

Bay County Extension Council

Minutes
March 19, 2008

Date: March 19, 2008

Time: 5:18 p.m.

Place: MSU Extension Bay County, Third Floor, Large Conference Room

Members Present:

Mary Jo Brandt

Lyle LeCronier

Doug Rise

George Heron

Bill Palmer

Barb Wishowski

Marybeth Laisure

Members Excused:

Joyce Gavord

Sara Marks

Mike Meier

Others Present:

Ann Arnold, Family Consumer Sciences Extension Educator

Judy Delestowicz, Administrative Assistant

Jan Rise, Master Gardener Volunteer Program Coordinator

Jodi Schulz, 4H & Youth Development Extension Educator

Howard Wetters, County Extension Director

INFORMATION PRESENTED AND DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

The meeting was called to order at 5:18 p.m. Doug Rise, chair, asked for review of the January 16 meeting minutes, which were approved as submitted. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

Under old business, Mr. Wetters extended an invitation to Council to attend two public presentations scheduled March 27, 2008, for the vacant ANR Extension educator position. Presentations start at 1 p.m. and are 30 minutes each. Ms. Mary Jo Brandt will represent Council in the interview process.

Ann Arnold and Jan Rise introduced the Healthy Toddlers research project, a USDA funded project. This two year study started in October 2007 and will end August 2009. The target population is low-income families with children ages one to three. The goal is to promote healthy eating behavior in children when they are young. Long-term goals are to help lower childhood obesity through better eating habits. The researchers are really looking at what families are eating, can they learn new recipes, where are they eating, does the environment have affect on the family, and can they change their habits.

Bay County is one of only three counties working on this project in Michigan; only Michigan, Colorado, and Wisconsin were chosen to participate by the USDA. Two MSU Extension Bay County staff are instructors for control and intervention, who provide parenting and nutrition education. One non-MSU Extension person was

hired to collect data by meeting with the families to observe habit changes. This project is administered through the MSU College of Nursing. Ms. Arnold stated that the curriculum is excellent, and that she is very excited about being a part of the study. Parents have to keep a food diary, so there is a little homework. But, families get to learn to cook with their kids, if they don't already. They also have the opportunity to receive a total of \$75 in incentives if they complete the project. A total of 90 Bay County families will benefit from this study over the next three years.

Mr. Wetters brought Council up-to-date on the status of the "Communities for a Lifetime" designation being pursued in Bay County. The Bay County Board of Commissioners has approved the measure, and the Bay City Commission is soon to consider approval. The RFP (request for proposal) is due in October 2008. If successful, Bay County will be the first county to seek a county-wide designation. This is a large undertaking in making a county-wide designation possible, it is an entire community collaboration and partnership. There is potential for community development, which highlights our "hidden" community assets and investments in going to incorporate a senior-friendly acknowledgement in local codes and ordinances throughout our municipalities. Great for seniors now located in Bay County and for those looking to settle here in the future. Bay County is now looking at their recreation plan.

Mr. Wetters and Ms. Jan Rise highlighted progress in establishing a new farmers' market in downtown Bay City. Rules, rental rates, bylaws are being created for review by the core group and application is being made to the City of Bay City to operate downtown. Fifteen interested citizens, City of Bay City representatives, MSU Extension Bay County, Bay County representatives, and local farmers comprise the core group. This farm market will operate under the MSU Extension umbrella for awhile to get established. The farm market plans to accept food stamp bridge cards, Project FRESH and Sr. Project FRESH coupons. The market will run Tuesday and Thursday nights till 6 p.m. at the parking ramp at Jennison Place on Saginaw Street. Ms. Rise shared some of her ideas on how to promote the market as a destination event and explained talked about a "community" booth, which will be an opportunity for promotion and education at market. The market's tag line is "Connecting people to their food."

Mr. Wetters talked about upcoming grant opportunities for MSU Extension Bay County, some of which are renewals, some are new and/or open bid processes for 2008-2009 cycle. They include United Way's American Dream grant, which focuses on providing parenting and nutrition educational series to families in Washington and Bangor Central. Also, the Dept. of Human Services Strong Families, Safe Children; MSU Extension's Family Nutrition Program; and the Children's Trust Fund, 0-3 Secondary Prevention are all up for renewal. A grant to support the farmers' market is also being sought. The Children's Trust Fund additional grant funds FY2007-2008 that MSU Extension Bay County applied for to support a teen wrap-

around program earlier this year was not approved for consideration. This does not directly impact staffing in this grant year.

Program area activities were presented to Council. Ms. Ann Arnold reported that the breastfeeding mom's club is doing well and growing every month. A community baby shower is being held again this year. Ms. Robin Wiess is moving up to Arenac County to fill a MSU Extension program associate vacancy in Better Kid Care and the Family Nutrition Program. She worked in Bay County for six years and will be missed. MSU Extension Bay County will fill the position, which has been posted. Better Kid Care 36-hour and 18-hour series are planned in Alma and Mt. Pleasant.

Ms. Jodi Schulz talked about the upcoming 4-H rabbit and cavy show. This is the first of its kind held in Bay County. The state-wide competition will be held on March 29 at the Bay County Community Center. Another Shaggy Spring Fling horse event is scheduled for April 12. 4-H Staff is now teaching plant science and aerospace technology concepts at three Boys and Girls Club locations. Ms. Schulz reported on the well received annual 4-H banquets to honor youth and leaders and about the successful spaghetti dinner fundraiser. Of course, fair is already in focus for 4-H staff. This year the Fair Board is negotiating with Red Cross to man a "comfort" station. The reading garden project at MacGregor Elementary was funded by a state-wide 4-H Participation Fees grant. This school was targeted because kids there have shown low reading scores and have other at-risk factors. The plan for the project in 2008 is to plant container gardens based upon books the students are reading, moving toward a more permanent garden in 2009. A reading garden will make a great place for kids to incorporate literacy in their day.

Mr. Wetters offered that there was no new ANR program activities to report.

Ms. Jan Rise reported that the latest Master Gardener class ends April 8. There are 17 trainees. The program is gearing up for the planting season and preparing the volunteer project list for 2008, Veterans' Memorial Park on the westside and the I-75 MDOT rest stop in Linwood are still the biggest projects. A Master Gardener Fun Fair is planned for April 29 to kick off the new season.

The next Extension Council meeting is scheduled for May 21. Mr. Rise adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

ACTION TAKEN

- It was moved, supported, and carried to approve the January 16, 2008, meeting minutes.
- It was moved, supported, and carried to adjourn at 6:25 p.m.

Prepared by J. Delestowicz