
Policies and Procedures Manual

Version 1, 2015

Richmond Hill Garden &
Horticultural Society

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Purpose

The purpose of this manual is to provide consistency and direction for handling commonly occurring situations and events by members of the Society, as roles evolve and change hands. (Approved by the Board of Directors 2014 – 2015).

Archives

Donations to the Society's Archives Collection are invited and encouraged. These items of historical significance will fall into two categories:

1. Paper based object donations including photographs, yearbooks, newspaper clippings, programmes, etc. will be forwarded to the Mary Lou Griffin Local History Room, located in the Central Branch of the Richmond Hill Public Library.
2. Object donations including trophies, banners, historic tools, etc. will be forwarded to the Artifacts Storage Centre at the Operations Centre of the Town of Richmond Hill.

All materials are to be forwarded to a designated Member of the Board who will send a letter of thanks to the donor on behalf of the Society. An annual transfer of these materials will be made and acknowledged by Deed of Gift forms, whereby the Board and the recipients agree to certain conditions related to the donated materials. Duplicated or inappropriate items will be returned to the donor with our thanks. (Nov. 2015).

Awards

Honorary Membership

An honorary membership can be initiated by a written documentation submitted to the Board, explaining how the individual has contributed to the goals and activities of the Society over an extended period of time. The award is at the discretion of the Board of Directors. Recipients receive a letter from the President and an Honorary Membership certificate at a general meeting.

Honorary Membership in the Society was approved for Charlie Dobbin. (May/July 2008)

Honorary Membership in the Society was approved for John and Sylvia Jansen of Richview Nursery. (Jun. 2015)

Volunteer Reception

A Volunteer Reception for all of the Society's volunteers may be held to recognize their contributions and formally thank them. (Sept. 2008)

Board Members/Meetings

New Board Members

New Board members are to receive a copy of the Job Descriptions.

Board Meetings

Board meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of the month at the McConaghy Centre, except in December, which shall be on the second Wednesday. (Jan. 2011/Nov. 2015)

Selection Process

Process for selecting new Board members is as follows:

- a. Through a Board appointment for a single vacancy
- b. Through the Nominating Committee which is made up of the current President, Past President, and one or two Society members in good standing. (Jan. 2012)

Criteria for new Board members: A demonstrated commitment to the Society; ability to attend the majority of Board meetings; willingness to contribute to the operation of the Society; and two Board members who have knowledge of the applicant and his/her contributions. (Nov. 2015)

Code of Conduct

A code of conduct should lay out an organization's expectations and guiding principles for appropriate behaviour for the Board of Directors and all participating members. It should cover accountability, conflict of interest, and confidentiality. It should also cover consequences of violation of policy.

The Richmond Hill Garden & Horticultural Society (herein called the Society), its Board of Directors, volunteers and general members will take proper measures to ensure there is not and it should not appear to be, any conflict between the personal and private interests of volunteers and members and their responsibility to the Society.

Any action deemed by the Board of Directors to compromise the integrity of the Society will not be condoned or allowed. The consequence of such actions will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal as a member of the Society.

Members should act with fairness, honesty and integrity. Members should respect the opinions of others and treat all other members and guests with equality and dignity without regard to gender, race, colour, creed, ancestry, place of origin, political beliefs, religion, marital status, disability, age or sexual orientation.

The Society has a zero tolerance policy with respect to personal or sexual harassment in any form and participation in such activity may be grounds for the termination as a volunteer for the Society.

Following an emergency situation in an event of the Society; a full written report must be completed and submitted to the Board of Directors within 2 days of the event occurrence.

Members should adhere to the policies and procedures of the Society and support the decisions and directions of the Board of Directors.

Conflict of Interest

Conflict of interest arises when a person participates in a decision about a matter which may benefit or be seen to benefit that person because of his or her direct or indirect personal gain or financial interest, affected by or involved in that matter.

Confidentiality

The Society requires members to maintain confidentiality of information gained as a volunteer of the Society, including but not limited to; photos, financial records, membership information and any other private information that a member may become privy to through his or her volunteer activities for the Society.

