

Minutes - Plant Introduction Project

Institute for Advanced Learning and Research, Danville, VA

February 21, 2005

10:05 a.m. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Fred Duis with the following people present: Jerzy Nowak, Walter Sullivan, Brad Brodsky, Harold Burkhart, Bill McCaleb, Matt Sawyer Ulrika Egertsdotter, Valerie Cooke, Jeff Corey, Michele Proffit, Greg Eaton, Lizzy Pine, Don Hyatt, Mark Weathington, Linda Pinkham, George Machen and Tim Franklin.

Introductions and Opening Comments

Tim Franklin welcomed everyone to the Institute and discussed the role of the institute, and said that Agriculture has an important role in area and at the Institute, which was developed to help re-develop the economy in the tobacco region of Virginia – a catalysts for economic transition. High value horticulture and forestry crops are very important to the success of the Institute. Congressman Goode was instrumental in directing federal funds, as well as state funds for staffing etc. to the Institute. Virginia Tech is very interested in using institute as channel to interface with the private sector.

Jerzy Nowak discussed targeting VNLA PIP program and developing a molecular breeding program and embryonic propagation which is currently targeting Christmas tree production. They will develop a link to Hargrave Military Academy's program. Two technicians and two faculty to be hired this year to work at the Institute for horticulture and forestry. Bio-energy and bio-products proposals are being worked on to generate fuel and energy, targeting the nursery and greenhouse operations and development, as well as work on a new growing media with Dr. Robert Wright's research on shredded wood products for growing media.

Dr. Harold Burkhart discussed working with horticulture and forestry, the Reynolds Homestead. Kyle Pier has been hired to do research out of the Reynolds Homestead. At Virginia Tech, for plant sciences, is almost completed, linking Forestry and Horticulture.

It was moved to approve the minutes as presented, seconded and passed.

Treasurer's Report: Jeff reported that \$10,000 from the VNLA had been deposited in the checking account and the only expenses to date were for ads for the plant introduction program coordinator position. A request for an initial advance of 25% of the grant (\$67,000) had been made to the Tobacco Commission, but there hadn't been any response yet.

The committees went to Breakout Sessions: Administration, Communication, Facilities, Plant Selection to discuss and plan for objectives for this year.

The Facilities Committee presented a preliminary report on the status of the sites and needs for site improvements. Each site will have approximately 40,000 s.f. fenced and beds approximately 8' wide with alternation 4- and 8' grass strips. Each site will have approximately 2,500 s.f. of lath shade area, a storage area, hand tools, lawn mower. Plant beds will be mulched with pine bark mulch and soil amendments will not be used. Annuals will be produced at the Martinsville greenhouses and used for evaluation and color the first year in the plant beds.

The Plant Selection committee developed a list of plants for evaluation for the first year, including comparison plants to compare the test plants. There will be 8 plants of each shrub, 16 of each perennial and 4 of each tree. There will be plants in each hardiness zone, but not necessarily at each site within the same zone.

The Administration Committee had narrowed the field of PIP Coordinator down to 4 and was interviewing two candidates on Monday and Tuesday.

Rick Baker reported on VDACS Specialty Crops Promotion Grant which could be one to two years before being available. VDACS will pay for a space at MANTS in 2006 and will help develop a slogan and logo before then. It was suggested that the PIP display be set up in 2006 and the Virginia Beach Flower Show.

Establishing a timeline for spring 2005, and a program of work was discussed.

Setting next meeting date – none set.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:25 pm

Respectively submitted,

Jeff Miller, Exec. Dir.