



Guidelines for Planning the AGM

General Overview

- The 21 Societies in District 6 take turns hosting the Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- The AGM is held in April or early May – avoiding Easter weekend
- Hosting is on a voluntary basis. But all society/clubs are expected to take a turn and host
- Societies are encouraged to co-host to share the tasks
- Support from your Society's Executive and membership is crucial
- Advise the District Director (DD) if you are willing to host
- Set up a Planning committee comprised of the Society President and at least 3 other executive members to investigate preliminary details
- Always keep the District Director involved in all planning.

Benefits of Hosting and Goals

- ❖ Venue to increase networking, make new friends, donate toward the District, and more importantly, raise local government awareness and the profile of the Garden Club/Horticultural Society
- ❖ The goal of hosting and financing District meetings to be at break even so that a Society is not out of pocket. The secondary goal is a small profit for the District. These funds are funneled back into Society Awards and Grants to help run the District
- ❖ Budget control is very important. Host Societies are expected to seek sponsorship or donations for as much of the event as possible; especially for speakers. Money from Society fund raising events at the meeting, such as flower /bulb sales, silent auction etc., remain the property of the Hosting Society. Normally refreshments and food are donated by the Society membership

Host Society's Responsibilities

- ❖ Choose event date with District Director's (DD) approval
- ❖ Visit and book the venue asap once mutually agreed dates are determined
- ❖ Select a theme
- ❖ Arrange for 1 or 2 guest speakers. Check with District as workshops may occur and a second speaker might not be required
- ❖ Arrange for dignitaries e.g., Mayor or Councillor; Host choice if they invite any
- ❖ Select a Master of Ceremonies to keep the event on track
- ❖ Set overall Agenda and timeline for the day
- ❖ DD will Chair the business portion of the meeting and be responsible for the Business Agenda.

Host Society's Responsibilities Continued...

- ❖ Provide light refreshments, muffins, fruit, drinks etc.
- ❖ Simple decorations (optional)
- ❖ Determine cost of ticket per member based on all expenses of the AGM with District Director's approval
- ❖ Look for sponsors at the early stages to keep the costs down
- ❖ Provide a preliminary budget to the District Treasurer (DT) for approval of the District Executive
- ❖ District will remind each Society to bring a door prize; \$20 to \$25 value.

District Responsibilities

- ❖ An Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) representative will be appointed to attend the District Annual Meeting by the OHA President. The District will assume the cost of a gift or luncheon for the OHA representative
- ❖ Guest Speaker(s) fees will be paid by the District. Any individual speaker fees over \$200.00 needs to be approved by the District Executive
- ❖ The District will pay for the facilities, simple decorations and printing of the program
- ❖ Consult with the DT for any funding limitations
- ❖ Conduct a Share the Wealth Draw. Proceeds go to the District.

Step 1: The Date

- ❖ Select a few Saturdays in April or early May when your Society is able to host the AGM
- ❖ Check dates with District Director to ensure there are no event conflicts with the District or OHA
- ❖ Your final date will depend upon availability of your venue.

Step 2: The Venue - Specifications & Considerations

- ❖ Select two or three facilities and arrange dates/times with their Facilities Manager for your committee to visit and check the venue for suitability
- ❖ Rental fees vary across the District according to size of town/city. Some venues offer discounts for Not-For-Profits
- ❖ Accessibility: Entrances, elevators and washrooms
- ❖ Facility to hold 200 to 250 members
- ❖ Space needed:
 - ❖ Business Meeting - Stage with podium, if available.
 - ❖ Flower Show room and staging area
 - ❖ Refreshments area, lunch seating and kitchen privileges
 - ❖ Is there a dishwasher?

Step 2: The Venue - Continued...

- ❖ Are there tables/chairs available at the venue – is there a cost to use them? Do they need to be rented? Cost to set up? If so, this should be reflected in your budget
- ❖ Insurance will be arranged by the Society's President through our Insurance Carrier
- ❖ Plenty of parking available – is it free. Where is the parking lot in relation to the venue?
- ❖ Cost of venue including any costs for rental of additional space needed or janitorial services
- ❖ Audio visual – does the facility have an microphone/speaker system, white presentation screen?
- ❖ Is the venue available on the dates your Committee has decided upon?

