

**Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC)**

[www.wparboretum.org](http://www.wparboretum.org) then select ABGC

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

**Notes – October 11, 2006**

*Voting*

*Members:*

**Arboretum Foundation**

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

**City of Seattle**

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

**University of Washington**

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

**Washington State**

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*Absent/*

*Excused:*

- Dave Towne, Washington State Representative

*Others:*

- Elizabeth Loudon, UWBG, Education and Outreach Manager
- David Graves, Seattle Parks, Project Planner
- Fred Hoyt, UWBG, Facilities & Grounds Manager
- Rick Reichert, Arboretum Foundation, Director of Development and Capital Campaign

*Staff:*

- Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 am. Deb Andrews moved that the October 11 meeting agenda and the September 9 notes, as corrected, be approved. Neal Lessenger seconded, the vote was taken, and motion was approved.

**SR520 Update**

Much of the meeting was spent discussing the many recent events surrounding the WSDOT State Route 520 Widening project. The preferred alternative has a major negative impact on the Arboretum.

- Jack Collins distributed copies of a draft resolution to be considered by the Board of Park Commissioners at its October 12 meeting. [Copy of the adopted resolution attached at the end of these minutes.] Superintendent Bounds, Donald Harris, David Graves, and Jack met on Friday and prepared the resolution. The resolution does not take a stand on any one alternative; rather, it lists expectations in response to the alternative chosen.
- Sandra finalized the ABGC position paper on the WSDOT project on September 15. It was distributed to Governor Gregoire, Seattle City Council, WSDOT, and the University of Washington President. Jack also read the position paper when he testified before City Council at its public meeting.

- The City Council of the Whole held the public meeting on October 4. Jack, Donald, Deb, Sandra, and Elizabeth attended. Approximately 200 people were in the audience. The first hour of testimony was primarily support for protecting the Arboretum, and then another 25-30 people spoke in favor of the Pacific Interchange alternative. The City Council heard only a briefing from WSDOT, then selected as its preferred alternative the Pacific Interchange. Deb stated that the Bellevue City Council also voted it as its preferred alternative at its October 10 meeting.
- David M commented that the only two Seattle entities voicing support for the Pacific Interchange are the Montlake neighborhood and the City Council.
- Some testimony at the City Council public meeting called for the City to take the “high road” and discourage an increase in automobile traffic, rather than encouraging it.
- WSDOT may be as much as \$4 billion short on the project at this time. State Representative Chopp commented that there are inadequate funds to undertake this project.
- The UW, like WSDOT, is a State agency and feels somewhat constrained in its response to the DEIS.
- David M stated that Arboretums around the world are monitoring this project and voicing their concern in the form of letters to WSDOT.

#### Schedule:

- Comments are due to City Council by 5 pm on Friday, October 13.
- Comments are due to WSDOT by 6 p.m. on Tuesday, October 31.
- The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) will be released sometime next year — there will be no public comment period on it.

#### Mitigation:

- If wetland mitigation cannot occur at the Arboretum, then the next use of funds would be in a wetland at a nearby Seattle park. David Graves has been meeting with the Fish & Wildlife agency and Department of Ecology; each would require mitigation from impacts to the Arboretum caused by the SR520 widening project. It is possible that the amount of mitigation required would exceed what could be used at the Arboretum. Parks staff are asking that any wetland mitigation funds be used in this order:
  - Arboretum & Arboretum Creek
  - Montlake Playfield
  - Magnuson Park
  - Ravenna Creek
- Neal attended last night’s City University Community Advisory Committee (CUCAC) meeting and there were allegations that WSDOT is not using the latest data on wetlands mitigation.
- The UW has hired both traffic and natural resources manager consultants and they are now gathering information from the UW. The UW has put together a huge list of mitigation impacts to its facilities, traffic, etc.
- Jack commented that, to give a more powerful statement, each interested entity should approach WSDOT separately with its issues, rather than speaking with one voice. David M. agreed.
- Donald reported that Paul Gibson, Arboretum neighbor who has been extensively involved in the Master Plan, recently telephoned and requested that funds for endowment be part of any mitigation as a result of long-term impacts on the Arboretum.

