

## Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Minutes Graham Visitors Center – July 13, 2016

*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.*

### Voting Members

#### Arboretum Foundation

- Paige Miller, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director
- Jim Reid, Arboretum Foundation Board President

#### City of Seattle

- Kenan Block, Mayoral Appointee
- Jack Collins, Mayoral Appointee
- *Excused*, Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Projects & Planning Division, Director

#### University of Washington

- Sally Clark, University of Washington, Director of Regional and Community Relations
- Sarah Reichard, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG), Director
- *Excused*, Iain Robertson, University of Washington, Associate Professor, Dept. of Landscape Architecture

#### Washington State

- David Towne

### Other Staff Present:

- Fred Hoyt, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG), Associate Director
- Andy Sheffer, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Construction Manager
- Rachel Acosta, Seattle Parks and Recreation, ABGC Coordinator
- *Excused*, Daniel Sorensen, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG)

### Standing Committees

#### Partners Committee:

AF: Jim Reid & Paige Miller  
City: Christopher Williams & Michael Shiosaki  
UW: Tom DeLuca & Sarah Reichard

#### Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG):

AF: Paige Miller & Jason Morse  
City: Michael Shiosaki (lead) & Andy Sheffer  
UW: Fred Hoyt & Sarah Reichard

#### SR520 Technical Committee:

City: David Graves; UW: Fred Hoyt

### Opening Items

Jim convenes the meeting at 8:30. He asks for any additions to the Agenda. Paige requests to add her conversation with James Fearn under Old/New Business. Jack requests a status update on the R.H. Thompson memorial and oral history. Jim asks for approval of the July 13 Agenda and the June minutes. Dave moves for approval and Jack seconds, the consent items are approved.

## Discussion: Traffic Operations Issues

*Mark Bandy, Director of Traffic Operations, Seattle Department Of Transportation (SDOT)*

Madison and East Lake Washington Boulevard: Paige summarizes for Mark that a resident wrote in to say traffic on East Lake Washington Boulevard has worsened. She suggested installing a left turn signal to assist with the flow of traffic.

Mark suggests SDOT obtain an updated traffic volume count at that intersection. If it says there has been an increase to volume threshold, SDOT would put in a left turn signal lead. The ABGC specify there is not as big a need coming from the South on East Lake Washington Boulevard. Mark says he will have be able to get the count back by the end of August and perhaps install a new signal by the end of 2016, if the data shows there is need.

24th and East Lake Washington Boulevard: The ABGC ask Marks feelings on having a signal versus a stop sign. The ABGC mentions if a signal is inevitable, they would prefer to have it sooner so WSDOT will pay for it instead of waiting for it to be SDOT's responsibility.

Mark is happy to check in to see who wants this and why. The backup is because of capacity at Montlake and East Lake Washington Boulevard, not at 24th. The ABGC clarifies that other neighborhood and community groups have expressed concerns over this also.

During the Arboretum Loop Trail construction there will be some short-term closures for tree removal.

## Presentation and Discussion: Leadership Tomorrow

*Presented by Meg McCann and Stephanie Gardner, Leadership Tomorrow*

Andy talked about the need to be more inclusive and bring diverse populations into the Arboretum and it grew into a real commitment to do something meaningful for the Arboretum. Leadership Tomorrow takes emerging leaders and uses their expertise to come to valuable solutions.

Their research was focused on outreach to diverse populations, specifically African-Americans. They wanted to ascertain their perceptions of the Arboretum, analyze why they are not coming, what barriers exist and provide actionable steps to increase utilization.

Exploration study – Finding information and best practices with the idea that they would be continued in a more rigorous manner. They performed informational interviews with botanic gardens across the country. Phone interviews and conversations with Atlanta Botanical garden, Cleveland, Lewis Ginter, and Denver. The messages received from all were:

- Diversity has to start from within; staff and board must be inclusive

- Communities have to feel they have a place at the table and want to engage

- Measuring racial diversity is difficult – observations have limitations; coming through the gate – last name indicator? Collecting information from zip code –

- Be relevant to community you want to engage. "Authentic" programming is important to diversify and increase visitors

Community link – connect with someone who is trusted and respected in that particular community.

