

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC)

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Joint effort of the Arboretum Foundation, Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks), and the University of Washington (UW)

Minutes – July 12, 2006*Voting**Members:***Arboretum Foundation**

- Deb Andrews, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director

City of Seattle

- Jack Collins, Board of Park Commissioner
- Donald Harris, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Property & Acquisition Services Manager

University of Washington

- David Mabberley, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG) Director
- John Wott, University of Washington Professor of Urban Horticulture

Washington State

- Dave Towne, Washington State Representative

*Absent/**Excused:*

- Margaret Ceis, Mayoral Appointee
- Neal Lessenger, Arboretum Foundation Past President
- Sandra Lier, University of Washington, Associate Vice-president of Business Services

Others:

- Elizabeth Loudon, UWBG, Education and Outreach Manager
- David Graves, Seattle Parks, Project Planner
- Fred Hoyt, University of Washington, Botanic Gardens, Facilities & Grounds Manager
- Rick Reichert, Arboretum Foundation, Director of Development and Capital Campaign
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Pro Parks Levy Manager

Staff:

- Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

ABGC Chair Donald Harris called the meeting to order at 8:35 am. Two agenda changes were made. **John Wott moved approval of the revised agenda and Dave Towne seconded. Motion was approved. David Mabberley moved approval of the June 12 minutes and Deb Andrews seconded. Motion was approved.**

Volunteer Program

Elizabeth Loudon recently replaced Sue Nicol as Education and Outreach Manager for the University of Washington Botanic Gardens. In addition to that role, she has undertaken a review of the Arboretum's current volunteer program and ways to expand it. A bulleted summary of her initial report and ABGC comments follows:

Current staff levels/volunteer levels:

- This is a two-fold issue: understaffing at the Arboretum and a low number of volunteer hours.
- The Arboretum has one of the most remarkable collections in the world, yet it is one of the most understaffed arboretums in the nation. There are currently six full time staff and David M estimates that 16 additional fulltime staff are needed to reach an adequate staffing level.

- Expanded volunteer hours could help cover some of this need. However, a volunteer coordinator is first needed to coordinate the program and oversee the efforts of the volunteers.
- Volunteer hours at the Arboretum are relatively low, with approximately 2,000 hours donated in 2006. This is the equivalent of one fulltime employee. Scheduling and supervising the volunteers takes time away from the staff's regular duties.

Review of Current Volunteer Program:

- Elizabeth is still getting a handle on the volunteer program and not implementing anything new yet. She believes there is great potential to expand the program.
- She recently met with David Zuckerman, UW's Arboretum crew chief. He is coordinating with Sarah Luczyk, the Arboretum Foundation's volunteer coordinator. Sarah is also working on projects to involve girl scouts and other groups at the Arboretum. There is a steady group of volunteers for the Tuesday work parties. David Z has some interaction with Starbucks on its volunteer efforts, but the Arboretum needs its own volunteer coordinator to oversee these potential volunteers.
- A good event was held on Earth Day, with more than 200 volunteers donating 800+ hours of work to the Arboretum.
- Efforts are underway to get groups to adopt certain gardens.
- Most of the needed work is weeding and mulching. The Arboretum's plant collections require trained staff to do the vast majority of plant handling — the work on the collections themselves is quite sophisticated.

Goals/Suggestions:

- The ABGC has been discussing the expanded volunteer effort since last fall, but little progress has yet been made. How does it get its arms around this problem? A key element is securing a volunteer coordinator.
- The ABGC must also put together a 3-5 year volunteer effort plan and then promote that plan.
- The plan should include an improved way to better teach volunteers the importance of their work at the Arboretum and teach them proper ways to do that work. A Powerpoint presentation will help with this.
- The discussion and plan should include methods for staff to work on weekends to oversee the volunteers. The majority of staff now work Monday-Friday and many volunteers are available only on weekends.
- Examine the current discounts for ongoing education classes in return for volunteer work. This currently has low interest — expand on this idea.
- Keep the Arboretum Foundation volunteer coordinator, Sarah Luczyk, in the loop. She can give some assistance to this effort.

Use Other Volunteer Programs as Models:

- Seattle Parks has two volunteer coordinators with over 400 parks. Jack commented that they do a terrific job of overseeing a wide range of volunteer efforts.
- Use the very successful adopt-a-park program as a model.
- Seattle Aquarium has one fulltime volunteer coordinator.
- Woodland Park Zoo has two who coordinate 600,000 annual volunteer hours.
- The Japanese Garden and Bellevue Botanical Garden were also suggested as models to follow.
- The National Arboretum has a Master Gardener-like program, which has been very successful.