#### **MPIG Update**

Donald Harris reported on the following projects:

*Pacific Connections:* This project is moving along well. It must be aligned with the actual budget within the next month. Fred reported that he received new interpretive items the day before.

*Irrigation Mainline:* The bids were received and opened and were considerably below budget. This project will begin in the next month.

*Japanese Garden:* The potential primary donor to this project, who voiced skepticism about both the design and cost, has reconsidered and the project is tabled. Deb reported that Foundation staff made good connections with other potential

donors. Donald stated that the project has momentum and asked that Deb and Foundation staff continue fundraising efforts based on the current design and drawings. Deb agreed.

## **Fundraising Update**

Deb reviewed recent efforts on the Master Plan fundraising efforts and reported that \$2.4 of the \$6 million for the Pacific Connections project has been raised. The discussion next turned to recent contacts with State Representative Helen Sommers, chair of the House Ways and Means Committee. Neal reported that Dave Towne recently talked with her and she wanted to meet right away, as she is excited about the Pacific Connections project. Neal, Dave, and Susan Black attended the meeting. She stated that it is easier to get operating money than capital funds. There is a surplus in the State budget and Representative Sommers suggested that \$3 million of State capital funds be used in the first phase of the Pacific Connections project, and the donor funds be used in the second phase. This would nearly complete the needed funding for this project. ABGC members spent 10 minutes or so discussing this funding opportunity. There is currently no model for how this proposal would work.

### **Other comments:**

David Mabberley and UW Dean of College Resources Bruce Bare met with Representative Sommers in 2005 to discuss securing opportunity funds for the Arboretum. The ABGC should support this request, as well.

## **Other Topics**

### **Communication Plan**

Elizabeth Loudon reported:

- She is focusing on the WSDOT SR520 Widening project and its impacts to the Arboretum.
- Updates on the project were recently added to the Arboretum and ABGC's websites.
- A mailer went out to over 1,000 people regarding the project.
- The Communication Plan will be added to the December 13 retreat agenda.
- Seattle Parks staff will notify Arboretum neighbors of the upcoming irrigation project.

### **Enhanced Volunteer Program:**

Elizabeth reported that:

- The "Adopt a Garden Bed" volunteer strategy is moving ahead and will begin in January 2007.
- Azalea Way is a top priority and will be the pilot program.
- The web pages will be used to generate excitement.
- Elizabeth is handling the communication portion; Sarah Luczyk, the Arboretum Foundation's volunteer coordinator, will be the lead working with the volunteers; and David Zuckerman, the UW's Arboretum crew chief, will be the lead for grounds maintenance and enhancement for this project.

**Arboretum Encroachments:** Donald reported that Seattle Parks' staff continue to resolve encroachment issues at the Arboretum and will also work with the UW staff on this.

**Retreat Planning Committee:** The annual ABGC retreat is scheduled for Wednesday, December 13, 8:00 am to noon at Northgate Community Center. Sandra and Neal volunteered to work with Donald to prepare a draft agenda, to be brought to the November 9 ABGC meeting for discussion and approval.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 am. Members then met Fred Hoyt and David Mabberley for an hour-long tour of recent Arboretum Master Plan projects.

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
David Mabberley, ABGC Secretary

## RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION expressing the position of the Board of Park Commissioners regarding the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project.

