

# Montgomery County Beekeepers Association

## Minutes for Monthly Meeting

### September 16, 2024

#### **Apprentice Beekeeper Meeting – began at 6:15 pm**

Led by Nadia Clark with 16 in attendance

#### **Question & Answer Period for New Beekeepers**

- Feeding sugar water
  - 2:1 vs 1:1
- Sugar bricks
- Importance of nutrition for winter bees
- Mite treatment to prepare winter bees
- Needs for nectar and pollen supplements
- Hive growth in fall
- Finding evidence of the queen
- Storing frames for next season

Question & answer period followed

#### **Apprentice Meeting adjourned at 6:51 pm**

#### **Monthly meeting – began at 7:01 pm**

Led by Vice President Brad Womack (President Matt Thomas is out of town)

- In attendance were 43 members and guests
- TBA Conference will be held November 15-16 in Austin
- There will be a large honey exhibit at the Texas State Fair

#### **Youth Program Update**

- Victoria
- Mason
- Isabella
- Soleil & Madrid

#### **Meeting Speaker – Brad Womack on Beekeeping as a Source of Income (*courtesy of Mindful Beekeeping*)**

- **Commercial Beekeeping - migratory services**
  - Pollination routes
  - Lots of hive losses
  - Intensive production to keep hives strong
  - Labor intensive
- **Think Outside the Box for Other Opportunities**
  - Optimize your operation
    - Educate yourself - learning techniques, bee behavior, hive management

- Plan and set goals - establish clear objectives
    - Streamline your operations - create efficiencies and simplify processes
  - Find niche market - unique, innovative products and services
    - Gain subject matter expertise
    - Use creative marketing techniques
    - Increase margins
    - Increase efficiencies
    - Reinvest in your business
- **Finding your niche**
  - Evaluate current offerings
  - Thorough market research
    - What audience wants/needs
    - What competitors are doing
    - Which have higher ROI
    - What's in and popular
    - How you may influence your audience
  - Examples
    - Whipped/spun honey
    - Comb honey
    - Chunk honey
    - Wax products
    - Salves, balms, butters, creams
    - beeswax/honey soaps
    - Food wraps
    - Resources - Beeswax Alchemy
    - Beekeeping for Kids - educational programs for children, tours, homeschool, simplified hive models
    - Honey sensory tasting
    - Beekeeping for Therapy and Wellness
    - Honey Varietals
    - Beekeeping tours and travel packages - agrotourism destination
    - Speaking Engagements
  - Be Creative!
    - Mead production
    - Bee pollination for orchards and gardens
    - Bee venom therapy and apitherapy
    - Propolis
    - Beekeeping for culinary experiences
    - Corporate tours
    - Beekeeping artistry
  - Branding & Self-Promoting
  - Social Media
  - Pareto Principle - spend more time on the more important
  - Invest in your business

- Try treatment free beekeeping
- Use locally adapted survivor stock
  - Catch swarms
  - Harvest splits and open mate the new queens
- **Benefits of Niche marketing**
  - High ROI
  - Builds customer loyalty
  - Feasible for all business
  - Effective use of resources
  - High-profit margin
- **Importance of insurance**
- **Ag valuations - using beekeeping as a qualifying activity**

**Additional Announcements –**

- Nanette said they're planning a honey show and are seeking interest from others

**Secondary Commentary on Making Money on Beekeeping - Andy Knight of Magnolia Bee & Supply**

- Be flexible
- Start small
- Educate yourself
- Learn new information and new processes
- Try new things
- Don't be afraid to embrace change
- Don't gamble more than you can lose
- If having a store, have a clothing background
- Understand your costs
- Plan ahead
- Be consistent for long term strategy

**Monthly Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm**

(Submitted by Keri Warren)