Transportation – access to Arboretum. Field trips from community centers

Partner with other organizations that provide services to low-income, immigrants and refugees.

Creative ways to engage – think about space – different communities want to come to open space for different reasons.

Stakeholder Survey – to find out from a particular group how public open space is used.

Leadership Tomorrow sent an online survey to First American Methodist Episcopal Church – but received only 6 responses. Those 6 people love being outdoors in their neighborhood parks; all had visited the Arboretum in the past, but it was not as convenient as their neighborhood parks.

Community Interviews - They went to the Starbucks at 23rd and Jackson and talked to anyone who came by. People were receptive to talk about it. The interviewers wore their Leadership Tomorrow badges with names and organizations and said they were doing some research to increase participation and diversity at the Arboretum. Participants said it was awkward and uncomfortable at first. The responses to their questions about the Arboretum were:

- They didn't know how to get in or park in the Arboretum.
- People commented they enjoy the water access, trails, trees, and quiet space.
- Most people said they went to the Arboretum as kids and that was their impetus to bring their kids.
- Wayfinding and parking were the most common obstacles.
- 23rd and Jackson to the Arboretum –there is a lot of traffic and congestion. It takes a lot of time to get to the Arboretum and there are great parks in their neighborhoods.
- Meg says she talked with a black man who was intimidating in his appearance but when they started talking she recognized her own bias based on the way he looked. He told her he loves the Arboretum. He brings his kids and loves having time with his son there. He wishes there was a natural tree/play structure.
- Frank – an accomplished local musician, feels there needs to be more blacks at the table to decide how parks are used.

### Recommendations

- Meg asks the ABGC to challenge the assumption that blacks do not come to the Arboretum. She feels on her visits to the Arboretum she has seen many ethnicities represented there.
- Leadership Tomorrow emphasizes the process to establish diversity is very difficult. Look at who is at the table making decisions about programming in the park.
- Target different communities through events.
- Better signage.
- Water features/playgrounds
- Institutional level – diversity conversations; do the Boards/staff represent the general population?
- Cognitive frameworks – more than just increasing the numbers to focus on equity framework – change structure to be inclusive.
  - How to change culture in organizations?
  - Who are you hiring?
  - Community bridges?

- Spokesperson – who is engaging with communities and bringing them in?
- Best practices from other arboreta
- Equity to be equal access in Mission Statement - identifies inclusion and equity and continually double-checking the organization's goals with the statement.
- Ongoing training for social justice – It is important to have a common vocabulary for those conversations.
- Ensure that everyone at the table can articulate their own organization's commitment to equity.
- Systemic programs through the University of Washington and The City are at the ABGC's fingertips.
- Pull in partners for community bridges to help with outreach.
- Add questions on engagement/diversity to interviews. Look for a demonstrated commitment to equity. Jessica will send some sample interview questions.
- Create a culture of mindfulness when it comes to decision-making; holding each other accountable and use mistakes as a learning opportunity.

Meg led a panel about hidden diversity at her work; people use vernacular that may be offensive to a group, such as I'm being mental, OCD, etc... She heard about barriers that impact people's lives in a real way. Many people were raw and angry and dismissive. It is acceptable to acknowledge that one doesn't understand. Equally important to be open to the criticism, take it in and be okay with serious discomfort.

The ABGC thanks Leadership Tomorrow for the information.

Sarah mentions that the increased education programs is working because the kids bring parents back. There is a new endowment that will give \$12,000 a year for bringing in schools and a \$10,000 grant.