Step 3: Committee Chairs

- ❖ Set up various Committees to plan and organize the AGM
- ❖ Ask for a volunteer from your Society to Chair each Committee who will report directly to the Society President and represent the committee during planning meetings
- ❖ Encourage Chairpersons to set task/action timelines
- ❖ Hold regular planning meetings with the Society President (normally the Chair of the event) and Committee Chairs.

Step 3: Committee Chairs & Tasks

Suggested Committees / Tasks:

Audio/Visual	Budget	Decorating/Cleanup/Janitorial
Draw Prizes	Flower Show	Fundraiser/Donations
Parking & Arrivals	Photographer	Programmes/Brochure & Agenda Design
Registration, Publicity & Promotion	Refreshments & Refreshing food tables	Registration
Signage (inside and outdoor)	Speakers	Tree Planting & Plaque
Vendors (Optional)	Welcoming & Hospitality	Silent Auction (optional)

Audio/Visual

- ❖ The services of a knowledgeable technical volunteer will be required throughout the day to troubleshoot
- ❖ Communicate with the facility to determine what equipment is available
- ❖ Most speakers will need appropriate audio visual equipment for their presentation. Bring a memory stick. Have a backup plan
- ❖ Ensure computers & equipment are in the proper place at the correct time for speakers and presenters, etc.
- ❖ Check if there is a podium that has a working, easy to use light (if possible) for presenters to see their notes
- ❖ Operate lighting and sound equipment or troubleshoot as needed
- ❖ Equipment includes microphones, stands, amplifiers, speakers, screens, projectors, tables, computer equipment for Power Point etc.
- ❖ Is there an equipment rental fee or is it included in the rental cost of the venue?

Budget

- ❖ A preliminary budget should be sent to the District Treasurer
- ❖ Unusual expenses need to be pre-approved by the District Executive who are all involved and ready to help throughout the process
- ❖ District Treasurer can pay any large amounts, if necessary to avoid a drain on Society funds
- ❖ A financial statement along with original receipts plus one copy of receipts is to be sent to the District Treasurer along with surplus or in the case of a deficit, the District will reimburse the Society.

Budget – Sample

RECEIPTS:	
Registration	\$15.00 to \$40.00
Donations	
DISBURSEMENTS:	
Facility Rental	
Speaker(s) Fees	
Audio-Visual	
Refreshments	
Printing, Publicity, Signage	
Tree & Plaque	
Janitorial	
Miscellaneous- please itemize	

1/20/2023

Decorating

- ❖ Keep decorations simple. Theme is set by the Society Host
- ❖ Consider decorating the main entrance, the registration desk and stage. This décor might work as door prizes; you decide
- ❖ Create name tents for head table – D6 District Director, Treasurer & Secretary, Society President & dignitaries
- ❖ Reserve area to display District & Society banners if there is room
- ❖ Make a map for organizing tables for Draw prizes, silent auctions etc.

Draw Prizes

- ❖ Each of the 21 Societies are asked to bring a draw prize valued between \$20-\$25
- ❖ A Volunteer is needed to gather and place gifts in a visible area with each Society's name
- ❖ Where possible, pre-draw winners' names and place with the gift. (Registrant names can be placed in a draw box)
- ❖ Add to the Agenda the approximate time to announce winners near the end of the meeting
- ❖ If vendors donate a prize, remember to officially express thanks for this.

Fundraisers/Donations

- ❖ Host should try to enlist the community for donations and sponsors
- ❖ It is very important to contact sponsors right after the new year while funds are still available
- ❖ The 50/50 Draw is handled by the District Executive and is not considered part of the event's Receipts
- ❖ It is the Society's choice to hold a fundraiser such as a Silent Auction or Penny Sale. All profits from these fundraisers are the Society's funds
- ❖ Any funds generated from expenses the District has paid, are the District's funds e.g., vendors' fees

Parking & Arrivals

- ❖ Society assigns someone responsible for providing designated parking areas
- ❖ Have proper, visible signage and an attendant to direct traffic if necessary. The District has some signage, check with them
- ❖ Pay Particular attention to members needing mobility device assistance to easily move from parking, around the venue and back to their vehicle
- ❖ Assist with Flower Show entries wherever needed
- ❖ Volunteers should wear brightly coloured t-shirts or vests for safety purposes.

