an auditor for a fee of \$1,800.
 - *Motion to hire an auditor for 2022 Financial review approved by poll.*
7. Gardens Report- Jeanne McRight and Murray Moore
 - In four years Blooming Boulevards' volunteers have created 208 pollinator plants gardens in Mississauga.
 - In 2022 a larger garden was installed at Sheridan United Church.
 - Plants were provided for 16 City parks, for non-profit ACER and Ecosource.
 - 28 volunteer propagators collectively grew 30% more seedlings than in 2021.
 - For 2023, we plan to set up a mentorship program for new garden stewards, to establish an education program for children, and begin a citizen science program.
 - Report found at [Appendix C](#)
8. Education Report- Jeanne McRight
 - Jeanne McRight presented 30 new or updated education talks, both online and in-person.
 - Groups paid a fee that contributes to Blooming Boulevard's revenue; other talks were presented at no cost to attendees. Average attendance was 100 to 150 people. Three thousand people in total attended workshops, most from Ontario but others from distant time zones worldwide.
 - The number of presentations will be expanding in 2023, both online and in-person.
 - Report found at [Appendix D](#)
9. Outreach - Wayne Cardinalli, Angela Jordan. [Report found at Appendix E](#)

10. Communications - Pamela Sleightholm. Report found at [Appendix F](#).

11. *Motion to approve the annual reports.*
Carried.

Douglas Markoff suggested investing surplus cash in a GIC for interest income.

12. New Strategic Plan for 2023-2026 - Sheila Cressman + guests Brakeley Bryant from Agritecture and Jane Hayes from Hoffmann Hayes. [Report found at Appendix G](#)

13. *Motion to approve new Board members: Archna Gupta and Jacqueline McKernan.. Carried.*

14. **Recognitions and honors - Jeanne McRight**

Garden Stewards of the Year: Catherine & Neil Fleming.

- Catherine & Neil were first year (2019) garden stewards. Every year they grow hundreds of plants from seed, indoors and outdoors and donate additional time to BB activities.

Outstanding Volunteers: Rita Bloem and Heather Doyle.

- Rita planned the complicated distribution of the 8,000 volunteer propagator-grown plants among 80 gardeners. Also valuable in this effort was J.P. McKernan.
- Heather Doyle writes for our newsletter in addition to being a garden steward and plant sale volunteer.

In recognition of these accomplishments, each honouree will receive a copy of *A Garden for the Rusty-Patched Bumblebee*, by Lorraine Johnson and Sheila Colla

15. Slide presentation - Growing the Future - Our Year in Review

Meeting adjourned.

See Appendices attached:

APPENDIX A - PRESIDENT’S REPORT	3
APPENDIX B - TREASURER’S REPORT	4
APPENDIX C - GARDENS REPORT	5
APPENDIX D - EDUCATION REPORT	6
APPENDIX E - OUTREACH REPORT	7
APPENDIX F - COMMUNICATIONS REPORT	8
APPENDIX G - STRATEGIC PLANNING AND COMMUNITY GREENHOUSE PROJECT REPORT	9



APPENDIX A - PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Submitted by Jeanne McRight

Blooming Boulevards connects neighbourhoods to nature, providing a network of native habitat gardens and opportunities for inclusive community engagement, education, and collaboration. Our vision is a city that supports well-being for all of its inhabitants - wildlife and natural resources as well as people.

This year we received a \$10,000 Mississauga Community Environmental Grant which allowed us to provide Mississauga residents ways to respond to climate change, protect biodiversity, and foster human well-being:

- Grew plants native to our Credit River watershed, to help biodiversity adapt to accelerating environmental change.
- Converted lawn areas to low-growing native meadows and boulevard gardens to beautify streetscapes, conserve water, eliminate chemical contaminants, remediate soil, eliminate runoff, prevent erosion, and cool urban heat islands.
- Created no-mow pollinator habitats that sequester carbon and rid need for power maintenance equipment, reducing CO2 and other climate change emissions.

Our commitment was to make goal achievement a priority:

Our membership this year increased from 180 to 230. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, we have consistently met or exceeded project objectives each year, as evidenced by membership growth, volunteer retention, steady increase of plants and gardens produced, number of presentations given with an increase in range and number of attendees, increased our revenue and met our budget.

Our new 2023 - 2026 Strategic Plan was developed by a team that included members of our board, our advisor, and a professional consultant. We worked to ensure that we have a growth-focused, achievable roadmap to guide us during the second phase of our development.

