**National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture (NICH)**

**Executive Committee**

**Bi-Weekly Conference Call**

**Tuesday March 5, 2019**

**10am ET / 9am CT / 8am MT / 7am PT**

**Minutes**

Attendees: Ellen, Gail, Sylvia, Pam, Mason, Missy, Natalie

1. Strategic Tactics *continued* (Ellen)

Final edits collected and vote taken to approve bulleted list. Missy will put the list of strategic objectives into a spreadsheet showing progress.   
What do we do with the list of strategic objectives? Sylvia will compose a note to the June meeting attendees to offer an update about progress on work done. We’ll also put the strategic objectives online and send them out to all list serves.

1. Committee Updates (new, Emergent Info to Share)
   1. Economic (Debbie) – N/A
   2. Community (Pam) – Committee meeting this afternoon. Beginning internal engagement strategies next week with EMG state coordinators.
   3. Environmental (Gail) – Have text ready for new infographics but waiting on illustration development by Jennifer Gray.
2. Council Updates (new, Emergent Info to Share)
   1. Non-Profit (Shannon) – N/A
   2. Commercial (Mason) – Council would like to know what Executive Committee’s pressing concerns are. How can the Council help to give the thoughts of the industry?   
      Gail – How can we make it easier for gardeners to identify pollinator plants at the point of purchase?

Sylvia – How do we engage the state-level associations?

Mason – What is touching consumers? How do we coordinate as an industry to send the same messages? We don’t want to sell the same product but we do want to share a message (maybe it’s based on a monthly editorial calendar?) to better engage consumers.

* 1. Academic/LGU (Heather)  
     Heather Kirk-Ballard has been appointed to represent the Academic/LGU Council. She was unable to attend today, Natalie Bumgarner filled in. Committee has been working to come up with projects that will have visibility/value with LGUs and promote NICH and NICH mission. Coming out with 6 publications that can also be used by agents, MG volunteers, and more as instructional material. First publication will be a general intro to consumer hort. Five remaining publications will be more content-specific. Each publication will go through the lead author’s academic institutions publishing channels. Publications will be co-branded NICH. Project set to take place over next 18 months.

1. New Business
   1. List serve/communication topics – If our communication topics meet industry needs we will have something that easily recruits participation and benefits both NICH and our stakeholders. We will create an editorial calendar that incorporates both gardening themes (e.g., pollinator month, etc.) and NICH call to action materials. Gail and Pam will send their communication ideas to Ellen by the end of this week. Ellen will incorporate into a draft master list. Commercial Council and Marketing Committee will be asked to review and provide feedback. Missy will check in about production of a template for the e-newsletter. Marketing Committee has multiple projects so if desired, this project could shift over to Lauren. Ellen will discuss possible opportunity with Lauren and also ask for regular updates on the number of opens for all NICH communications. As per previous discussion and recommendation from Marketing Committee we will be in communication with the list serve once a month. However, altogether the group feels that we’d like to try for biweekly (every other week) communications. Mason’s industry perspective is that we need to give people something they can’t get elsewhere – information and content that will generate discussions between NICH stakeholders (because industry folks like to talk to each other).
   2. Sylvia’s list – should we put emails on our list serve?  
      Discussion that there is some risk in putting emails on list serve – Mason feels if there is a way to opt-in that would be a better approach. Will communicate with everyone on tent list via email – “click here if you would like to continue to receive these emails”. Mason will draft communication to be vetted by MarCom Committee.
   3. Should we think about the development committee? *Table for next meeting.*
   4. Hashtags – *Table for next meeting.*
      1. What is ours? How does it tie to NICH?

**ACTION ITEMS:**

* Relevancy reviewers – Always potentially needed please continue to have potential relevancy reviewers contact Tom Bewick @ NIFA ([TBEWICK@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:TBEWICK@nifa.usda.gov)).
* Missy will put the list of strategic objectives into a spreadsheet showing progress.
* Sylvia will compose a note to the June meeting attendees to offer an update about progress on work done (to be vetted by MarCom Committee).
* Ellen will make sure the strategic objectives get onto the website.
* Gail and Pam will send communication topics/ideas to Ellen by the end of this week, March 8.
* Ellen will create a draft editorial calendar populated with topic ideas from herself, Gail and Pam.
* Missy will reach out to Mary Kay about progress on e-newsletter template.
* Ellen will reach out to Lauren about possible e-newsletter template project as well as analytics for e-mail campaigns.
* Mason will draft recruitment communication for tent list (to be vetted by MarCom Committee).