

ELIOT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

APRIL 8, 2024

First Congregational Church of Eliot and via ZOOM.

PRESENT: 12 with 3 on ZOOM

Vice President Tracey Graffam-Dickson opened the meeting at 7:00pm.

Program

Tracey introduced Carolann Gagne, the president of the Eliot Garden Club. The organization is celebrating its 95th anniversary. A resident of Eliot, for 38 years, she began looking into the history of the Garden Club to find ways they might celebrate. She thanked Rosanne for the material she had sent her. As Carolann spoke, slides were put up to illustrate.

The Eliot Garden Club is part of the Piscataqua District of Federated Garden Clubs (National). They were organized on July 22, 1929 and Federated on July 19, 1934. Their status gives them a voice with the State concerning gardening, groundwater, and related issues. Garden Clubs started up in the United States during the restoration period after the Civil War. As others were working to preserve historic structures, another group, primarily women, were concerned about the grounds and gardens. This period was fertile ground for woman's activism to take interest in their communities. This involvement spread nationally, after the original organizational meeting in Cambridge, Mass in 1899.

In the 1950's Eliot Garden Club produced a lovely little booklet, looking back on 28 years of service to their community. They hosted flower shows, giving the proceeds to help needy children get dental and eye care; supported what was then the Tri-County hospital. Located on Rt. 1 in Kittery, Maine; did a number of beautification projects around the town, taking their love of flowers as a means of giving to friends and worthy causes. They were also deeply connected with the library, as they are today, taking care of the beautification of the WWI memorial on the grounds. They worked to have State Road designated a "Blue Star Highway" and placed the marker, which has since been moved to Hammond Park, at the intersection of Moses Farmer Road and State Road. Today they continue these beautification projects and also decorate the Gazebo, where they have their annual plant sale, and, with help of the town road department, had planters placed at various road intersections, throughout the town, which they maintain.

Their original by-laws are still current today and anyone in Eliot and the surrounding towns may become a member. Meetings begin with the pledge of Allegiance, followed by "A Gardener's Prayer".

Tracey read from a 1967 anniversary brochure listing members of the Garden Club and talking about the activities of the group.

Presently they are looking at some plantings for Eliot's "Welcome Signs", located on 236 at the Kittery/Eliot line and in South Eliot, just after crossing over from Kittery, past the marina. The Garden Club is also looking for support to petition the state to consider building up and beautifying the center island on Rt. 236 in front of Eliot Commons, making an inviting entrance into Eliot.

Slides of various Garden Club activities and gardens of members were shown during the talk.

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Announcements

1. Paul Johnson said that the installation of the heat pump has been delayed until April 17th.
2. Jan Cerabona has taken posters to area museums announcing our programs and offerings. In return we are also publicizing their events at our #8 Schoolhouse and through our Facebook interactions.
3. Next meeting is May 1st.

Meeting closed at 9:30, following refreshments.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosanne M. Adams-Fisher, Secretary