This year, connecting with regional organizations such as The Riverwood Conservancy, Ecosource, Association of Canadian Educational Resources (ACER), Credit Valley Conservation, Master Gardeners of Ontario; participating in the City's Parks and Forestry programs and events; and networking with key provincial and national organizations such as Pollinator Pathways, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Global Pollinator Collective enabled us to extend our reach far beyond our own organization.

In 2022 we targeted residents with varying levels of expertise to participate in our programs; those who are more experienced mentored beginners. Volunteers worked within their own neighbourhoods, and their families and social networks got involved in the process. The program was accessible to seniors, youth, people with disabilities, new Canadians and other marginalized people.

We welcomed all Mississaugans who appreciate our efforts to preserve biodiversity and foster the resiliency of our natural heritage, and who may be inspired by our example to take action to preserve biodiversity throughout the region.



APPENDIX B - TREASURER'S REPORT

Submitted by Mary Jean Kucerak

2021 Fiscal Year

Blooming Boulevards ended the 2021 fiscal year on December 31, 2021, with a surplus of \$10,765.84.

The primary sources of revenue included a community grant of \$5,000, plant sale revenue of \$5,531.75 and community garden installations of \$2,470. Membership continued to grow in 2021 with \$2,165 received in membership dues. Total revenue for the year was \$19,196.79 compared to budgeted revenues of \$8,800 for the year.

On the expense side, the primary expenses were related to the propagation of native plants for garden stewards and community installations. A total of \$5,906.01 was spent on propagation activities. Communication related expenses which included costs for the website, domain name, membership management and zoom were \$1,086.78. Expenses for promotions which included a reprinting of the brochure cost \$706.16. Total expenses for the year were \$8,430.95 compared to budgeted expenses of \$9,460.

All-in-all, 2021 was a good year financially for Blooming Boulevards.

Total assets at year-end were \$14,507.81

2022 Fiscal Year

The current fiscal year has seen a marked increase in grant funding with \$10,000 received from the City of Mississauga's Community grant and \$44,900 received from the Trillium Fund for the greenhouse feasibility study. The greenhouse project will carry over to fiscal 2023 so any unspent Trillium Funds at year-end will be accrued to next year. To-date just under \$15,000 has been spent on the greenhouse project.

Grant funds aside, revenue of \$16,383.35 has currently been earned on regular activities such as the plant sale, speaking engagements, membership dues and community garden installations.

On the expense side as you can expect the primary expense areas are same as those of 2021 with major expenses incurred for plant propagation, communications, and promotional activities. Plant propagation expenses have in fact almost tripled from 2021 and this due to purchasing shelving and grow-lights for our home propagation team plus buying additional supplies in readiness for 2023 while trying to avoid the impact of rising prices.

Barring anything unforeseen, it is expected that 2022 will end with an estimated surplus of between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

Blooming Boulevards continues to build its assets and remains a sustainable organization moving in 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jean Kucerak

Treasurer

APPENDIX C - GARDENS REPORT

Submitted by Jeanne McRight

In 2022 our gardens program had three areas of focus: 1) expansion of our garden network, 2) increased plant production, and 3) continued accessibility. Plans are developed by our gardens committee members and implemented by volunteer teams and leaders supervised by our Board.

