

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Retreat Notes
Center for Urban Horticulture – November 12, 2014

The Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee is a Joint effort of the Arboretum Foundation, Seattle Parks Department, and the University of Washington, and designated by Seattle City Council Ordinance 65130, approved December 27, 1934, and Ordinance 116337, approved September 8, 1992.

Attendance

Arboretum Foundation

Rhonda Bush, Randall Hitchin, Sherrey Luetjen, Paige Miller, Jim Reid, Skip Vonckx, Craig Trueblood, Jeff Boyer, Nathaniel Bennett, Linda Strout, Diane Adachi, Jason Morse, Niall Dunne

City of Seattle

Rachel Acosta, Lisa Chen, Jack Collins, Andy Sheffer, Michael Shiosaki, Christopher Williams, Doug Critchfield, Kenan Block, Karen O'Connor, Giles Morrish

University of Washington

Sarah Reichard, Iain Robertson, Fred Hoyt, Wendy Gible, Stephanie Harrington, David Zuckerman, Kristin Buckley, Ray Larson, Karl Wirsing

Washington State

Dave Towne

Welcome

Jack reviews the Agenda and ground rules. He thanks Acting Superintendent Williams for his support to the Arboretum.

Acting Superintendent Williams - Introduction

Acting Superintendent Williams says that it has been a watershed year for Seattle Parks and Recreation; turned on by the confidence of the Seattle voter for creating Park District. Seattle Parks and Recreation will be one of the best funded parks and recreation department in the country; furthermore, city council, in their wisdom, decided to freeze the level of general fund support so and it will grow with inflation. The Seattle Park District will provide \$48million in funding primarily for basic maintenance and operations. It is a responsibility to protect the legacy of Seattle Parks and Recreation and one of the ways this is done is by supporting infrastructure.

The core response from the public was for higher accountability – clear communication regarding the investment initiatives. Parks will publish regular or annual reports. Parks staff are preparing for a baseline performance audit of staff/management ratios, service levels – against which Parks will measure each year. The Mayor and the City Council are in the process of setting up a Citizen’s Steering Committee – the purpose of which will be to review how dollars are spent.

Thanks the University of Washington, Arboretum Foundation and the Arboretum Botanical Garden Committee for being such a great example of a good partnership. Volunteers play a vital role in Seattle Parks and Recreation and the department could not operate without them. Michael will talk about how funding

may affect the Arboretum. There is no specific money for the Arboretum but there are funds out there that the Arboretum could compete for and there is major maintenance funds for the Arboretum. Dave Towne asks if there will be a restructuring of the organization. Acting Superintendent Williams says the Executive Team will have a conversation about this today. Paige asks about the process to find a new Superintendent. Acting Superintendent Williams says the Mayor has done an excellent job finding capable candidates.

Stephanie Harrington – Introduction

She is glad to be at the ABGC retreat. The UW is so grateful for these partnerships. She asks the partners for support in the Washington State Legislature during the upcoming budget process; K-12 mandate is supported but higher education is not included. Jack advises her to let the ABGC know how they can help and they will go down and lobby. Paige will be lobbying for the specialty license plate and she would be happy to help the UWBG.

2014 Accomplishments

There were challenges on both ends of the economic spectrum in 2014

- Broadmoor parking issues – met with Broadmoor homeowners and security; they've been giving tickets that tell contractors they are not allowed to park in the Foster Island Parking area.
- The State moved in to take responsibility for demolition of the Ramps to Nowhere and the beginning of construction on the West Approach Bridge North. This displaced an encampment; homeless are all over the Arboretum. Seattle police does not consider it a priority. There are thousands of homeless people in Seattle; it is a growing problem. Fred Hoyt adds that UWBG is to contact WSDOT because SPD and WSDOT have an agreement to deal with homeless in the Arboretum related to SR520. Put it on December meeting agenda.
- SR520 – the ABGC has been having regular briefings by WSDOT; substantial improvements to the lid design and rest of the west. WSDOT included the Berger Partnership in design which is good because they have a real sensitivity to our aesthetics.
- Activists Remembered, Celebrated, and Honored (ARCH) – A citizens group who called themselves ARCH made an effort to keep columns in the wetlands as a Memorial; the ABGC have convinced them to put a memorial in the North Entry. Parks will hold onto materials that came out of the construction; oral history of the R.H. Thomson Expressway.
- Seattle Park District – Many members of the partners volunteered and donated money.
- Sound Transit station– A committee of the ABGC had a meeting with the Sound Transit Acting Executive Director to discuss the possibility of changing the name to include Arboretum and address wayfinding signs to the Arboretum. Despite eloquent presentation they will not be changing the name to UW/Arboretum Station but are working with us to ensure adequate wayfinding to the Arboretum.
- The Arboretum Loop Trail (ALT) is a big deal coming up this year.
- Flurry of activity related to Weyerhaeuser Bonsai collection
- Toured the Arboretum with Councilmember Jean Godden who now chairs the Parks, Seattle Center, Libraries and Gender Pay Equity Committee; need to follow – up with Councilmember Bagshaw.

