

Grant Process for the Deane Fund

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Introduction

In January 2015, the Men's and Women's Garden Club of Minneapolis received a bequest of just over \$65,000 from the estate of Betty Deane, the widow of Burton Deane, a long-term member of our club. The MWGCM Board of Directors has approved a plan to use these funds which is described below.

Charge to the Deane Project Review Committee

The charge to the Burton & Betty Deane Project Review Committee is to advise the MWGCM Board of Directors each year on all project proposals submitted that year. The Committee will solicit projects, ensure all applicants have provided the required information, and review and evaluate all complete project applications. After all project proposals submitted for the year are reviewed, the Committee is charged with rank ordering all projects from most to least favored, including annotation justifying their decision(s). The Committee's recommendations, along with the applications and the committee's evaluations, are forwarded to the Board of Directors who will select the project(s) to be funded in the following year.

General Principles (*with annotation*):

- 1. Devote all the money gifted from the estate of Betty Deane to a wide range of horticultural projects which reflect and support the missions of the Club. Projects that lead to tangible community change/improvements are valued as well as legacy projects. The money bequeathed to the MWGCM was given to the Club for the Club's benefit.** *(The Deane Project Review Committee should keep focused on Club managed projects that benefit members in some way; that is, either members receive something from the project {e.g., a new webpage is developed or a color picture reference for the annual Plant PreSale is created} or they participate in providing services {e.g., develop butterfly gardens for public libraries}. Projects that do not have direct benefits for Club members or opportunities for members to provide services for others will be considered non-MWGCM projects, regardless of who leads the project.)*
- 2. A maximum annual amount should be established to fund projects. If funding levels permit, some of the annual budget may be awarded to non-MWGCM community projects that match our criteria. Proposals for a single use of the entire Fund or multiple years of the Fund's annual allotment will not be considered.** *(For an initial annual allotment the Board has approved a maximum of \$6,000 a year can be granted from the Fund. Up to \$3,000/year of that money may be awarded, to non-MWGCM applicants. \$6,000 is roughly 10% of the Fund's original assets. If all \$6,000 were granted every year, the money would last 10 years. At the same time, very worthy projects may arise which justify using all \$6,000 in a year, resulting in only one project being funded that year. Applications from non-MWGCM organizations will be considered, but applications of comparable quality from Club members will have priority. Money in excess of the original \$60,000 to fund the first 10 years of the grant program and money not awarded in a year from the \$6,000 allotment should be added to an account building toward \$6,000 for an 11th year of the program. If funds permit, additional years may be added in the same way until the fund is exhausted.)*

3. Money should be requested for innovative projects but not to fund ongoing Club activities. *(The Fund is not a monetary resource for activities that are funded by the Club's annual budget. MWGCM committees are encouraged to apply for money to support new directions or expand services or opportunities for Club members; e.g., a request for funds to develop a new webpage would be legitimate, but a request for funds to pay for the annual upkeep of that webpage would not be appropriate.)*

4, Projects are for one calendar year maximum. *(This is a small projects program. Annual awards need a specified closing date. If after 12 months the funds have not been depleted, whatever remains returns to the Deane Fund account. If a project fails to complete in a year, the Project Leader may petition the Board for an extension to complete the original project. Extensions may be granted if the reason for the delay is credible. If the extension is granted, the original funding continues with the extension and must be used solely for that purpose. If additional funds are needed, the Project Leader can apply to the Board through the Deane Project Review Committee for second-year funding and request an expedited review. A second year of funding may be considered occasionally, but the decision whether to offer further support should not be made until all project requests in that year are submitted. Review of continuing projects will be considered competitively with the other applicants for that year. After the closing date for applications, the Committee may take up the issue of second year funding immediately and make recommendations to the Board as soon as possible. The Committee should advise the Board whether additional funding of a project will yield experiences or information worth continued funding. The Board must then decide whether to fund a second year or not. Under no circumstances should a third year be considered.)*

5. Grant money may be used for purchasing materials and equipment for the project, including plant materials and for paying fees associated with the project (e.g., advertising an opportunity to participate). Grant money cannot be used for paying wages or for paying expenses which are normally covered by an existing budget line. Expenditures not itemized in the application budget may or may not be reimbursable.

