



**BLOOMING BOULEVARDS  
2023 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
NOVEMBER 16 2023, 7 p.m. via Zoom**

**MEETING MINUTES**

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**MEETING MINUTES**

1. **Call to order and declaration of quorum, followed by Land Recognition:** Jeanne McRight, President and Chairperson of the Board of Directors
  
2. **Motion to approve agenda for 2023 Meeting of Members.**  
Moved: Jeanne McRight  
Seconded: Doris Wukasch  
Carried
  
3. **Motion to approve Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting.**  
Moved: Jeanne McRight  
Seconded: Alan Schaubel  
Carried
  
4. **President's Report:** Jeanne McRight  
See Appendix A, attached.
  
5. **Treasurer's Report:** Mary Jean Kucerak  
See Appendix B, attached.

**Motion to approve the December 31, 2022 Audited Financial Statements**

Moved: Mary Jean Kucerak  
Seconded: Alan Schaubel  
Carried

**Motion to appoint Claire St. Pierre as Blooming Boulevards' 2023 Auditor**

Moved: Mary Jean Kucerak  
Seconded: Alan Schaubel  
Carried

6. **Gardens Report:** Jeanne McRight

Our annual garden program starts early with our seed program which we have expanded into an online fundraising activity, thanks to Sandra Hewitt. Our propagators work for months to produce plants, with assistance from our online training process. This year we gave away hundreds of plants to our municipal partners and local organizations, in addition to the plants we contributed to our garden stewards. We earned over \$9000 this year at our Plant Sale and with sales of plants to outside groups. We are working on mapping the contributed and paid gardens that are spread throughout the City of Mississauga. Since 2019 we have put in 260 contributed gardens and 33 paid gardens.

7. **Spruce Park Report:** Wayne Cardinalli (report authored by Jacqueline McKernan)  
See Appendix C, attached.

8. **Education Report:** Jeanne McRight

We present an average of 30 virtual and in-person educational training workshops and webinars each year. The emphasis is on variety, relevance and participant engagement with science-based content. We provide accessible handouts and follow-up support for questions. We are continuing to develop and expand our educational program so it has a further reach. Our ability to hold in person sessions has assisted greatly this year. We commenced an in person workplace Lunch and Learn program, with a session being held at the Hershey Corporation, which will be building a pollinator garden with our assistance next summer. We are also working with Grade 8 students at Bristol Road Middle School as part of their year long program on pollinator gardens. Blooming Boulevards is donating seed.

9. **Outreach Report:** Wayne Cardinalli (report authored by Jacqueline McKernan)  
See Appendix D, attached.

10. **Communications Report:** Pamela Sleightholm  
See Appendix E, attached.

11. **Special Resolutions:**

**A. Board Members:** Jeanne McRight

**Motion to elect Aranya Iyer to serve a first term as a Blooming Boulevards director.**

Moved: Jeanne McRight  
Seconded: Douglas Markoff  
Carried

**Motion that Mary Jean Kucerak be re-elected to serve a second term as a Blooming Boulevards director.**

Moved: Jeanne McRight  
Seconded: Liz Piggott  
Carried

**Motion that Murray Moore be re-elected to serve a second term as a Blooming Boulevards director.**

Moved: Jeanne McRight  
Seconded: Rick Wukasch  
Carried

**B. Changes to Articles of Amendment:** Sheila Cressman  
See Appendix F, attached.

**Motion for the membership to authorize the changes made to our original Letters Patent, now titled Articles of Amendment.**

Moved: Sheila Cressman  
Seconded: Alan Schaubel  
Carried

**C. Bylaw #2:** Sheila Cressman  
See Appendix G, attached.

**Motion that Blooming Boulevards' new Bylaw #2 be approved to replace Bylaw #1.**

Moved: Sheila Cressman  
Seconded: Liz Piggott  
Carried

## **12. Goals for 2024**

**A. Charitable Status Application:** Jeanne McRight  
See Appendix H, attached

**Motion that Blooming Boulevards takes the required steps to become a registered Ontario charitable organization.**

Moved: Jeanne McRight  
Seconded: Liz Piggott  
Carried

**B. Community Greenhouse Project: Douglas Markoff**  
See Appendix I, attached.

## **13. Recognition and Awards**

**2023 Environmental Stewardship of the Year Award.** Thank you to Ward 1 Councillor Stephan Dasko for presenting this award to Jeanne McRight.