- 1) We expanded our city-wide native habitat garden network into more areas of the city and through an active campaign to encourage potential garden stewards, created 76 new residential boulevard gardens, bringing our city-wide total to 208.
 - (a) We facilitated completion of City permits for boulevard garden sites and supported residents with preliminary site visits, plus information on site location, soil preparation, planting design, and plant maintenance.
 - (b) This year's special project was a 22" in diameter circular habitat garden at Sheridan United Church, installed by a host of community volunteers including members of a local scout group.
 - (c) By establishing supportive working relationships with community partners as well Mississauga's Parks and Forestry department, we were able to provide plants for new habitat gardens in at least 16 city parks and other municipally-owned sites. Our partnership with ACER and Mississauga Parks and Forestry in a Canadian Healthy Communities Initiative project provided native plants to accompany tree plantings in parks throughout the city. Partnership with Ecosource involved pollinator garden renovation at community garden sites.
- 2) We improved efficiency of our popular native plant propagation program. This is a meaningful hands-on activity, rewarding for participants who understand that the program supports the quality and quantity of habitat gardens that we can plant on municipal property throughout the city, benefitting people, plants and wildlife and the municipality as a whole. We had two volunteer training programs:
 - (a) Seed collection training: We gave our volunteer seed collection team the required knowledge and skills to gather seeds of appropriate indigenous perennial species from wild and managed locations in the Credit River Watershed region. The seeds produced plants for use in our gardens. In a series of field trips this fall, 3 volunteer teams are learning safe, ethical collection methods, seed cleaning, plus proper labeling and storage.
 - (b) Plant propagation training: This training program has a three-month duration. We trained 28 volunteers, triple that of last year. Participants ranged from experienced to beginner. Each volunteer was loaned the equipment they needed, such as sets of grow lights, shelves, containers, soilless mix, and germination trays. They produced 8,000 seedlings, 30% more than last year. Seedlings were grown in volunteers' homes until they were ready to be distributed to garden stewards. We continued to develop our high quality online and in-person propagation training course via webinars, presentations and demonstrations. As well, we collected data to evaluate the program via garden stewards' Facebook group posts, garden steward survey responses, and workshop participant feedback.
- 3) We continued to connect our native garden program directly with residents in their neighbourhoods. This enabled access by families with young children, seniors, and people from underserved communities with marginalized individuals and community groups who did not have the ability to travel far from home.

APPENDIX D - EDUCATION REPORT

Submitted by Jeanne McRight

In support of Mississauga's Living Green Master Plan, our goals align closely with the Connect and Green pillars: our programs promote a "sustainable city with a unique quality of life within each neighbourhood, where residents value the beauty and variety of the natural environment..." and we have established education and outreach programs that that encourages residents to support "a city that values its shared responsibility to leave a legacy of a clean and healthy natural environment. In support of the LGMP, we hope to be "leaders in delivering environmental best practices, so we can encourage others to take action."

Our education programs developed and promoted a new series of course topics and educational approaches that built higher levels of understanding, knowledge and audience engagement. They run from February through November. This year we presented 30 new/ updated educational slide shows online and/or in-person. These were accessed for free by individuals and offered for a fee to local groups, institutions, and municipalities. Most attendees are from Southern Ontario locations but many also are attending from across Canada and the USA. This year we now have people attending our presentations from all over the world. Average online attendance is 100 - 150 people. We have had over 3,500 presentation attendees worldwide.

We Improved volunteer training programs by expanded online training content, and creating new YouTube videos to use as a volunteer resource.

Expanding our education program: In addition to researching/planning new workshops to refresh our offerings for 2023, we plan to set up a mentorship program for new garden stewards, to establish an education program for children, and conduct a citizen science program beginning in 2023.

APPENDIX E - OUTREACH REPORT

Submitted by Wayne Cardinalli and Angela Jordan

Our Blooming Boulevards outreach representatives are members of our board and volunteers. We call them the “Away Team”. Outreach events afford us the opportunity to explain the goals and activities of Blooming Boulevards. We connect with people personally when we tell them the benefits of becoming a member, and when we encourage them to apply for a boulevard garden or to volunteer in some other capacity.

At these events, we use seeds gathered from our gardens, as well as the native plant seedlings we propagate as incentives for people to support our mission and participate in our activities. As you will see in the slide show, at our information booths we wear whimsical handmade pollinator-themed headbands and make them available to the public. It is all part of the fun. Our cause is serious but our methods are light-hearted.

Since Covid restrictions have been relaxed, we were able to participate once again in community public events. During the summer months, we set up colourful, engaging information booths at five Mississauga events:

1. In May, we were at Seedy Saturday at the Unitarian Church of Mississauga, where we did a slide presentation, passed out brochures, answered questions, sold seeds, and gave a free native plant to each new member.
2. In June, we set up our booth at the Seniors Fair, sponsored by Councillor Stephen Dasko and held at the Mississauga Seniors Centre.
3. Then on to the Riverwood Conservancy, where our team had a booth in celebration of Canada’s Year of the Garden. In support of the event’s “Red” theme, we brought red wild columbines to display and sell.
4. In September we made new friends at the Lakeshore Farmers Market, where we had an indoor community booth in the Small Arms/Creative Hub 1352 building.
5. Our final display booth of the season was at the We are Resilient launch in Community Common Park, an exhibition curated by Mississauga’s Environment Section and Museums of Mississauga exploring climate change and climate action in our city. We were proud that our Blooming Boulevards’ president’s story and image entry was among those featured.