WHEREAS, the Seattle Board of Park Commissioners has been in continuous existence since 1887 and acts in an advisory capacity to the Mayor, City Council, Seattle of Parks and Recreation, and other City departments; and

WHEREAS, State Route 520 has been, since its completion in 1963, and continues to be to this day, a blight on the Washington Park Arboretum; creating noise and visual intrusions into the park; encouraging cut-through traffic along Lake Washington Boulevard in much higher volumes than was originally intended for the boulevard, disturbing the serenity of the Japanese Garden, and affecting the passage of people and wildlife between Marsh and Foster Islands and the remainder of the Arboretum; and

WHEREAS, the Washington Park Arboretum is Washington State's official State Arboretum and contains internationally recognized woody plant collections and North America's largest collection of *Sorbus* and Maple, the second largest collection of species Hollies and significant collections of oaks, conifers and camellias; and

WHEREAS, a new Master Plan for the Arboretum was adopted in 2001 that was the culmination of five years of planning work undertaken by Seattle Parks and Recreation, the University of Washington, the Arboretum Foundation, community groups and members of the general public; and that will guide improvements to the Arboretum for the next 20 years, including many specific projects to enhance the physical and natural characteristics of the Arboretum such as increasing habitat diversity by restoring the natural function of Arboretum Creek and the northern shoreline; and

WHEREAS, the Washington Park Arboretum contains the largest freshwater wetland complex of its type in the Seattle region, and the Master Plan, in conjunction with the existing wetlands, includes the restoration, enhancement, and creation of new wetlands by restoring the ecological and wildlife function of the former garbage dump surrounding existing SR Route 520 ramps, and creating a Pacific Northwest Marshland collection along the shoreline of Union Bay; and

WHEREAS, implementation the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project, as currently proposed, will forever compromise the aesthetic setting, biological diversity, educational opportunities, and physical connections for people and wildlife within the Washington Park Arboretum:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SEATTLE BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS THAT:

The Board cannot endorse any of the alternatives identified in the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) due to the profound negative environmental impacts the project would have on the Washington Park Arboretum.

The preferred alternative chosen must be consistent with the following:

- The structure should minimize the impacts on the Washington Park Arboretum, especially including the Japanese Garden and Foster and Marsh Islands, and other adjacent and nearby parks such as East Montlake and McCurdy parks;
- The structure should have the least number of travel lanes possible;
- The structure width should be the minimum necessary for safe passage;
- Any structure should be designed to have the least amount of coverage and shadow impacts on park land below;
- Clear, open, and safe access for people and wildlife under the structure must be provided to reconnect severed components of the Arboretum; and,
- Any required wetland mitigation must occur within the Arboretum first; if the area within the Arboretum is insufficient to accommodate the required mitigation, Park sites within Seattle on or adjacent to Lake Washington must be considered.

Mitigation of the continuing highway and future project impacts must be considered, regardless of the alternative/option chosen, to re-establish the Arboretum experience. As a starting point, the following should be considered in any mitigation package:

- Completely fund the Arboretum Master Plan, including wetland and shoreline restoration and planting (approximately \$60 million);
- Develop the stormwater pond in East Montlake Park for educational use;
- Provide a park-like lid at Montlake (depending on the option, the lid should extend as far as possible given the geography) which will create a strong connection between the neighborhood and the Arboretum;
- Replace (at WSDOT's expense) all of the functions served by the MOHAI building;
- Design and provide access and parking at East Montlake Park for access to the Arboretum Waterfront Trail and for hand-launched boats; and
- Install sound walls along the eastern and portions of the northern and southern edges of the Japanese Garden.
- Address the traffic impacts to the Arboretum caused by increased traffic along Lake Washington Boulevard (LWB) including prohibiting access to SR 520 from LWB or alternatively, allowing east bound traffic on LWB to access SR 520 via a round about at the intersection of LWB and the SR 520 on/off ramp; repaving LWB with "quiet" pavement; incorporating other traffic calming measures in LWB south of the Arboretum interchange to discourage through traffic movements, e.g., a traffic island at the intersection of Boyer Avenue E and LWB; and tolling the Arboretum ramps.

Adopted by the Board of Park Commissioners the \_\_\_\_ day of October, 2006 and signed by me in open session in authentication of its adoption this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2006.

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Chair of the Board of Park Commissioners