6. Grant recipients must share their experience and things learned from it by writing a summary of the experience for the Garden Spray or a similar publication. *(This summary must be submitted to the Project Review Committee 60 days after the project ends or by March 1 of the next year, whichever comes first. The Deane Project Review Committee has the right to ask for a summary report that describes the project outcomes and reports tangible results. The intent is to share with the Club members what the project accomplished and to remind them of the availability of funding for similar/suitable activities. Failure to submit a report may affect eligibility for future Deane grants.)*

Structure of the Deane Project Review Committee

As the MWGCM Board of Directors has made it clear that they wish to make the final decisions on which projects are funded, the preparation and initial review of applications will be accomplished by a subcommittee of Board members. A 3-member committee will promote efficiency and the odd number of members prevents tie votes. With only 9 Board members, even a 5-member committee would create a group almost as large as the Board itself. Thus the Deane Project Review Committee will consist of 3 members of the Board of Directors. Each year, 3 Directors will be appointed to the Committee by the President and Vice President of the Board on or before January 15. At their first meeting of the new year, the Committee will elect their chair who will serve as the point person, set the agenda, and assign tasks among the committee members.

Some variables that, while not required, may influence selection of committee members are Directors who: have expressed a strong interest in serving on this new Committee; have a background in research, or project development; have skills in writing, word processing, form development, budgeting, or spreadsheets; or are likely to be on the Board for another 2 to 3 years

One of the challenges facing the Board and Committee member selection is continuity of the Committee from year to year. Ideally Committee members would serve 3 years on a rotating basis, but with most Board members serving only 2 to 3 years on the Board itself, special attention should be given to committee member continuity from year to year so at least one person is familiar with procedures. Given that there are only 9 Directors, the majority of whom serve 3 years or less, the Board has approved inviting past Board members to serve on the Committee as needed. With the years, a cohort of past Board members who also served on the Deane Fund Committee will develop; this group should be encouraged to join the Committee when there are not 3 current Board members willing to serve on the committee. Only one such individual should serve at a time and that person should be given the opportunity to serve up to 3 years.

A final word of caution: This is a working committee assigned to review project proposals and make recommendations to the Board. It is not a forum for lobbying for one's own projects. If a Board member plans to apply for a Deane support funding, s/he should decline any offer of serving on the Deane Project Review Committee as well as excuse him/her self from the full Board deliberations over which projects to fund that year if his/her project is part of the mix being considered by the Board that year.

Review Schedule

Project Leaders may begin submitting applications July 1. October 15, 2020 will be the deadline for grant applications. The Deane Project Review Committee will review all proposals and forward them in rank order with recommendations to the Board. The Board will then make a final decision at the December Board meeting. The recipient(s) of Deane grants could be announced in the January Garden Spray or be otherwise notified by January 2nd. After recipient(s) have been selected, the Board will notify unsuccessful applicants and thank them for their participation.

All dates in the above paragraph are adjustable. The above calendar favors preparing project applications in the fall when gardening activities are slowing down, but the recent summer may be fertile with project inspirations. The selection processes occur during November and December. The final awards could be announced in January. The projects will be funded on an annual calendar which coincides with the Club's fiscal calendar. The final reports on the projects can be reviewed in January a year later. Overall this calendar favors letting the Committee focus on one activity at a time with all applications: preparing the application materials, distributing them, checking applications as they arrive for completeness and eligibility, reviewing applications, and finally rank ordering and forwarding results to the Board.

Financial Management of Projects

Project applicants will be asked to include a budget with their project application. Applicants are encouraged to be realistic about their budgets. Requesting too much funding limits the number of

projects that can be supported in a year. It might also result in the project being passed over when there are insufficient funds left in the annual grant allocation to cover the inflated budget. Too low an estimate and the project risks running out of money before it's completed.

Upon approval of the projects for a year, the chair of the Deane Project Review Committee will communicate the Board approved budgets to the MWGCM Treasurer who will create a budget line for each project. As a project incurs expenses, the Project Leader will turn over receipts to the Treasurer for reimbursement. Each Leader must understand that there is **no reimbursement without a receipt**. Also, expenses not itemized in the original project budget may not be approved. Questionable expenditures will be flagged by the Treasurer and reviewed by the Board before being reimbursed. During the course of the project, the Treasurer will keep a record of all reimbursements. At the end of the project, the Treasurer will supply the project leader with that information for the project's final report.

If the project's expenses are approaching its limit, the Treasurer will notify the Project Leader and the President of the MWGCM Board that the project's funding will soon be depleted. Between the Board's President and the Treasurer, the Project Leader will be informed that there will be no further reimbursement once the budget limit is reached, but the Project Leader can apply to the Board through the Deane Project Review Committee for second year, expedited, project support; it is assumed second year support will be 10% or less of the original first year funding.