

**St. John Parish
Horticulture Advisory Council Meeting
February 27, 2013**

Minutes

In Attendance:

Phillip Adams, St. John Parish Parks and Recreation; **Steven Fraker**, St. John Parish Economic Development Committee and local business owner; **John Olynich**, St. John Parish United Way; **Rene' Schmit**, St. Charles Parish County Agent and Parish Chair, **Kay McKey**, St. John Parish Libraries; **Mary Claire Fisher**, Fisher's Ace Hardware Store, **Mariah Bock**, St. John Parish County Agent

The meeting started at 10:30 a.m. with the introduction of members. Members stated their name and affiliation to the horticulture program. Following introductions Mariah Bock provided a brief overview of the LSU AgCenter and the Horticulture Advisory Council job description. Mariah gave a summary of current St. John Parish horticulture programs (L'Observateur monthly news column, home horticulture visits, Horticulture Hints distribution, River Region Master Gardener Association, schools gardens, etc.).

Members shared horticulture issues and needs in the parish. Topics identified include:

- Homeowners need education on tree care, pruning, maintenance, insurance and placement. Rene' volunteered to assist with this program as needed.
- Conducting a series of workshops was suggested. Topics could include lawn care, composting, irrigation, proper pesticide handling, and soil testing procedures.
- Use RTC channel 11 and an office Facebook page to advertise upcoming programs and events. Traditional media coverage doesn't exist anymore.
- Conducting workshops through homeowner associations was suggested. Could advertise the event through homeowner association mail outs.
- A community garden was suggested. Could use 4-H members, Junior Leaders, and volunteers to help maintain the garden. Vo-tech school, sheriff's office or food bank to assist.
- Foresee potential problems and make recommendations prior. Could use YouTube to create videos available to the public. Keep videos short and to the point.
- Educational program for lawn care companies. Contact Harold Flynn.
- Continue to use public buildings like the library and parks for programs and events.
- Tree distribution through the Department of Ag and Forestry to students. Contact District Attorney Tom Daley.

- Create email list for Horticulture Hints newsletters. Lots of good information that people miss out on.
- Conduct programs at the veterans home and senior centers.

Mariah thanked all the attendees for their important contributions and insights. The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.