Status Report on the Arboretum Loop Trail

Arboretum Loop Trail (ALT) Garret Farrell is the project manager for Seattle Parks and Recreation. Fred says 2200 plants will be impacted and they are analyzing how to deal with that and what plants will be replaced. Ray, David and Fred have been evaluating each plant individually.

Scope: primary objectives of the ALT; staff are focusing on core elements to stay on budget; re-prioritize design so users can loop around Foster Island Drive to Arboretum Drive since North entry isn't done; this incurred additional cost. The design also incorporates a connection from Boyer to the Arboretum with a bridge over Arboretum Creek. Storm water from Lake Washington Boulevard gets cleaned through biofiltration on it's way through Arboretum Creek. Parks staff eliminated anything not immediately pertinent to the ALT; couldn't restore/renovate Azalea Way Pond.

Reviews ALT design – 10 feet wide with 2 feet shoulder on each side; improved connections to Montlake community.

Mitigation in meadow – newly created wetlands – joining 2 wetlands that have raised earthen roadway; provides interpretive opportunity – there will be pipes every 20 feet to provide water to travel.

Controlling user conflict – bridges provide friction for bicyclist – continue paving pattern on trail for a warning that the bridge is coming. New Bridges increased costs; wanted to make sure street sweeper can cross bridges; handrails are integrated in bridge design.

Schedule: Out to bid in early 2015 with construction starting in 2015 thru 2016; conditional approval on Master Use permit. 85% complete on building permit. Structural engineer is reviewing bridges. The building permit will not be released until JARPA and the master use permit is approved. It will go out to bid in February with a 2-year construction period.

Skip asks about what the AF can do to deal with public backlash? Michael says they have been clear with the public about the tree removal. Jim says keep the message uniform to have consistent messages; a message to the public that the ABGC partners are taking a lot of care to maintain trees and looking at each tree. Kenan feels it's a great media opportunity. There will be a public information plan with information updated on the Parks website and with signage at the Arboretum. Kenan is impressed by the WSDOT construction updates on their website. Andy adds that SPU has email updates on Combined Sewer Overflow projects and Parks may want to do that. Iain adds that it's good to word it that they are using this opportunity to renovate some of the collections.

Paige asks if parking has been addressed. Stewards have gone home because they couldn't find parking when athletic fields are in use. Parking on Interlaken has increased and stalls are delineated which makes them more efficient. There isn't enough parking, do we take out collections to put in pavement? There will always be a parking problem.

Andy says there are pre-qualification for bidders to ensure the contractors qualifications are beefed up since the Arboretum is an environmentally sensitive area and there is some significant grading. Construction staging will be in the Interlaken parking lot; staging in an area that will totally be re-done.

Partner update:

Parks District Implementation/Superintendent hiring process: Michael Shiosaki

Winning Proposition 1 was a huge moment for parks and he thanks all the partners; implementation of the Seattle Park District is moving along. City Council/Park District Board approved the Charter, By-laws, and the Inter-Local Agreement. The 2015 budget will be passed on November 24 – the City is loaning Parks \$10million during the interim year. They are forming a Citizen’s Oversight Committee; it will be a 15 member board – 4 Park Board members, 4 representatives from other city Boards and Commissions; 1 from each City Council district with the Chair appointed by the Mayor. Key initiative for the Arboretum is the \$1.5million per year Major Project Challenge Fund – staff recommendations will go to the Oversight Committee who will decide what goes to the City Council.