Thank you as well to the **Society for Organic Urban Land Care** for recognizing Blooming Boulevards as a Greener Greenspace for 2023.

**Awards to Blooming Boulevards' members:** Aranya Iyer

**Outstanding Volunteer of the Year.** Congratulations and gratitude to Sandra Hewitt

**2023 Native Plant Gardener of the Year.** Congratulations and many thanks to Diana Westland.

**Heartfelt thanks to the following for grants received this year:**

City of Mississauga  
Ontario Trillium Foundation  
TD Parks People

14. **Motion to adjourn:**       Jeanne McRight  
**Seconded:**                   Liz Piggott

**The meeting was followed with a Question and Answer session.**

## APPENDIX A

### **AGM President's Report** **Jeanne McRight**

#### **2022-2023 overview**

Blooming Boulevards started a pilot program four years ago with a mission: to create a network of gardens across the city of Mississauga, to educate people about why this is important, and to work our hardest to motivate the public to take action. We wanted to see how well people in Mississauga would respond to this, and happily, the response has been wonderful.

During these four years we have remained true to our mission. Heading now into our 5<sup>th</sup> year, we have launched our second phase with a new strategic plan that focuses on growth, starting with a growing membership and volunteer base, and moving into new program development and expanded activities and services.

#### **People & programs**

We have expanded our programs to eleven in 2023 from nine programs in 2022 and seven in 2021. Work on programs tends to be distributed in several ways: Our growing membership and base of volunteer helpers are the people collecting seeds, propagating the plants and stewarding the gardens. As well, volunteer leads contribute their time as project planners and supervisors whose work focuses on developing and managing communications, marketing and outreach activities. Our volunteer directors are our program administrators also involved hands-on with worker and lead activities but have a primary focus on governance and fundraising.

In 2023 we had close to 13,000 volunteer hours logged from January to mid-November, equal to seven and a half full time staff. The value of their time and skills at \$27.00 an hour is a little over \$349,000.

#### **Feasibility study**

One of our major projects in 2022 was working with consultants Agritecture LLC and Hoffmann Hayes to do a community greenhouse feasibility study. Their Final Report was submitted to us on May 31, 2023. We plan to use it to initiate the implementation of a community greenhouse facility where we can grow more plants, expand our programs, and strengthen community connections.

After months of research, the consultants' concluding comments in their Community Greenhouse Feasibility Study Final Report were encouraging:

"The combined efforts of Blooming Boulevards, community stakeholders, and strategic partnerships will contribute to the realization of a vibrant community greenhouse that not only supports local biodiversity but also creates a lasting positive impact on the Mississauga community. Through careful planning, effective implementation, and ongoing evaluation, Blooming Boulevards can establish itself as a leader in promoting sustainable practices and environmental stewardship."

#### **Sustainability**

We're looking toward financial sustainability and the health of our organization. More information on our work in those areas will follow in our other board reports.

Submitted by: Jeanne McRight

## APPENDIX B

### Treasurer's Report

#### 2022 Fiscal Year

Blooming Boulevards retained Claire St. Pierre, CPA, CGA, LPA to conduct an audit for fiscal year-end 2022 and the audited financial statements were distributed as part of the AGM materials.

In reviewing the statement of operations for the year on page 4 of the audited statements, the primary sources of revenue are identified as grants in the amount of \$27,270. This included a City of Mississauga community grant of \$10,000, and revenue realized from an Ontario Trillium Foundation grant to undertake the greenhouse feasibility study. The plant sale continues to be a popular event and fundraiser bringing in revenue of \$6,690. While membership fees were increased in 2022, membership also continued to grow.

On the expense side, the primary expenses were related to the propagation of native plants for garden stewards and community installations. A total of \$15,803 was spent on propagation activities. Other major expenses were related to the greenhouse feasibility study and included \$10,710 spent on consultant fees and \$6,089 spent on legal, accounting and audit fees.

