

Wisconsin Hickory Association (WHA)
Annual Board Meeting Minute
Saturday, January 21, 2017

I. CALL TO ORDER

The WHA board meeting was called to order by President Starshak at 10:00 a.m. at the Goose Blind, Green Lake, WI

Board Members Present: Mike Starshak, Wendy Stobbe and Sarah Naparalla.

Absent: Carole DeCramer and Kevin DeCramer

WHA Members Present: Gary Ertl, Marilyn Perr, William O'Brien, Marilyn Niedermair, Don Niedermair, Dan Solberg, Linda DeCramer and Laird DeCramer

II. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion to approve agenda by Laird DeCramer, 2nd by Don Niedermair. Approved

III. APPROVE MINUTES

Minutes of January 10, 2017 not available.

IV. TREASURE REPORT

WHA checking account balance \$1144.00.

V. 2016 YEAR-IN-REVIEW

- A. State Petition for the Hickory Nut to be the state nut. We have over a 1,000 signatures. President Starshak read the petition out loud and encouraged all to sign if they haven't already and made sheets available to circulate for signatures if interested. Having the hickory nut declared the state nut will help the organization to promote hickory as an industry.
- B. Speciality Block Grant: Matt Winden, Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics at UW-Whitewater will be working with students to study the feasibility of hickory as a resource for industry in WI. Matt discussed the 4 main areas that would be researched in the project.
 1. Market analysis - develop a list of hickory products and value added products, determine the potential demand based on present sales and sales of similar products on the market
 2. Develop a Business Plan for each of the products on the list - determine start up cost for equipment, depreciation, cost production, estimated profits, profit sensitivity, etc.

3. Economic Impact - Estimate the number of jobs created per type of business, those creating product, distribution, marketing, etc as well as \$ spent by consumers
4. Hickory Locations - determine geographical locations in the state that hickory is already growing to obtain product now and what locations would be good to plant hickory groves for larger production

Matt informed us that neither he nor the director are paid through the grant funding. Students are hired to do the research work and this allows them to gain paid experience. The preliminary report will be completed by approximately Nov. 2017 with the Final

Report

being completed by April 2018 to share with WHA Members.

VI. 2017 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- A. Arbor Day - Letter from DNR Forester, Jeremiah Auer, was read regarding the program where a free tree can be provided to every 4th grader in the state. Applications were distributed that can be passed on to schools. President Starshak discussed how WHA is encouraging all schools in Green Lake County to apply and receive hickory seedlings and allows WHA to do a presentation on how to plant and care for them. Members encouraged to pass on an application to their school and to check out DNR website under the Arbor Day listing for more information.
- B. Green Lake Sheriff Recidivism Program - Inmates that can maintain gainful employment or develop job skills while incarcerated have a lower chance of committing a crime and returning to jail. WHA looking into the possibility of creating a program that inmates grow hickory seedlings that WHA can sell to the public or nurseries (few nurseries offer hickory trees) to be prepared for the increase in demand.
- C. Nut Cracking Workshop - Sarah Naparalla gave a description of information provided in the workshop, the locations they were provided and attended by 101 people. She stated that many more people may be interested in hickory nuts if they knew how to pick them out easily. She is willing to expand out from the area to offer workshops. She encouraged anyone to contact her if they would like a workshop in their area.
- D. Field Tour/Workshops - Wendy Stobbe discussed the bus tour provided in 2014 and 15 and the workshop we held in 2016. She expressed our need to expand to a new location to offer tours/workshops to attract and serve more people. Also need ideas of what people are interested in seeing/learning. Naparalla brought up that many people in attendance for the feast were from the Milwaukee area so we should build on that and expand south. Members Don and Marilyn Niedermair from Beaver Dam stated they would be interested in hosting a tour or workshop. Grafting seem to be a topic of high interest as well as the possibility of planting hickory trees to qualify land to be considered farmland. President Starshak stated that Agriculture Agent, Nav Ghimire, suggested that we hold an

Annual Symposium on Hickory with workshops featuring different hickory products and their uses.

E. Hickory Feast - Discussion was held as to what price could be charged for this fundraiser & the

quality of food and location. All present felt that people would pay \$50 to attend. Some felt this

would be the maximum for 1 group of people but others with more income or from a larger city

or those looking to “experience a hickory meal” would be willing to pay much more.

Chef/ Catering Business Owner, Dan Solberg felt the average cost to create the meal would be

about \$35 per plate. It was suggested that we offer 2 different priced meals, a brunch & a dinner.

Marilyn Niedermair stated that Old Hickory Golf Course in Beaver Dam may be a possible

host location. Solberg said that he had been at events where they created a story to go with the

meal; the chef would talk about how he created and paired the food for each course and the

organization would tell their story throughout the meal. Linda DeCramer suggested that we gear

the marketing not so much to people interested in hickory but people who like eating really

good food, interesting or unique meals and those looking for a “new experience”.

President Starshak asked for volunteers to create a Feast Committee to set up one or 2 feasts

this year. Feast Committee members: Marilyn and Don Niedermair, Linda DeCramer, Marilyn

Perr and Dan Solberg.

VII. ELECTIONS

A. Treasurer: Gary Ertl made a motion that Kevin DeCramer continue as Treasurer.

Motion seconded by Laird DeCramer. Motion passed unanimously.

B. Member-At-Large: Wendy Stobbe is not interested in another term so nominations sought.

Don Niederman expressed interest. Wendy Stobbe made a motion to elect Don

N.

Motion seconded by Marilyn Perr. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Vice-President: Laird DeCramer made a motion to elect Sarah Naparalla for a 2nd term
Motion seconded by Marilyn Perr. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Media Manager - WHA looking for volunteers or a Media Manager to help with the website, facebook posts, news article, etc. Dan Solberg said he would assist with facebook. S. Naparalla reminded people to visit WHA facebook page on a regular basis and like and share to spread exposure.

Linda DeCramer suggested that a Media Manager job description be written up to share so that people know exactly what we are looking for. Laird DeCramer and Marilyn Perr have contacts within the schools and would pass this info on when it is available. It is possible that we could arrange that a student gets class credit for this or maybe there could be some pay/stipend involved. President Starshak will complete the job description and disperse.

IX. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Have we set up at fairs and other events? We did have a display booth at the Green Lake County Fair but we have had limited manpower and being only 2 yrs old lack of time to plan ahead.
- Members felt this meeting was very valuable and allowed them to become more involved. It was agreed that we should have 2 group meetings per year, January and then late July/early August.
- Interest in having WHA t-shirts and caps. Idea-Chew softly, carry a big stick
- Is there anyone that is looking at duplicating tree selection based on nut size, taste, desirable characteristics? Northern Nut Growers Association is interested in working with a group that has grants to do this.
- Workshop ideas; grafting, tree trimming/maintenance, reducing grubs
- Short discussion on trials to create hickory oil by crushing nuts in the shell, then uses for the shell and ashes from the burnt shells.

X. ADJOURN MEETING

William O'Brien made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Marilyn Perr. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned followed by potluck lunch.