Superintendent hiring process: There is a headhunting firm who is looking at some great candidates; application period closes on November 21. The Mayor has put together a selection committee who will go through 12 or so candidates and make recommendations to the Mayor. The goal is to have someone hired by the new year!

UW Capital Campaign/Advancement: Kristin Buckley

UW is in the early planning phases of a comprehensive campaign; UWBG and the Arboretum will be a part of it. Kristin works regularly with the UWBG – Sarah is point person for UWBG to talk about funding. The UW works with the Arboretum Foundation quarterly regarding donor relations; strategizing on how to be more successful.

Joint solicitation – Paige found a foundation to get the funds they needed to build an open sided shelter for the nature-based preschool; they are going to be the sponsors.

Education Program and Center updates: Sarah Reichard

Personnel: New staff Alicia Blood – Youth and Family Education Supervisor; Kate Maher, Fiddlehead Community Programs Coordinator, increased nature child classes

Accomplishments for 2014

- Fiddleheads – 3-5 year olds preschool expanded to 5 days a week
- Parent nights to meet and discuss pedagogy
- Parent/child nature classes- 5 days a week and Saturdays
- Saplings/seedlings and spruce – school-based program
- GROW Program - outreach program – rain garden at Seattle Girls School, raised beds in Assisted living homes
- Summer camps have expanded – fiddleheads summer camps; offer summer camp for 1-3 graders and 4-6 graders
- Summer Kayak tours are really fun!
- Weekend walks – every Sunday at 1pm
- GIS mapping has been completed; phone applications are being developed now.

Coming up:

- Put together a drive tour along Arboretum Drive with 9 talking points

- ALT tour – with people mover so people who have mobility issues can go
- Park in the dark – nighttime summer programs

Terrific staff and excited for the coming year!

Arboretum Foundation: Paige Miller and Jim Reid

Events –

- Opening night and display garden at the Home and Garden Show in February raised a lot of money; Ginny Ruffner did the garden.
- Florabundance – returned to Magnuson – didn't raise as much money as in the past.
- Japanese cherry tree dedication – very fun

Volunteer activities –

Volunteer program is thriving; great partnership activity because closely coordinate with City and UWBG. New Zealand Forest day in September in honor of opening anniversary – Christchurch sister city came and did work party then we fed them meat pies and beer; dedicating bench to John Bollard was a highlight.

Fundraising – the Arboretum Foundation did a big sign campaign for Give Big – and people gave big; doubled the money and tripled the donors. The Arboretum Foundation helped with funding for the forest school shelter – had a day and a half to submit the grant; hosted trustees and administrator from family trust. They met the kids and the parents and the Arboretum Foundation got the check! It will be built this summer for September school start.

License Plate – died last year on Senate floor. Paige met with Brady Walkinshaw last week and they will partner again with the Spokane Arboretum for east of the mountains support.

Major initiative: membership task force to take a look at membership programs and benefits. What are the levels and benefits? What do other organizations do? What are best practices? Kenan has agreed to be in it. Jeff and Nat will be staffing it and they will push us to do new things.

Jim adds that Paige has put together the strongest staff and a terrific board; lost some iconic members but it's a great group of people now. The Arboretum Foundation are looking for board members that have corporate connections; great connections to other organizations in horticulture arena; diversity.

Jack brings up the State representative on the ABGC, Dave Towne. Governor has no legislative authority to appoint someone to the ABGC. He feels they ought to offer some names and then get legislative authority.

Master Plan Implementation Priorities

Michael has been the leader of MPIG for some time now. His job coincides with his responsibilities on the committee. Other members of the MPIG committee are: Paige, Jason Morse, Fred, Sarah and Andy.

A lot of underway projects completed:

- Wayfinding and interpretation signs were completed.
- UW completed 3 interpretive trail loops.
- Arboretum waterfront trail completed schematic design
- Ridgetop trail - woodland garden bridge is in design

- Outdoor classroom now has full funding and will be done sometime next year.

Coming up: Additional parking and stormwater improvements – comprehensive look at GVC parking and Duck Bay

Pacific Connections – Australia next up?

