

Sheboygan County Beekeepers Association

April 11, 2023

Minutes

Dan H called the meeting to order.

Attendance: 36

New members: 4

Minutes - No minutes for March because of the Introduction to Beekeeping/Pizza with a Purpose.

Treasurer's Report

Checking account balance - \$ 456.04

Savings account balance - \$ 1891.96

The only expenditure so far this year was for our ad for the Introduction to Beekeeping talk, which we split 50/50 with Nourish.

We would also like to thank Garry O. of Honeyland Farms for his donation of honey to Nourish.

Motion to Accept: Garry

Second: Peter D

Old Business -

- New officers - vote was taken.
 - ✓ President - Dan Hocevar
 - ✓ Vice President - Kurt Petersen
 - ✓ Treasurer - Ken McCormick
 - ✓ Secretary - Kathy Petersen
- Membership forms for 2023 (Ken)
- Sign-up for Programs and Snacks
- March Introduction to Beekeeping with Peter D.
- Revisit the Member Directory. Ken will get me the updated list for 2023. Kathy will post it on the website and send out the password. People should be able to connect with other members that way. **IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO BE ON THE LIST**, please let Kathy know. Otherwise, you will be posted. **ONLY** members will have access.

Correspondence -

- Kathy keeps receiving requests for bee removal. We decided that any requests will be passed on to the membership, no matter what season. Members will decide if they would like to investigate the situation. Dan H has been in contact with a few of these already.
Discussion among members ensued concerning the "8th Street Bees" in Sheboygan. There is a significant colony inhabiting at least 1 building on the 1200 block of N 8th Street; one SCBA member visited that site 10 years ago, another visited 3 years ago, so it is a multi-generational colony. There were suggestions as to what NOT to do to relocate the hive and agreement that it is a tough site, with a flat roof and plenty of cracks in the cream city brick for access. Members are encouraged to submit ideas to address the issue.
- We have also been receiving some contacts asking if we will be doing another Intro to Beekeeping meeting. I have been encouraging them to come to our meetings. Peter D added that finding a "good fit" mentor within the SCBA is a great way to develop good beekeeping skills.

New Business -

- SCBA volunteering to do a project with Nourish. A signup sheet was passed around to create a list of members willing to volunteer for Nourish. We expect the work will be out-of-doors and garden focused. It is also expected that the work will generally take place on weekdays, as the facility is rented out for weekend events.
- Joann F. purchased native plants from Ozaukee County Native Plant & Grass Sale. She has offered to bring plants for purchase to the next meeting if the plants are available. If they are not, please talk to her if you would like some.

Questions sent from membership -

- Who cares for the hives at Fresh Meals on Wheels? Dan P.
- Peter D. asked about the concerns of having sugar stored in your hives with honey as a result of feeding. Members offered the following comments:
 - Some beekeepers remove all the honey from their hives and then feed sugar water to their bees, which often results in starvation of the hive.

- Dan H. says that if the bees are taking small amounts, they are taking what they need. If they take gallons, then they are storing it.
 - Another member runs 2 deeps and feeds sugar water with an inverted bucket. This works when the temperature is as low as 40 degrees. A regular feeder requires temps of 55 or more for the bees to feed from it. He feeds through mid-November.
 - One member shared a situation in which bees were removing jelly from an Oriole feeder and taking it directly into the hive.
- Hive reports - short description of member's hives. The comment was that one doesn't really know exactly what is getting stored.

Peter D's question was left unanswered.

Hive Reports - All over the map, with a few beekeepers offering comments, which are included at the end of the counts. The first number indicates the number of hives going into winter, the second indicates the number still alive.

3/3	3/0	4/3	2/1	2/2	2/1	1/0	2/1	7/3	1/1	10/8
3/2	23/12		22/12		1/1	25/11		8/1	3/2	

Jason lost just one hive over winter and credits an experiment he tried - closing the upper entrance and having a solid, rather than screen bottom. His thought is that there is so much draft with an open hive that the bees have to work too hard to stay warm and eventually burn through their food stores. The one hive he lost had a screen bottom. Another member thought this approach might work in a short hive, but perhaps not in a large stack.

Program - Discussion time on getting hives ready for bees and good beekeeping practices.

Dan H. - cleaned out his hives. He observed active foragers in a hive due to the warm weather and noted a 20 degree increase in hive temperature. They are foraging pussy willow, crocus, violet, and even early dandelion. His Queens are laying.

He has ordered 3 packages and 1 nuc from Garry O and said that if anyone wants packages from him, they need to order them NOW,

although there are plenty of nucs available. Garry O will also be rearing queens, which should be available in late June.

Jason offered some advice for new beekeepers. First, do not underestimate the problem of varroa mites. He treats his hives monthly using the blue towel method and then vaporizes (again with oxalic acid) in the fall.

He then described different methods of splitting a hive. One method, the "walkaway". He waits until he observes drone larvae, then locates the queen and pulls her frame from the hive. He locates nurse bees (who have not yet become foragers) and eggs that are less than 3 days old. He transfers the nurse bees and drone larvae, and new eggs to a five frame nuc box (he shakes the bees in) and leaves it alone for 18-20 days. They will make their own queen, who will emerge at the 16 day mark and soon be ready for her mating flights.

Alternatively, simply remove workers and stores from the hives to create a split, place them into a new hive, and buy a queen (usually around \$35).

Garry - offered that there is a good video on YouTube by Bob Binnie that offers instruction on identifying a queen (often the most difficult task for a new beekeeper). Here is a link to that video: [How to Find and Mark a Queen](#)
Garry also said that you can shake some frames into a box and set it above a queen excluder; you want uncapped brood included, which the nurse bees will continue to tend by traveling through the excluder. This should tell you where your queen is.

Other comments: hives become upset and noisy if you take their queens. Early swarms are generally led by older queens, late swarms by young ones. If you do create a split, you should change something about the existing hive, for example, by placing an obstruction in front of it so it looks unfamiliar or by closing one of the entrances. Also, it is best to create a split at night as the bees are all home.

Other discussion - we had our monthly Blue Towel discussion. Members don't start treating until the outside temp is consistently 60 degrees.

Another topic - a man in Milwaukee is apparently breeding varroa resistant

Bees. Another member added that this research is also ongoing at UW Madison.

Raffle - a great success

Motion to adjourn: Jean (?)

Second: Peter

Next meeting is May 9th, 6:30 PM at Nourish

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth D (thanks!)