Violation of Policy

In the event that a person has violated the Code of Conduct, or not fulfilled his/her role or expectations of his/her position:

- a. A private/confidential meeting with the person will be held by one or two persons, including the President if appropriate.
- b. At this meeting, documented difficulties will be shared, which specify the date, time, nature of the difficulty, by the person who experienced it/them.
- c. "Difficulties" are to be described/stated objectively; for example, "I did not receive _____; Your decision to _____ resulted in _____.
- d. Review the goals of the Society, and clarify the roles and expectations of leaders and members.
- e. A confidential letter will be sent, and a copy kept, of the meeting proceedings, including the person's response, and the agreed-upon outcome/result. (Nov. 2015)

Constitution and Bylaws

Copies of the Constitution will be posted at the Annual General Meeting. (Nov. 2009)

Copies of the Constitution, Bylaws, and Policies and Procedures Manual will be available to members on the website. (Nov. 2015)

Death/Illness/Other

OHA “In Memoriam” Book

The names of long term members of the Society who demonstrated commitment to the Society shall be submitted to the OHA for inclusion in the “In Memoriam” Book upon their death. (Sept. 2007)

The Society will cover the cost of all “In Memoriam” requests to the OHA.

Illness of a Society Member

The Goodwill Ambassador will send a card from the Board on behalf of the Society in the case of illness of a Society member.

Death of a Member or Immediate Family

The Goodwill Ambassador will send a card from the Board on behalf of the Society in the case of a death of a Society member or their immediate family.

Upon the death of an immediate family member (parent, sibling, or child) of a Society member, condolences may be published in the newsletter with permission. (Aug. 2009)

Honouring Past Presidents

The Society will honour Past Presidents in memoriam with a tree and plaque to be planted in the Celebration Forest at Phyllis Rawlinson Park. (Nov. 2015)

Donations/Tax Receipts

Donations

Whenever the Society receives a donation, a “thank you” note will be sent to the donor acknowledging receipt of the money and/or a card will be sent to the family of the person being memorialized if that is the nature of the donation. (October 2014, November, 2015)

Tax Receipts

Individuals wanting to make a charitable donation and receive a tax receipt must make out a cheque to the Ontario Horticultural Association and specify that the funds be directed to a specific project of our Society. The OHA has a charitable number and can issue tax receipts, while our Society is non-profit and cannot issue tax receipts. (Jan. 2014)

Email Messaging/Communication with the Membership & Others

Purposes of Communication

It is our policy to communicate with the membership for the purposes of:

- Informing and reminding members of our Society’s up-coming & educational events.

- Informing members of horticultural and garden-related events, learning opportunities in the broader community which would be of interest/benefit to the membership.
- Obtaining input into decisions that affect the Society's programs and functioning, as deemed appropriate by the Board.

We will not utilize the resources of the Society to communicate events and programs that have no relationship to horticulture, gardening, and the functioning of the Society. Neither will we sell or distribute for profit the Membership List to other organizations. (April 2014)

Questions from the Public

Horticultural questions from members of the public are to be directed to appropriate Town personnel or to Master Gardeners at the Toronto Botanical Garden (T.B.G.) (Sept. 2009)

Authorization

Only emails authorized by the Board should be sent out to the general membership. (Sept. 2009)

Flower Shows

Exhibitors

Members may exhibit up to two entries in each class, provided they are of different cultivars. (Nov. 2015)

Forfeiture of Exhibitor Number

A Flower Show exhibitor who does not participate for 2 years will forfeit their number. (Sept. 2005)

Judges Honoraria (see Funding)

Funding

Ticketed Society Events

For "ticketed" Society events, payments are final and therefore non-refundable one week prior to the event. (Oct. 2006)

OHA Banquet Speaker

The Banquet Speaker at the OHA's Annual Convention will be funded by the Society out of the Gladys McLatchy Endowment. The amount to be decided by the Board. (Nov. 2015)

Delegates to the OHA Convention and Annual General Meeting

The Society will refund the registration and banquet expenses of each voting delegate who attends the OHA convention. (May, 2006)

Judges Honoraria

The honoraria paid to Flower Show judges shall be \$50.00 as of 2009 and shall be reviewed annually. (Oct. 2008)

Willem Schurman Scholarship

This scholarship, valued at \$1,000.00, will be awarded to a graduate of a Richmond Hill high school who intends to pursue studies related to horticulture or environmental studies. (Jan. 2005)

Holiday Celebration & Awards Ceremony

Tickets to the Holiday Celebration & Awards Ceremony may be subsidized from the Gladys McLatchy Endowment. (Aug.2007)

Remembrance Day

The Society may participate in the local Remembrance Day Services by laying a wreath at the cenotaph. (Oct. 2009)

Funding of Large Purchases

The funding of large purchases on behalf of the Society (e.g. peonies, Plant Sale, Corn Roast/BBQ) are to be arranged in advance with the Treasurer. An expense form along with the original receipt(s) is required for reimbursement. Contact the Treasurer for the expense form. (Nov. 2015)