For considerations:

- Electricity at Crabapple Meadow and Pacific Connections
- Michael suggests combining Ridgetop Trail/Azalea Way Pond renovations for Major Project Challenge Fund grant. Andy says we're at 50% design on both of these projects; riparian corridors need renovation and improvements – estimate \$1.5million. Michael says the Major Project Challenge Fund will probably be a matching fund. Azalea Way pond upgrades are not part of the base design for ALT; AF has a \$140,000 fund dedicated to Azalea way, money is in hand and could be used as part of challenge match.
It's a really good, visible project and important – the pond is sad. Users like to encounter water; enhances the Arboretum to have these streams. Paige adds the theme at the 2015 Flower and Garden show is Azalea Way.
- Education building : campus architect and a landscape architect from UW toured the area; design build, design/contract. This would take about \$150,000 for planning. Parking is big limitation; uncertain they would get permit to build without adequate parking.
- Café: sharing experience and food with friends/co-workers.
- Waterfront Trail: Michael states they have \$400,000 in mitigation money – they are going to apply for grants. The whole project would cost \$4-5million range; just to replace worst boardwalks would cost \$1million. It is one of the most used parts of the Arboretum but we don't have a funding source to fix it.
- Fred adds having connection between Azalea Way and Ridgetop Trail is important.
- Jim feels both Australia and Education building should be progressing. There is initial work to be done so that they are ready to move forward.

Marketing Opportunities

Wayfinding has been included in all of our new projects

Working with Sound Transit on wayfinding from the station – met with them on several occasions and they are supportive of wayfinding in the new station. What other areas can we be looking at? Where else?

Develop a marketing strategy for the Arboretum. Do something with tourism bureau. Once lid goes in there will be more wayfinding signs. Once people leave Sound Transit station, how do we lead them to the Arboretum? Skip asks if we track how people come to the Arboretum? He's met a lot of people from other places; how do they hear about the Arboretum?

- Kids bringing their parents to the Arboretum
- Parks is doing external newsletter – doing stories
- Social media – twitter
- ALT will help facilitate more visitorship.

Seattle Parks and Recreation purchased a people counter; could be used at arb.

Paige asks why market to bring more people in if there's no parking. Fred responds educating people how to get to the Arboretum via other methods of transportation is important; parking is limited but here are your other options. The more people who come the more funding the Arboretum may be able to acquire from city

and state funding. Kenan suggests signage that says distance/time. Jack asks if we should have a committee to work on wayfinding; a focused strategy. Fred suggests finding an organization to do some pro bono work. Andy says it fulfills our mission to communicate really strongly about public transportation. Master Plan says there cannot be any more parking. Ray Larson says there was less parking when they closed Arboretum Drive. Water access is another way to get to the Arboretum. There seems to be consensus to emphasize public transportation in marketing. There is discussion about forming a committee and hiring professional help to develop a marketing strategy that is executable. Niall adds the Arboretum Foundation was involved in putting out marketing materials for the Arboretum around the city; there is some confusion as to who does marketing. Pulling a committee together would be fantastic and he feels partners should be driving it. Jack brings up the UWBG Arboretum brochure; and he's only seen it at the Arboretum and Center for Urban Horticulture. He feels they should be in more places and in more languages. Fred mentions there are few visitors from the African American community. Skip brings up Pronto Bikeshare – there's one by the IMA. Fred suggests putting it on a work list; parking for cyclists in the Arboretum.

Niall feels there is a need for more internal wayfinding signage in the Arboretum to help people get around. Fred says that in each of the projects there is a little funding for signage and wayfinding. Ray concurs that it's easy to get lost in the Arboretum.

2015 Plan

Lobbying legislature for funding/ city council work plan

Marketing plan: Funding wayfinding a little more comprehensively, What are our individual roles and responsibilities?

DESC – coordinate for social services – encampments

Coordinating message for ALT

Master Plan – opportunities to prioritize

January meetings: establish priorities and establish measurements to see if we make progress. Jim feels that establishing measurements and articulating the goals for 2015.

Sarah said ABGC used to brief the City Council and regents and haven't done that in a while. If we want to ask for money then we should show them how much has been accomplished.

Sarah has a master's student who is finding out what students look for in the Arboretum.

Jack thanks Theresa for buying everyone lunch.

At the last ABGC meeting, they made the decision to talk about City Council meeting regarding SR520 Montlake lid design; the ABGC feels the letter is sufficient but Jack could go and present.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00pm.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
John B. Collins, ABGC Chair