Photographer

- ❖ Have photo release forms at Registration table for registrants to sign
- ❖ Team of photographers should work throughout AGM, taking candid shots of delegates
- ❖ DD to remind registrants about photo taking
- ❖ Ensure photos are taken of recipients during Awards Ceremonies
- ❖ Send pictures to District Director for inclusion in District Six Dirt Newsletter & District Website
- ❖ Optional - prepare a wrap up video documentary to distribute to District's Societies.

Programmes/Brochure/ Flyer

- ❖ Design and develop the flyer/brochure - needs approval of District Director
- ❖ Include good writing principles: Who, What, Where, When, Why, Registration Deadline, e.g. 2 weeks from event. No refund after a set date
- ❖ Pre registration (Registrant name and Society) to be sent to D6 Secretary
- ❖ Solicit members with good computer software program skills
- ❖ Include Society & District Logos
- ❖ Find pricing for 3rd party if unable to print in-house - submit to Budget Chair

Publicity & Promotion

- ❖ Host District should make an effort to advertise the AGM in their area. Most publicity can be handled electronically. Be environmentally friendly when printing!
- ❖ Be sure to use the District Newsletter to keep members informed
- ❖ Give pertinent information to District Director to email out to all societies
- ❖ Helps obtain maximum media coverage of the AGM by working with all local media.
- ❖ Try to have members familiar with the local media available
- ❖ Arrange to have newspaper reporters in attendance, if possible
- ❖ Arrange media interviews for Society President & DD, interesting speakers to ensure good coverage of event.

Refreshments

- ❖ List everything you will need; plates, cutlery, how much coffee, tea, table clothes etc., with 1 person controlling the list
- ❖ Make up a donation request letter for all local grocery/food supply places to ask for donations, do this EARLY, then you know how much you have to spend at each location
- ❖ Watch for specials and shop wisely, when coffee is on sale use the gift card for that store. Start marking off your master list what you have purchased
- ❖ Request from your Society members to sign up for baking and fruit you need so you know how much food to expect and how much you must purchase (if any). Develop a list with quantities needed
- ❖ Baking and fresh fruit is a definite; cheese, yogurt & granola bars are nice but should be considered extras
- ❖ Start shopping early so you can mark off that list! Get all your dry goods & paper goods early
- ❖ Remember to label foods with nuts or avoid nuts in everything
- ❖ Place Diabetic and any Gluten free items on separate platters and labelled.

Refreshments continued...

- ❖ Set some food out at the start so you do NOT rely on all baking arriving on that day, get some the day before, or well in advance and freeze
- ❖ Everything comes in throw away containers so you are not chasing people for pickup (or have Member label the bottom of their containers and be responsible for retrieving it)
- ❖ Double check that the facility can handle multiple coffee urns plugged in; this is the number 1 mess up, breakers that flip because of poor electrical output and location of breakers not known.
- ❖ Thank you List; acknowledging everyone who donated and should be displayed with the food. Make sure that Thank you cards go out to everyone after the event
- ❖ Everyone has hair tied back/hair nets, gloves or tongs/cutlery for handling food. Do a quick "rules" so no one handles food with fingers. Have waterless hand cleaner available.

Registration

- ❖ Pre-registration is the Society's choice to make but encouraged – will need to have a deadline and send out explicit instructions to each Society via District Director. Ensure Society name is beside the registrant's name.
- ❖ The Registration desk should be set up at an entrance or near the meeting room. At least two tables are required, with a space for the Registrar to sit and handle inquiries. Have multiple copies of registrants' names
- ❖ One or two cash boxes with floats and 3 or more volunteers required
- ❖ Provide plenty of supplies; highlighter pens to highlight arrivals, pens, name tags, hand outs, signage, waste bin near the table
- ❖ Hand out Photo release forms. Have people sign it even if they have already submitted a photo release form for that year. Use a box to place photo release forms
- ❖ Consider setting up a separate hand-out and Information table to relieve pressure on the Registration Table people to allow correspondence and Society packages from the DD to be placed there
- ❖ Registration fee will be kept reasonable to promote attendance
- ❖ District Treasurer/District Director is available to help determine the Registration fee.