The grant received from the Ontario Trillium Foundation was for work that spanned two fiscal years, with the project starting in June 2022 and ending in June 2023. While the total grant amount was \$49,800, \$44,900 was received in 2022. In the Notes to the Financial Statements on page 8, the auditor has outlined how these funds were utilized in 2022. Total expenses for the greenhouse feasibility study were \$17,270 and this amount was taken into income to cover these expenses. The balance of the funds received \$32,530 were recorded on the balance sheet as deferred revenue.

Total revenue for the year ended was \$44,801, total expenses \$36,038 resulting in a year-end surplus of \$8,763 and total assets at year-end of \$23,271.

#### 2023 Fiscal Year

As Blooming Boulevards continues to grow and mature as an organization, changes are required for the organization and the Board to best meet its fiduciary responsibilities. In 2023 Blooming Boulevards moved its record keeping from Excel to QuickBooks. The move has resulted in several challenges that continue to be addressed. They are not insurmountable, and the use of an accounting package will better serve the organization as it continues to grow. Other changes include moving banks and obtaining a corporate credit card.

As for financial activity, the balance of the Ontario Trillium Foundation grant has been received and all grant funds have now been spent.

Barring anything unforeseen, it is expected that a year-end surplus will be realized. Blooming Boulevards continues to build its assets and remains a sustainable organization moving in 2024.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Jean Kucerak  
Treasurer



## APPENDIX C

### **Spruce Park Report—TD Parks People Grant**

Jacqueline McKernan

Our large outreach project of 2023 was the Spruce Park Project, which was an extension of the original Spruce Park Project which was started in 2019. BB was successful in obtaining a grant through the TD Park People Grant, which enabled us to build additional garden beds and plant more native flowers in those beds. Over 3 Saturdays, there were at least 71 volunteers providing support through helping build and sand the garden beds, move soil into the garden beds, space and plant the flowers, run the outreach booth to engage the community walking by and feeding our volunteers! All in all, this project took about 500 hours to complete, but the end result was well worth it. Not only did the community appreciate the extensions of the garden, but there was much more interest and educational opportunities for those who walked by and were interested in learning more about what we were doing.

Many of the volunteers from this particular project were high school students from local high schools such as Cawthra Park, Port Credit School and Bronte College. Most of the students were enthusiastically involved and expressed their admiration and their desire to commit to supporting the local environment through becoming more aware of climate change and also the knowledge they gained from their experience planting native plants.

We are so grateful to the TD Park People Grant which enabled us to continue this project and know that those who volunteered had a fantastic time.

## APPENDIX D

### Outreach Report

JP McKernan

BB outreach events are of significant importance to us, as a way to increase our scope and reach to in person audiences as well as to engage with the community and provide education and awareness as to what is being done for pollinators and the greater environment.

BB would not be able to do this important work without the support from our amazing and dedicated volunteers, all of whom took time out of their busy schedules to spend hours spreading the word and attending community events. Some of the main events that BB had a presence were Seedy Saturday, the Mississauga Seed Library at Small Arms Inspection Building, Eco Day, earth Day, the Seniors Fair, Blooms and Berries as well as being a host for the PawPaw Parade!

This year, BB was the Mississauga host site for Carolinian Canada's PawPaw Parade, which entailed an incredible volunteer to drive to London, to pick up pawpaw trees and drive them back for us to distribute the trees to those who signed up for them. This was so important not just because it allowed people in Mississauga access to pawpaw trees, but it is an example of the commitment and collaboration that BB has working with other agencies in order to support the environmental sector as a whole.

This speaks to BB's larger commitment as a whole - we understand that individually, our impact is small, but that when we come together as individuals, communities and agencies, then we can accomplish so much more.

In all of our outreach events, there were approximately 665 volunteer hours with at least 100 unique volunteers giving their time. This demonstrates that all of our volunteers understand and believe the same thing we do. For that, we are grateful.

If there are any other events you feel BB should be attending and can be representing, please be sure to send us a note. If you are interested in volunteering a few hours a month with our outreach events, please connect! We would love to have you.

## APPENDIX E

### Communications Report

This year in communications, our volunteer team worked hard to create more original content, but also to connect with more like-minded organizations on social media.

Horticultural societies and master gardener groups, large environmental organizations such as Xerxes, smaller community organizations like the Butterfly Rangers throughout Ontario and local Mississauga groups and schools all interacted with Blooming Boulevards – and vice versa.