Funding Goals

As a non-profit organization, the Society will ensure that a two year operating fund is in place to support the Society's economic viability. Funding goals, therefore, are to exceed the break-even point at Society events. (Nov. 2015)

Budgets

Budgets should be submitted annually by all Board members and Committee Chairs. (Nov. 2015)

Garden Maintenance Commitments

Mandate

The Society's mandate for the creation and maintenance of beautiful gardens is for the Town of Richmond Hill only. (April 2011)

McConaghy Centre

A committee of Society members will maintain the indoor plants at the McConaghy Centre. (April 2008)

Gladys McLatchy Memorial Garden

The Society will establish and maintain the "Gladys McLatchy Memorial Garden" at the Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. (June 2008)

Millennium Garden at the Mill Pond

(May 2011) Established in 2001 and maintained by volunteers from the Society.

Russell Tilt Park

Volunteers participate in the maintenance of this park in collaboration with Evergreen Brick Works in honour of our late Past President.

Heritage Centre Herb Garden at Amos Wright Park

Volunteers maintain the herb garden located in Amos Wright Park behind the Heritage Centre (formerly called the Amos Wright House). (Nov. 2015)

Hill House Hospice

Volunteers take care of certain flower beds, providing beauty for patients, caregivers and visitors. (Nov. 2015)

General Meetings

Time and Place

The McConaghy Centre shall be booked for general meetings from 5:00 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. (Nov. 2015)

New Members

New members shall be introduced at each general meeting. (Aug. 2005)

Non-Members/Visitors

A fee of \$5.00 will be charged to non-members/visitors attending general meetings. (Jan. 2007)

Guest Passes

One "Guest Pass" will be given to members who renew their membership early for the up-coming year. This "Guest Pass" can be used at any time in the following year. (Oct. 2007)

Green Policy

The Richmond Hill Garden & Horticultural Society will promote and practice horticultural and gardening activities which can develop, enhance, and sustain the well-being of our community. To the greatest extent possible, incorporating environmentally friendly practices in the various initiatives and endeavors of the Society such as:

- Reducing, re-using, and recycling materials.
- Using organic materials to the greatest extent possible, e.g. cardboard vs. Styrofoam cups.
- Requesting guest speakers to focus on natural practices and solutions where feasible.
- Emailing newsletters whenever possible.
- Having a place for Green Tips in each newsletter.

- Promoting environmentally friendly gardening in publications or promotional events. (April 2008)

Lightning Policy

If a Chairperson or Board member were struck by lightning, every attempt will be made to ensure that we have a Member who is capable of carrying on the duties and is familiar with the processes of the particular project or event that the Chairperson or Board member was responsible for. No one person, therefore, will be responsible for the core/critical portfolios of Membership, Website, and Treasurer.

Membership Dues

Society membership dues shall be established by the Board and updated in the Society's Bylaws. Family membership includes two adults and children under 16 years living at the same address. At age 16, a person may become a member of the Society.

Open Gates Gardeners

All Open Gates gardeners who open their gardens to the public and are not currently members are to be offered free membership in the Society for the remainder of the year. (July 2009)

Richmond Hill Blooms

The property owners of the top three gardens from each of the six Town wards who are not currently members will be encouraged to join the Society by being offered free membership for the remainder of the year. (Aug. 2015)

Photographs

Under review.

Policies and Procedures

The Society will develop and maintain a Policies and Procedures Manual to provide guidelines and a sense of consistency to the Board when making decisions. (July, 2009) The Board is responsible for reviewing and accepting changes to the Policies and Procedures manual on an annual basis.

The Policies and Procedures manual shall be posted on the Society website. The Board will invite the membership to review and submit changes to the Policies and Procedures manual and open the floor for discussion at the Annual General Meeting. (Nov. 2015)

Workshops

Society workshops are to be self-funding as much as possible. (Feb. 2009)

Enrichment Workshops

Enrichment workshops of the Richmond Hill Garden & Horticultural Society offered at times and locations other than at the general meetings shall be planned with every effort to make them self-funding, exclusive of the room rental.

Mini-Workshops

Short workshops shall be offered prior to the start of the monthly meetings occasionally and shall be called “mini-workshops” and shall be free to all members. (Feb. 2009)

Risk Management

Bus Trips

Waiver forms must be completed by all participants when they sign up for the bus trip. The form indicates that payment is non-refundable. (Nov. 2015)

Police Checks

It is our policy that all adults working with youth obtain a Police Vulnerable Sector Check (PVSC) before the start of any activities. The Society will pay the fee associated with obtaining the PVSC for those involved in youth activities. (Jan. 2009)