The ABGC discusses some ideas on how to proceed with their equity work, including:

- How to build brand recognition? There may be opportunity to apply for other grants.
- Partner with individual schools? Community centers?
- Challenge ourselves about who we are talking about when we say African-Americans? She has seen a wide cross section of the city coming here.
- Look at swath of population to see if the responses vary depending on the location in the city.
- Pilot project to secure money through the City/University of Washington?
- Arts community –suggestions for types of events to engage and be relevant to communities of color.

### Budget, Personnel and Other Items

### **Seattle Parks and Recreation**

The Arboretum Loop Trail is on budget and on schedule.

2008 Levy funds are being carefully used for capital improvements and ensuring maintenance is properly administered. SPR staff are reviewing the asset management – what is ongoing maintenance and what is a capital project?

Arboretum Loop Trail progress – constructing the retaining walls behind the stone cottage. The contractors hope to get the South end paved and buttoned up by fall for permanent erosion control instead of having to maintain erosion control.

Driving piles for first bridge and testing them - so far so good. Contractors hope to complete piling this week.

Madison to Boyer parking lot: Goal is to get it done by the end of 2016 and open to the public which would trigger the warranty period.

Have to stop with grading by October 15 unless the contractors obtain a dry season extension. Light work in the winter because of the weather.

The partners need to do a site walk for bench locations.

Stumps need to be removed. There will be additional tree removals; once the ABGC has received the arborist report, they will walk the trail with the Urban Forestry Commission to keep them in the loop.

## **Arboretum Foundation**

New Stewards Assistant/Office Coordinator – Nick McGruder, Nat is going full-time to the Evans school.

Arbfest – fabulous party – 150 people attending; partnering with friends of Olmsted. Food and drink stations have fun historic names. A number of people on there are from the surrounding neighborhoods. The Committee did a great job of inviting and encouraging people to attend.

Arboretum Foundation staff are so stretched.

Japanese garden party on July 29<sup>th</sup>. The Arboretum Foundation expects between 200-300 people. The tickets are \$75. There was a Tanabata Festival on Saturday with 1200 participants. Visitorship increased 16%. Social media has proven very successful to drive participation.

## **University of Washington**

Chris Watson lead arborist/horticulturist has left. Summer camps are happening and full.

### **MPIG**

Waterfront trail – WSDOT barge hit the boardwalk. Divers submitted a report but Andy says MPIG hasn't received it.

Education Building – SPR is writing a Memorandum of Agreement for the building. This project will include moving the Pat Calvert Greenhouse. The Arboretum Foundation needs to be involved in an agreement for this as well.

Education shelter – preconstruction – Tentative finish date of September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Fred to let Paige and Sarah know so they can tell the donors when he gets a firm date.

Azalea way centennial garden – Work with contractor to add some of the work into the current contract for the Loop Trail project.

Broadmoor drainage – tightlined into new catch basin and raised a structure; will do chlorine test on water that's coming from maintenance facility.

New boulders by New Zealand garden are great.

Camellia collection will receive much needed maintenance and improvements.

Parking committee is formed and will meet to discuss options.

#### Old/New Business

James Fearn – Works at Seattle Housing Authority as general counsel and he is a former Park Board Commissioner. He is on the Port Jobs Board which helps lower income people find jobs in the port. Paige spoke with him about filling Jack's seat on the ABGC when he finishes his term at the end of the year and he said he is not opposed.

The ABGC are receiving complaints about bikes on trails and endangering people. Signs don't matter not sure who to enforce it. The ABGC will contact Cascade Bicycle Club.

WSDOT – waterfront trail closed on Friday.

Yesler Swamp board walk is done and it is terrific.

RH Thompson – Andy is pursuing completion of an Agreement; WSDOT cut out the date stamp from the ramp and a slab and it is at Magnuson. WSDOT also provided barrels of 4-6" rubble. Oral history is being performed with WSDOT and stakeholders. Andy is working with the design group associated with the North Entry to interpret what was there and bring up cultural relevancy.

There being no new business, the meeting adjourns at 10:40am.

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Reid, ABGC Chair