As we grow, we'll continue to nurture these relationships, including the one we have with author and native plant expert, Lorraine Johnson, to strengthen our connections in the community and in the field.

Our social media presence continues to mature, with the number of Instagram followers growing by nearly 80% over the past year and Facebook followers increasing by almost 30%. Our followers are active and engaged, regularly contributing to the conversation and sharing their own experiences.

This is important, because much of our website traffic comes directly from social media channels, especially Facebook. As Blooming Boulevards continues to grow, our online activities will become even more significant.

If you aren't following Blooming Boulevards online, please do! Our communications team is creating and curating interesting and inspiring content each week. And our private Facebook group, which is open to garden stewards and members, continues to be a great community of support and knowledge.

Since last year, visits to our website have gone up about 80%. This is a result of Blooming Boulevards' growth over time, but also shows the value that great content has on visits. Blog posts written by our volunteers, a growing native plant resource library, and Jeanne's incredible workshop lineup have brought a steady stream of new visits.

Our newsletter now goes out to over 3,000 subscribers, with open rates always over 50%. The average open rate for non-profits is below 30%, so the newsletter consistently performs very well.

Here's an interesting peek at one of our website's metrics – the number of visits by location.

We have the highest number of visitors coming from southern Ontario but interestingly, we also see traffic from every continent other than Antarctica.

With that, I want to give the communications team a big thank you. You've all done an incredible job creating amazing materials that have a huge impact on Blooming Boulevards' work.

Submitted by: Pamela Sleightholm

**APPENDIX F**  
**CHANGES TO THE ARTICLES OF AMENDMENT**

When Blooming Boulevards was incorporated in 2019, the original directors envisioned a pilot project to encourage residents of Mississauga to transform their boulevards into native gardens to provide habitat for at risk pollinators. At that time, charitable status with the Canada Revenue Agency seemed out of reach for our little start up organization.

The original directors set out the purposes of Blooming Boulevards based on this small scale pilot project in a document then called the Letters Patent.

As we've grown and expanded our vision, we have realized that in order to build on our successes and do more for the promotion of native plants in Mississauga and the area, we need to obtain charitable status with the CRA so that we can give tax receipts to our many potential donors.

In order to be eligible for such status, the organization's purposes as set out in the Letters Patent, now called Articles of Amendment, have to be specifically charitable. I hope you've had the opportunity to look at the draft of the amended purposes and provisions of Blooming Boulevards which was attached to your notice for this meeting. It's up on the screen right now.

We had the good fortune to be assisted by a very knowledgeable consultant, Graham Boyce, who volunteered through the Management Advisory Service, which provides free of charge consultants to not for Profit organizations. Graham has a lot of experience in helping organizations obtain charitable status with the CRA. We met with Graham on a number of occasions over the last few months to review the purposes of Blooming Boulevards as set out in our Articles.

The way our current purposes are worded is a little vague and not targeted at meeting the strict requirements that the CRA applies in evaluating an application. So the Board has carefully reworded them to meet the necessary criteria (and checked with the CRA that they appear "unofficially" to be OK).

Submitted by: Sheila Cressman

**APPENDIX G**  
**BYLAW #2**

The Board has also spent a lot of time over the last few months, guided by our consultant Graham Boyce, in revamping our bylaws, which are the rules that govern Blooming Boulevards. Since we are incorporated under the laws of Ontario, our bylaws have to comply with legislation set out by the province, which is the Not for Profit Corporations Act

When we last amended our by-laws we were very aware that there were changes coming to the legislation that governed our situation as a not-for-profit corporation. We were incorporated under the previous Corporations Act and for some years various governments had been looking to replace it and bring in the then draft Not-for-profit Corporations Act (or “ONCA”) but the legislation had never actually been enacted. Our By-laws were drafted with the potential implementation of ONCA very much in mind, so they would continue to work and be compliant.

The legislation is now in force, and all not for profit corporations have until October of 2024 to bring their bylaws into compliance, which is why we’re bringing this new proposed bylaw to the membership today.

Many of the changes that we’ve made have been specifically drafted to comply with the new legislation; other provisions have been drafted to eliminate some previously confusing provisions.

I note that we can revisit many of these provisions in the future to make amendments in accordance with new preferences.

