

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 – May 10, 2006

Voting

Members:

Arboretum Foundation

- Neal Lessenger, Arboretum Foundation President
- Deb Andrews, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director

City of Seattle

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

University of Washington

- Sandra Lier, University of Washington, Associate Vice-president of Business Services
- David Maberley, University of Washington Botanic Gardens Director
- John Wott, University of Washington Professor of Urban Horticulture

Washington State

- None

Others:

- Cathy Tuttle, Seattle Parks Project Planner
- Rick Reichert, Arboretum, Director of Development and Capital Campaign
- Michael Shiosaki, Pro Parks Levy Manager

Voting members

Absent/Excused:

- Margaret Ceis, Mayoral Appointee
- Dave Towne, Washington State Representative

Staff:

- Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

ABGC Chair Donald Harris called the meeting to order at 8:35 am. Two agenda changes were made. **Neal Lessenger moved approval of the April 12 minutes as presented; Sandra Lier seconded. Motion carried.** Sandra volunteered to meet with newest ABGC member Dave Towne and update him on the SR520 Widening project.

Report: Japanese Garden Entry Project

Cathy Tuttle, Seattle Parks' project manager, presented information on the entry project at the Japanese Garden. Cathy briefed the Board of Park Commissioners at its April 27 meeting and attended today's meeting at the request of Jack Collins, who is also a Park Commissioner.

Design

Cathy distributed a handout and displayed four large poster boards. One showed the design of the new facility, which will be 1,700 sq. ft. The Japanese Garden currently has no permanent restrooms, only port-a-potties. The new facility will include a ticket booth, meeting/class room space, and restrooms. The new entry is needed for both safety and aesthetic reasons.

Project Timeline

The Garden is closed for three months each winter. To accommodate completion of this five-month project, it may close one month earlier and open one month later. Another suggestion is to close the Garden for the usual three months and use the gates on the Lake Washington Boulevard side as the entry area for two months.

Estimated Costs/Funding

The cost estimate is approximately \$1 million, which doesn't include any landscaping. The landscaping costs must be defined soon, as well as the new facility's future maintenance and operations costs. A donor is very interested and some funds will also come from the Pro Parks Levy. Deb Andrews and the Arboretum Foundation will act as lead to assist the Japanese Garden Society volunteers who are enthusiastically working to raise funds. ABGC members should call Deb if they have suggestions for possible donors.

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG)

Michael Shiosaki reported on the following:

Pacific Connections Garden: The third public meeting was held last week with 40 people attending. Six-ten of these were new attendees; some were UW students. A lively question and answer session was held, with Portico doing a good job of presenting updates on the design and landscaping. A particularly difficult issue is the need for some type of restrooms in this area, while adhering to the Master Plan (which doesn't include a new building for restrooms.) A possible option is to add restrooms to the caretaker's cottage, although the historical aspects of this building could make this difficult. David Maberley stated that the portable toilets in the east parking lot will be there for some time.

Michael stated that Seattle Design Commission has approved the overall design, but not the shelter's design. The proposed design for the 300 sq. ft. building has a roof with five pitches, which the Design Commission thought excessive. A brief discussion followed on the Design Commission's roles in projects.

Irrigation Mainline: Staff continue to look for ways to reduce this project's cost, while designing a system that will last for the next 50 years. The project will go out to bid in June.

Portal Signage: David Maberley gave a brief report on this. The two portal signs at the north and south ends of the Arboretum were discussed at the last public meeting. The two portal entry signs were discussed at the last public meeting] with no objections from those present. Funding for this project hinges on the irrigation mainline costs. The [DELETE two] pair of 10-ton rocks are costed at \$5-10,000 for the rocks, engraving, and installation, and Michael Shiosaki opined that they would be installed this fall.

Communication Plan

David Maberley has appointed a new UWBG Education and Outreach Manager who is working on this. A report will be brought to the June 14 ABGC meeting.