We look forward to more outreach events in 2023 and welcome all opportunities to engage with our community. When we help people understand how native plants are not only beautiful but also functional, we support our city’s Climate Action and Living Green Master Plans and inspire others to also take action in behalf of environmental wellbeing.

APPENDIX F - COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Submitted by Pamela Sleightholm

In the past year, many volunteers have contributed extraordinary communications materials for our blog, newsletters and social media channels. This effort has greatly extended our reach: from readers last year mainly in Ontario and the eastern U.S., we now have views from across North America and Europe and into the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

All channels are growing continuously, but especially Facebook, where we just passed 1,000 followers. Facebook reach continues to be very high, especially around Jeanne's online workshops. Blooming Boulevards' Stewards Facebook group has grown into a tight community and a great place for sharing photos, questions, tips and encouragement for our members, informed by the group's highly respected experts, educator and master gardener Cathy Kavassalis and author Lorraine Johnson.

Our Instagram followers are very active and engaged, and the numbers are growing.

As we've noticed substantial interest from corporate groups over the past year, we've also created a Blooming Boulevards LinkedIn page, which is in its infancy.

Our monthly newsletter goes out to three times as many readers compared to last year. The extremely high open rates of the emails and clicks on content are a testament to the great content created by our volunteers and members.

This year we've focused on creating diverse content – including member profiles, gardening tips, ecological information and native plant details. We're building a great resource library for people interested in habitat gardening. Our most popular content is our member profiles, followed by gardening tips and plant sale details.

Moving forward, we will continue the work we're doing online – including a goal to increase our video content – but also to do more outreach to local conventional media outlets.



APPENDIX G - STRATEGIC PLANNING AND COMMUNITY GREENHOUSE PROJECT REPORT

Submitted by Sheila Cressman

2023-2026 Strategic Plan

When Blooming Boulevards was first conceived in 2019, the founding board members developed a strategic plan that envisaged the establishment of a 3 year pilot project to provide native plants for Mississauga residents to create boulevard gardens.

After an incredibly successful 3 year run, we came together in the winter of this year to brainstorm about the future of Blooming Boulevards. We had grown a lot as an organization and we wanted our mission, vision and strategic objectives to reflect where we saw ourselves in the future. We had the guidance of a veteran consultant, Bill Winegard, who worked on a volunteer basis thanks to the Management Advisory Service, which provides assistance to not for profit organizations.

Our new vision

After many hours and days of intense discussions, we produced a new Mission statement for Blooming Boulevards, along with concrete steps we hope to take in the next 3 years.

Here are some of the highlights:

- We will be assisting residents with native habitat gardens in locations such as yards, balconies and rooftops
- We will facilitate plantings in conspicuous community spaces and non-residential sites throughout the city
- We intend to solidify our internal management and reporting so that we're in a position to seek registered charity status, and expand our fundraising capacity.
- AND, most exciting, we will explore the possibility of establishing a Community Greenhouse in order to greatly expand the number of native plants that we grow.

Community Greenhouse Feasibility project

We have already taken the first steps on the path to fulfilling this last goal.

We are very grateful to have received a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation to explore the feasibility of a Community Greenhouse project. The study is intended to help us analyze different greenhouse operating models and partnership opportunities, as well as to develop a business plan for capital funding and operations. We see a greenhouse (or greenhouses) not only as an opportunity to grow greater numbers of native plants, but to provide space for inclusive community education programs.

www.bloomingboulevards.org | info@bloomingboulevards.org | 905-271-1998

We are pleased to have engaged the team at Agritecture, an advisory services and technology firm with expertise in urban and controlled environment agriculture. They have partnered with Hoffmann Hayes, which specializes in urban agriculture, gardens and healthy food and community development programs in the Greater Toronto area.

I am pleased to introduce Jeffrey Landau and Brakeley Bryant from Agritecture, along with Jane Hayes of Hoffmann Hayes. Brakeley and Jane will be providing a brief overview of the project.

1. Project Brief

AGR will cover the project timeline, key deliverables, and processes associated with the project.

2. Work completed thus far during the community engagement process

HH will cover engagement efforts made thus far including the survey, emails, and phone calls. A brief summary of findings to date will be included.

3. Next Steps

AGR will briefly cover the next steps of the project including programming, farm design, and business plan creation.

Thanks to all from Agritecture and HoffmanHayes.