Efforts to Fund Additional Fulltime Staff

- Donald asked for an update on the UW's request to the Washington State budget to bring the current staffing level to 22 fulltime employees. David M will check and report at the August meeting.
- Dave T asked if the ABGC can take a position on the budget request and lobby the State. David M answered that, because the UW staff are State employees, they cannot lobby the State. Dave Towne, as Governor Gregoire's representative to the ABGC, can take a strong role in this. Dave T agreed and asked that UW staff make sure the request is included in the budget.

- David M and Dave T will meet with UW College of Forest Resources Dean Bare to discuss and strategize the budget request.

Action Items:

- Elizabeth will set up a 2-3 hour meeting with the volunteer program committee: Jack Collins as lead, David M, Donald H, David Z, Royal Alley-Barnes, Rory Denovan, Sarah Luczyk, and Elizabeth.
- Elizabeth will contact EarthCorp or Americorp. Both groups have strong experience in leading volunteer efforts and this may be a way to tap into good people to get the volunteer expansion program up and running.
- Elizabeth will also look into the possibility of a grant to help pay for program oversight.
- She will give a progress report at the August ABGC meeting.
- David M and Dave T will meet with Dean Bare to strategize funding for additional staff in the State budget.
- David M to report on status of State budget request at August ABGC meeting.

Communication Plan

One of the ABGC's goals is to "Develop and implement a Master Plan Implementation communications strategy and issues of concern to the external community." Elizabeth Loudon, Education and Outreach Manager for the UWBG, gave an initial presentation on plans to reach this goal. ABGC members gave some suggestions/feedback. Elizabeth will give a progress update at the September 13 meeting.

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG)

Michael Shiosaki reported on the following:

Pacific Connections Garden: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/proparks/projects/Arboretum-Pacific.htm>

This project will most likely be brought to the ABGC in August or September for approval. The shelter and interpretive elements have not yet been approved by the Seattle Design Commission. The designer and representatives from the Design Commission plan to meet and continue to refine the design. Dave T asked which elements Seattle Design didn't approve. Michael answered that the shelter and interpretive elements have a very basic design. However, there is some disconnect between Portico, the principal landscape architects, and Pomegranate, the design consultants. Some re-design has to occur and some plant and botanical issues must be addressed. David M commented that these issues have been brought to Portico's attention previously.

Jack commented that Parks staff briefed the Board of Park Commissioners on this project at its June 22 meeting and the Board was very impressed.

Japanese Garden Entry Structure: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/proparks/projects/Arboretum-JapaneseGarden.htm>

Michael reported that the schematic design is complete. Deb is working with the anonymous donor to figure out the next steps to move the project forward. She will report back to the ABGC at the August meeting.

Irrigation Mainline: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/proparks/projects/Arboretum-Irrigation.htm>

Parks staff are waiting to receive the 95% construction documents. David M commented that this project will progress more smoothly if it is implemented before the winter rains set in.

Action items:

Michael will bring the shelter and interpretive elements to ABGC for approval at August or September meeting (after approval by the Design Commission.)

SR520 Widening Project Report

The ABGC receives regular reports from the Mayor's Stakeholder's Committee (represented by Jack Collins), the City's project manager assigned to monitor this WSDOT project (David Graves), and the UW/ABGC representative to UW/WSDOT workshops (Sandra Lier.)

Stakeholder's Committee Report: Jack summarized the most recent Mayor's Task Force for this project. The final meeting is on August 8 and he will be out of town. David M or Sandra Lier will attend, as his replacement. He commented that the UW President recently took Lucy Steer's 18-page letter to Governor Gregoire. Ms. Steer is a citizen very interested in this project. The Governor stated she was unaware of the support for a tube option before reading the letter.

City staff report: David G reported that the City's understanding is that the Draft Environmental Statement is to be released by WSDOT in August.

Old/New Business

Goals & Objectives Review: The Goals and Objectives were reviewed and updated.

Property at North End of Arboretum: David M referred to property located at the north end of the Arboretum, known as the "Peninsula." He is interested in maintaining/expanding collections in this area and it is currently unclear who the owner of the property is (WSDOT or the Arboretum). John Wott suggested that the library may have a copy of the title. Donald will also have his property management staff research this.

Arboretum Tour: David M and Fred invited ABGC members on a tour of the new projects. It was determined that a short business meeting will be held on October 11, immediately followed by the tour. Sandy will assist David and Fred with the arrangements.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 am.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
David Maberley, ABGC Secretary