Signage

- ❖ Outside signs are needed to make it easy for delegates attending to find the facility and large enough to be visible, to lead the delegates from the major roads to the facility/parking lot. Consider adding a map link on the poster
- ❖ Depending upon the venue, there needs to be signage directing delegates to the proper entrance and then to registration
- ❖ Signage is needed for all common rooms – seminars, workshops, elevators, Flower Show, Flower Show staging area & washrooms
- ❖ The Society is Responsible for creating and placing all signage
- ❖ Donor and Sponsor boards should be easily seen, if applicable
- ❖ Keep an inventory of signage to pass along to future AGM hosts

Speakers

- ❖ Host arranges for one to two speakers and the pre-approved costs are paid by the District
- ❖ Speaker's full name, address including postal code and phone number is to be given to the District Treasurer at least two weeks before the event
- ❖ Ascertain what equipment each speaker will need and if they will be supplying the equipment themselves or whether they need you to obtain equipment. Suggest they bring a memory stick with their presentation
- ❖ Speaker' biography and cheque (in a thankyou card) should be ready for the volunteer introducing/thanking the speaker
- ❖ Liaise with the Welcoming Committee to make sure speakers are on time and ready when required. Make sure all speakers are treated as guests and all of their needs are taken care of
- ❖ Assist speaker with the carrying any material or equipment as needed
- ❖ Introduce the speaker, guests etc. to the persons in charge of the programming/Audio Visual crew
- ❖ Ensure water is available for each speaker.

Tree Planting

- ❖ The Host Society will organize with the Venue/Town/City (as needed) the site and type of tree to be planted in commemoration of the current year District AGM
- ❖ The Host Society will communicate this information to the District Director in advance of the AGM
- ❖ The Society orders the tree and arranges for planting and its location
- ❖ The District Director needs to be aware of the planting details in the event a photo opportunity exists
- ❖ Payment Details:
 - ❖ The Society obtains tree for approximately \$200.00 or less and gives invoice plus 1 copy to the District Treasurer for payment or reimbursement
 - ❖ Check with City or County offices for possible donation of the tree (appropriately sized, and native)
 - ❖ Host Society to arrange for a commemorative plaque (see sample attached) for the tree and submit invoice to District Treasurer for payment or reimbursement

Tree Plaque - Example



Vendors

- ❖ The choice to have vendors is solely up to the Host Society. Solicit donation a prize from them
- ❖ One person should be in charge of this area to see that all bases are covered
- ❖ Determine space available and a suitable location is easily visible and accessible by delegates
- ❖ Look for a good mix of products/services and attempt to keep them apart when identifying table locations
- ❖ Issue invitations to vendors and assign space. Vendor fees are set by the Host Society. The District pays the rent so if there are vendors at a District event, the funds go to the District.
- ❖ Ensure vendors know OHA requirements for Vendor Insurance Coverage.

Welcome/Hospitality

- ❖ Issue a warm, cheerful welcome to all delegates and guests attending the AGM
- ❖ Ascertain when and where special guests will be arriving and arrange for them to be properly received. The chairperson should make sure they have a list of V.I.P.s
- ❖ Ensure there is parking close to the entrance to the building being used for any function that dignitaries are attending. Use appropriate signage
- ❖ Have enough volunteers available at the times and places specified and arrange for extra floaters to be on hand
- ❖ Make sure members of this committee are well versed in all areas, including refreshments, first aid, parking displays, washrooms, meeting rooms, etc.
- ❖ Be prepared for delegates requiring mobility devices and be ready to assist them
- ❖ Gift bags for delegates or table centrepieces are at the discretion of the Host Society. .

Emergencies – Safety is everyone's concern

- ❖ All volunteers should know the venue address and be prepared to call 911 in case of an emergency. Keep cell phones handy
- ❖ In the event of an emergency, one volunteer should wait by the entrance for the ambulance, fire fighters, etc., to arrive and direct them to the emergency situation's site
- ❖ Another volunteer should notify the Chair and District Director details of the emergency
- ❖ Ensure all volunteers know where the first aid station and defibrillator stations are located
- ❖ Remember to remain calm.