Here are some of the highlights:

**Membership:** (Section 4(1)). We have decided for now to have 1 class of members (as opposed to multiple classes, such as students, seniors, family, etc).

**Annual meeting:**

We have made changes to specify how voting will take place, and to specifically allow for electronic voting (Section 5(7))

**Board of Directors:** We have set the number of Directors at 8 (Section 6(1)). You may recall that the Articles of Incorporation set a range between 3 and 12 Directors. It’s a good practice for the bylaw to set out a more precise number of directors, and after a lot of discussion we decided that 8 directors is the best number for us at this time.

We’ve also set the term at 3 years, and the maximum number of terms to be 3 (Section 6(4)). This was done to ensure continuity of knowledge and experience with the board. We’ve also eliminated a previous inconsistency between the term lengths of the board officers and directors at large.

We have a conflict of interest provision, which is required by the legislation. (Section 8)

And we’ve set out the functions of the officers with greater clarity. (Section 10)

That’s a general summary of what’s in the new bylaw.

Submitted by: Sheila Cressman

## APPENDIX H

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### Ability to Apply for Charitable Status

In 2019, BB registered as a non-profit corporation, enabling our organization to continue its operations even if changes in leadership or membership occurred. This allowed long-term planning, sustainability, and effective succession management. We wanted to provide stability and reassurance to stakeholders, funders, and the community.

BB successfully achieved its objectives in its 2019-2022 Pilot Phase. We are heading into our second developmental phase, guided by our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, that emphasizes sustainable growth. We feel that it is important that we do more: expanded programs, a facility to run them, and staff to manage them.

Having spent much time on thought, discussion, research and consultation with our knowledgeable MAS advisor Graham Boyce, our board of directors now feels ready for our next crucial step: obtaining charitable status from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

The CRA application process to become a registered charity involves four key steps:

1. Describe in clear detail each charitable activity you will undertake to achieve each of your stated charitable purposes.
2. Show how it provides a benefit to the public.
3. Name the activity, describe it, answer specific questions about it.
4. Provide any supporting documentation.

For example, the first purpose in our Articles of Amendment states:

“To provide a public benefit to the local community by conducting environmental projects on municipal and private lands designed to preserve and protect native flora and fauna and improve the urban environment throughout the city of Mississauga and environs.”

This single statement of purpose contains descriptive “what, how, why, and where” clauses where we must provide details backed up with supporting documents.

Ensuring accountability to the CRA will be an important responsibility for BB as a charitable organization.

Charitable status will grant additional benefits to Blooming Boulevards:

- exemption from income tax
- access to specific government programs
- the ability to issue tax receipts for donations

With charitable status, our organization gains further recognition and credibility within the charitable sector.

Submitted by: Jeanne McRight

## APPENDIX I

### A Community Greenhouse for Mississauga

Good evening everyone.

*Your* BB has moved forward with its community greenhouse project. This novel initiative and the first of its kind in Mississauga, is a goal in BB's 2023-2026 strategic plan.

There are two main focuses to the greenhouse project, each based on community engagement. The greenhouse becomes a 4-seasons space for the horticultural growing of native perennials to support our struggling pollinators. These plants will be the primary source of perennials for gardens installed on front boulevards and provide pollinators with critical sources of nourishment, enhance their habitats, help them adapt to a changing climate, support our urban agriculture, and all the while add beauty to our homes and public spaces.

The greenhouse also will serve as a venue for public education, training for youth, seniors, marginalized adults and other organizations. Its design provides accessibility to people of all ages and abilities. The benefits to community residents, wildlife and BB partners, including the city, are planned to compound over time as bees, birds, butterflies and other critters find nourishment and overwintering spaces. BB's vision is to establish an enhanced network of pollinators corridors, share its experiences and demonstrate to other municipalities what is possible to achieve when you have a collective, shared vision.

As you heard from Jeanne, the feasibility report, generously supported by the OTF, concluded that this action-based, volunteer-supported community greenhouse project is entirely feasible, with two parallel caveats – the need for a location within Mississauga, and the implementation of a successful, strategic and ongoing fundraising plan.

The City is actively working with BB to identify a location which is accessible to the public with the features necessary for its success. There are a few candidates being explored. One is ideal – the former Hancock Woodlands nursery, now a recent addition to the city park system.

Submitted by: Douglas Markoff