

WORCESTER COUNTY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY 184th ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

June 26, 2025

Kent dur Russell, Society Vice-President, welcomed the Society's members to its Annual Meeting and called the meeting to order at 4:05pm.

Rick Leif, Society Secretary, presented the Secretary's Report. He reported that 77 members had registered for the meeting satisfying the quorum requirement. He then presented a motion to waive the reading of the minutes of the 2023 Annual Meeting. This motion was seconded and approved. He then presented a motion to approve these minutes. This motion was seconded and approved.

Emily Wood, Society Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's report. She reported that the Society achieved excellent financial results in FY25 and recorded revenue of \$8,262,700, the highest level in the Society's history. The Garden Shop recorded \$1,000,000 in revenue for the first time. Expenses were \$8,283,532. The Endowment stood at \$29,000,000.

In his report, Mr. dur Russell highlighted the continued growth experienced by New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill. Visitation exceeded 250,000 in FY25 and NEBG was a top 7 attraction in Massachusetts. 20,000 people attended education classes and membership has exceeded 13,000 members.

Jim Karadimos, chair of the Development Committee, presented the Development report. Donations in FY25 totaled \$3,303,897. Membership has grown from 3,500 to 13,000 in the past ten years. We have experienced excellent growth in the Perennial Circle with 100 people now including us in their plans for future bequests. He expressed his appreciation to Theresa Lee, Chief Development Officer, and her staff for their excellent results in our advancement work.

Grace Elton, CEO, presented the CEO's report. FY25 was a busy and productive year for the Society. Visitation at NEBG reached 250,397 including 66,268 attending Night Lights. The surfaces of the Winter Garden and Nadeau Garden were replaced making them safer to walk on and more attractive. We co-hosted the 2024 annual conference of the American Public Gardens Association held in Boston and welcomed over 600 attendees to the Garden for a wonderful reception during the conference. We finalized our partnerships with Botanic Gardens Conservation International US and the Ecological Landscape Alliance, appointing former Director of Horticulture Mark Ricardson as Executive Director of both organizations and moving their headquarters to NEBG. We received the Safe Homes Social Justice Advocacy and Action Award recognizing our efforts to make the Garden welcoming and affirming for all. We received an ILMS grant to fund a plant recorder position to update and maintain the database of records for our plant collection. We welcomed Steve Conaway as our new Director of Horticulture. Ms. Elton recognized her Senior Staff and thanked them, the entire staff, and all our volunteers for their outstanding efforts in FY25.

Catherine Colinvaux, chair of the Governance Committee, presented the Governance report. She presented for approval the following nominations:

To serve a second three-year term as Trustee
Richard Leif, Shiamin Melville, Emily Wood

To serve a first three-year term as Trustees
Jeanie Connolly, Jyoti Datta, Ellen Hornig, Andrea Mattei, Gail Radcliffe, Priya Vaidya

To serve a one-year term as Trustees to continue serving as an Officer
Michael Machnowski, Kent dur Russell

To serve as Officers of the Society

President	Gayle Weiss
Treasurer	Emily Wood
Asst Treasurer	Michael Machnowski
Secretary	Richard Leif
Vice President	Catherine Colinvaux
Vice President	James Karadimos
Vice President	Ashlyn Donohue
Vice President	Kent dur Russell

To serve on the Governance Committee for a second three-year term
Shiamin Melville

To serve on the Governance Committee for a new three-year term
Mark Shelton

To serve on the Governance Committee for a special one-year term
Samantha McDonald, Kent dur Russell

This slate of nominations was adopted by the meeting.

Ms. Colinvaux then presented changes to the bylaws recommended by the Governance Committee for approval. A motion to approve these changes was made, seconded, and approved.

Mr. dur Russell recognized outgoing Trustees, Pat Bigelow, Curtis Falzoi, Abe Haddad, Tom Halpin, Matt Mattus, Lisa McDonough, and Dennis Murphy, and thanked them for the many years of dedicated service they provided to the Society.

Ms. Elton recognized and thanked Mr. dur Russell for his contributions as President of the Society and presented him with a bowl made from the wood of an apple tree in our orchard.

Gitu Jain, Director of Marketing and Communications presented the Community Greening Awards.

Berlin Community Garden
Clark Street Community School Garden
Gardening The Community in Springfield
Pine Hill Meadow Garden in Southborough
Town of Oxford Pollinator Team

Marissa Gallant, Director of Education, presented the Volunteer of the Year award to Laura Booth and Penney Gambino and the Distinguished Service Award to Bill O'Toole.

Steve Conaway, Director of Horticulture, presented the Cary Award for Excellence in the Field of Horticulture to Peter Del Tredici.

Mr. dur Russel announced that, posthumously, Brian Vogt, longtime CEO of the Denver Botanic Garden, has been named an Honorary Trustee of the Society

Ms. Elton presented the Society Silver Medal to Rick Kimball.

The audience gave a warm round of applause to each of these recipients.

Mr. dur Russell declared the business portion of the meeting adjourned at 5:30pm at which time Cary Award winner, Peter Del Tredici, gave a fascinating presentation on the regenerative capability of plants.