SR520 Widening Project Report

Sandra Lier and David Maberley are attending UW/WSDOT workshops that focus on various concerns the UW has with the WSDOT SR520 Widening Project. These concerns include athletic and medical facilities and the project's 11-year impact on these facilities. David voiced concerns at the meeting on the negative impact the project could have on the Washington Park Arboretum and the rest of UWBG. He asked WSDOT staff for figures on traffic and noise impacts, as well as a visual showing the impact of the proposed and temporary bridges, and the positioning of assembly yards. At the second workshop, WSDOT showed a temporary bridge being built south of the current one, on Arboretum wetlands, the final new bridge to have a 300' wide footprint over Marsh Island near the interchange proposed in one alternative. The Union Bay or Arboretum bridge proposed in this alternative would stand 120' high. At this workshop, increased traffic estimates for Lake Washington Boulevard were for a 10% increase (previous figures were quoted by WSDOT as a 49% increase.) WSDOT staff believe some of the increased traffic will begin using Boyer Avenue — although the residents of Boyer may not yet be aware of this. Sandra commented that the drawing also showed Montlake Boulevard being widened to 6 lanes, then narrowing to fewer lanes at 45th (as it does now), which would cause a traffic bottleneck. WSDOT staff will bring a visual (model) of the bridge at the third workshop.

University Position Report: Sandra reported that the UW Regents will meet on May 18 and give Theresa Dougherty, Vice-President of Regional Affairs, their official guidelines. Theresa will then go out to the communities and talk about the size of the proposed bridge and its impacts. Sandra will report on this again at the June 14 meeting. When the EIS is released, the UW will hire consultants to study traffic and wildlife impacts.

Stakeholder's Committee Report: Jack Collins attended the second Stakeholder's Committee and sent a report to ABGC members. The Committee consists of City staff and well-researched neighborhood representatives. There is a strong push from the Broadmoor community that WSDOT seriously consider replacing the bridge with a tube. There have been 17 major tube projects since the end of World War II. Councilmember Conlin agreed to study the tube proposal. David Maberley met with Broadmoor community members yesterday, while the Mayor and Governor are going to Australia and will have the opportunity to see the tube built under Sydney Harbor. Jack believes that the Montlake Community, which originated the Better Bridge concept that WSDOT seems to be leaning towards, has a different agenda than the other communities represented on the Committee. He also believes that the summary from this Stakeholder's Committee will be very different than WSDOT's current stand on the bridge replacement. Jack believes that that project will result in the type of political process that stopped the R.H. Thompson Freeway project in the 1960's, which included protest marches.

City Staff Report: David Graves reported that the estimated release of the EIS is sometime in June. He believes that more public attention will focus on the bridge once the EIS is released. He believes that if the City of Seattle speaks with one voice on the project that any mitigation would be maximized. Jack agreed. David Maberley stated that the University will also strategize to maximize mitigation. David Graves stated that WSDOT is now seeing the fallacy that Boyer Avenue can accommodate the increased traffic from this project.

Old/New Business

Enhanced Volunteer Program: Jack Collins is chair of this ABGC sub-committee. He requested and received a copy of the National Arboretum's training program and gave it to Fred Hoyt. The UW does not currently have the staff to manage volunteers as they do at the National Arboretum. David Maberley stated that the new UWBG Education and Outreach Manager will also work on the volunteer effort.

Encroachment Strategy: Donald Harris is the Seattle Parks' Property Management and Acquisition Services Manager. He reported that both he and Fred Hoyt have been attending the Operations staff meetings and at a recent meeting, staff reported being intimidated by a neighbor of the Arboretum. They were working on Arboretum property and the neighbor accosted them in a rude and accusatory manner. Parks staff have prepared a survey of the Arboretum's boundaries and are sending letters to the 30+ neighbors who have encroached on Arboretum property with fences, landscaping, garages, etc. David Maberley stated that he was delighted that Parks is handling this problem. Neal commented that the issue is preserving the Arboretum and not Parks taking an adverse position with the neighbors.

Operations Staff: Donald will invite representatives of the UW and Parks' Operations team to attend the June ABGC meeting.

Funding: The Arboretum is included on the City's list requesting federal funding. Deb was complimented for her good work in generating letters to Representative Norm Dicks and Senator Maria Cantwell.

NRPA Conference: Jack will attend the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) conference next week in Chicago. Two other Park Board Commissioners will attend.

Graham Visitors Center: UW is reviewing some insurance and management issues at Graham Visitors Center and also looking at some physical improvement to the building. UW staff are also searching for the title to the Stone Cottage; John Wott suggested they look in the library archives.

Working Together Agreement: Neal reported that he is working with the UW Dean on the Working Together Agreement and has nothing to report yet.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 am.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____

David Maberley, ABGC Secretary