



American Peony Society

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

February 13, 2025 | 6:30 p.m. CST

Call to Order / Roll Call

Voting Members in Attendance: Lois Girton (President), Nate Bremer, Lynn Gessling, Rich Grenier, David Michener, Mary Muellner, *Brandie Orchard, Scott Parker, Steve Smith, Matt Snyder, Jill Stevens, Cory Tischman, Kent Trethewa, Piet Wiestra,*

Non-Voting Members in Attendance: Sheryl Lawson, Bernie Miller

Absent Members: *Nick Maycher, Melissa Sullivan*

A regularly scheduled meeting of the American Peony Society (APS) was held on November 14, 2024, via teleconference (Zoom). It began at 6:36pm CST and was presided over by Lois Girton as President, with Brandie Orchard as Recording Secretary.

Reading & Approval of Minutes

Brandie Orchard submitted the meeting minutes from the BOD Meeting on Nov 18, 2024. The minutes were submitted to be ratified with a motion by Steve Smith, seconded by Nate Bremer, which was carried unanimously.

Officers' Reports

President's Report – Lois Girton

- **See Report**

Treasurer's Report – Lynn Gessling

- **See Report**
- **See Motion**

Committees and Special Projects Reports

Auction Report – Jill Stevens, Lois Girton, & Mary Muellner

- No Report

Award of Landscape Merit (ALM) Committee Report – Cory Tischman

- The committee has not had a formal meeting. There has been discussion about how to include intersectional peonies and woody peonies. There is general agreement to create a form for recommended woody peonies rather than including them in ALM.
- Nate is working on a Woody Peony Survey.

Awards Committee Report – Steve Smith

- *Personal Awards:*
No new nominations have been submitted in 2025 to date, we do have some potential previous nominations to review. The awards committee will meet after the March 1st deadline to discuss.
- *Gold Medal and Award of Distinction Awards:*
I have updated our master list of nominated cultivars including new nominations from members. The awards committee will meet after the March 1st deadline to discuss.

Book & Publications Report – Mike Miller

- No Report

Bulletins & Editorial Committee Report – Kim Bremer

- No Report

Commercial Members Committee Report - Piet Wierstra

- No Report

Convention Steering Committee Report – Nate Bremer, Cory Tischner, Lois Girton

- No Report

Exhibition Committee Report – David & Linette Sorrentino

- No Report

International Outreach Program Committee Report - Nick Maycher

- No Report

Membership Report – Liz Best, Lois Girton

- **See Report**
- Nate Bremer may be able to download detailed reports on members to get a better idea of how many members use the online only bulletin. He could do a test run for us.

Mentorship Committee Report – Kent Tretheway

- No Report

Newsletter Editor Report – Bernie Miller

- No Report

Nomenclature Committee Report - Jordan Kabat

- No Report

Nominations Committee Report – Cory Tischman

- **See Report**

Programs Committee – Lois Girton, Nate Bremer

- **See Report**

Reference Garden Committee Report - Lois Girton, Nick Maycher, David Michener, Steve Smith, & Brandie Orchard

- **See Report**

Scientific & Horticultural Studies Committee Report - David Michener & Rich Grenier

- No Report

Seed Distribution Program Report – Scott Parker

- Voice Report
- Scott Parker should have a list of available seeds for 2025 by the end of February.
- We had record sales in 2024 due to first time online sales.
- Nate will work on a better way for non-members to order seeds online without the ordering problems of 2024.

Social Media Committee Report – Liz Best & Lynn Gessling

- No Report

Speakers & Programs Committee Report – Nate Bremer & Lois Girton

- No Report

Website Committee Report - Nate Bremer, Nick Maycher, David Sorrentino

- **See Report**

Correspondence – Sheryl Lawson

- **See Report**

Unfinished Business

- APS Archives:
 - Lois contacted the Sorrentino's about the materials they are holding and was informed that nothing could be done until their return from Arizona.

New Business

- Winter Zoom Seminars - Lois Girton
 - **See 'Motions'**
- Rack Cards – Nate Bremer
 - **See Report**
 - **See 'Motions'**
- Peony Reference Garden Grants – Lois Girton
 - **See 'Motions'**
 - Piet Wierstra agrees that awarding grants to APS Reference Gardens is a great start and a good opportunity to gather information.
 - Steve Smith noted that the recipients of grant money will be required to submit a report at the end of their season where we can acquire pictures to include on our website and bulletins.
 - Lois Girton hopes this program will encourage other gardens to apply in the future.
 - Cory Tischman wonders what our application process is and if there is clear criteria. The proposed application was shared.
 - David Michener points out that this is our first year and we are gathering information with a very restricted dollar amount. Application process, for now, will be done by committee review and hopefully we can build a more transparent criteria for future grant applications.

Discussions

- Beaver Dam Convention 2025 - Nate Bremer
 - **See Report**
 - Overall, everything is looking good. We need more volunteers. Nate Bremer recommends visiting the website and registering and securing lodging.

- Philadelphia Convention 2026 – Matt Snyder & Bernie Miller
 - **See Report**
 - **See Motion**
 - Looking for a new hotel. The proposed hotel estimate is above and beyond our budget
 - Lois says that we have used APS funds to help with conventions in the past and we could certainly do the same for Philadelphia. However, we need to act quickly.
 - Questions as to whether we should have a flower show or just focus on tours.

- Washington Convention 2027 – Steve Smith
 - We are settling on the best date and will move forward with creating a contract very soon. I have a local society member who has volunteered to head our promotions and marketing team.

Motions

Motion: I David Michener, make a motion to move \$100,000 of APS funds to be more strategically invested. Lynn Gessling, Piet Wierstra, Brandie Orchard and Lois Girton will work together to find an investment vehicle with a higher interest rate. Motion seconded by: Piet Wiestra. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: I, Matt Snyder, make a motion to increase number of participants allowed in March and April Zoom Seminars to 500 at a cost of \$50 per month = \$100.00. Motion seconded by: Mary Muellner. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: I, David Michener, make a motion to approve the purchase of 5000 new rack cards, quoted at the price of \$.12 each. Motion seconded by: Cory Tischman. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: I, Steve Smith, make a motion that the board allocate up to \$10,000 to award grants to the current APS Peony Reference Gardens. Awards would be for a maximum of \$2,000 and would require application by April 1, 2025. Motion seconded by: Piet Wierstra. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: I, Piet Wierstra, make a motion to approve the dates of May 2-5, for the 2026 Philadelphia Convention. Motion seconded by: Nate Bremer. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

Lois Girton moved that the meeting be adjourned, and this was agreed upon at 7:59pm CST.

Next Meetings:

- Sunday, June 15, at 8:30am CST in person
- Thursday July 17, at 6:30pm CST by Zoom
- Thursday, November 13, at 6:30pm CST by Zoom

Minutes Submitted by: Brandie Orchard