

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC)

Web site: <http://depts.washington.edu/wpa/abgc/>

The ABGC is also closely monitoring the WSDOT SR520 project for impacts to the Washington Park Arboretum. Please see

<http://depts.washington.edu/wpa/520.htm>

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

Location: Graham Visitors Center

April 8, 2009

Voting

Members

Present:

Arboretum Foundation

- Paige Miller, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director
- Barbara Wright, Arboretum Foundation President

City of Seattle

- Jack Collins, Mayoral Appointee
- Kjrjs Lund, Mayoral Appointee
- Donald Harris, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Property & Acquisition Services Manager

University of Washington

- Theresa Doherty, University of Washington, Assistant Vice President for Regional Affairs
- Sandra Lier, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG) Director
- Iain Robertson, University of Washington Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture

Washington State

- Dave Towne, Washington State Governor's Appointee

Others

Present:

- Tim Gallagher, Seattle Parks, Superintendent
- Fred Hoyt, UWBG, Facilities & Grounds Manager
- Helen Payton, Arboretum Foundation Development Director
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks Deputy Director, Projects and Planning

Members of

The Public/Other

City Departments:

- Brett Middleswart and several staff from Seattle Public Utilities
- Paul Gibson, Interested Neighbor

Staff:

- Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Standing Committees

Funding Requests to State Legislature: John (AF), Jack (City), & Dave T (Washington State)

Fundraising Policy: AF: Paige Miller & Barbara Wright

City: Tim Gallagher (Chair) & Donald Harris

UW: Bruce Bare & Sandra Lier

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG) Michael (lead), Donald, Fred, Julia, Paige, Sandra & Tom Hinkley

Mission Statement: Kathleen Pierce (AF), Donald (City), & Sandra (UW)

Naming Recognition Guideline: Paige (AF), Donald (City), & Sandra (UW)

SR520 Mediation (Group of 34): Paige, representing both the ABGC and AF

ABGC Chair Dave Towne called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. The agenda was approved, as well as the minutes from the March 11 meeting.

Announcements/Introductions:

- The ABGC will prepare a commendation to present to Elizabeth Loudon at the May 13 meeting.
- The April 7 plant lecture with Dan Hinkley as guest speaker had a great turnout, with University Tower Auditorium nearly 2/3 full.
- Introductions were made around the table.

Madison Valley Drainage Project Update

Brent Middleswart, from Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) Engineering Division, and several other SPU staff gave an update report on the Madison Valley drainage project, Phases I and II. They distributed several handouts. For updated information on the project, see the project web page at

http://www.seattle.gov/util/About_SPU/Drainage_&_Sewer_System/Projects/MadisonValleyProject/

Background of Project: Brett stated the drainage system is to protect Madison Valley residents from the type of extreme rain storms that are forecast to happen once in every 100-year cycle. However, the area was hit with storms of this magnitude in both 2004 and 2006, resulting in severe flooding and one death. A two-million gallon storm drainage tank is planned for installation in Washington Park south of the playfield.

SPU will continue work on this project in 2010 and 2011. The final configuration has not yet been developed. His staff has an arborist mapping the project site and some trees will need to be removed. Seattle Parks and Green Footprints, a community group, are discussing this tree removal with SPU.

He understands the ABGC's interest in the project is to determine a way to divert water to the Arboretum. Donald clarified that the ABGC's interest is focused on the location of the diversion pipe and stream inputs. Brett and Tom Finnegan, SPU consultant, pointed out the potential pipeline alignments on page 2 of the Project Area handout and where the water would run underneath the park. Paige asked SPU to look at separating the water where it goes into the combined system at the pathway, in order to augment Arboretum Creek. Tim asked who will clean up any silt and debris on the grass and Tom responded that SPU will do so. Paige asked if the tank might fill with storm debris and silt. Tom answered that SPU will have access hatches to the tanks and will inspect and clean on a regular basis.

History of Arboretum Creek being paved over: Kjrj asked for a description of Arboretum Creek prior to it being covered and what this new drainage pipe is replacing. Brett answered that until the early 1900s Madison Creek flowed where the current Madison Street is now located. Madison Street was built on a trestle above the creek. Then the creek was covered and Madison Street was paved as it appears today.

Paul Gibson noted that SPU will spend a large amount of money building this new tank. Why not, instead, route the stormwater directly and continuously into the creek to serve both the needs of SPU and Seattle Parks. Brett and Tom responded that might work during regular runoff; however, the area would still have the extreme storm events and flash floods and the creek could not handle that type of runoff. There could also be severe erosion to the creek banks if the storm water isn't controlled. And the Arboretum and Japanese Garden could be flooded, leading to much higher costs than the tank installation.

Could Fish Return to Arboretum Creek?: Jack stated that the key is how often would there be water in Arboretum Creek. Will there be enough to support salmon for part or all of the year? Donald responded that SPU's goal isn't to return salmon to Arboretum Creek; however, it is working to give Seattle Parks Department the capacity to work to bring back the fish. Jack commented it appears that SPU is designing the system to be responsive to Parks' future needs for Arboretum Creek.

Paige noted two issues: (1) SPU must allow the collected water to be used for Arboretum Creek; and (2) mitigation from the SR520 project could include salmon restoration to Arboretum Creek.

Tim asked for more information on the tank storage elevation and topography. Tom pointed out the areas: the manhole is at 100' elevation, then there is a drop of 40-60' at Azalea Way and Arboretum Creek. The challenge is where/when water for Seattle Parks would fit into the treatment segment of the water to enable it to be clean enough to sustain fish. Tim asked if this is enough space to treat the water and Tom and Brent answered that it isn't; it would require 1,080 feet of piping, which could be serpentine – it doesn't have to run in a straight line. The west side of the soccer area would have adequate space. Tim asked if a ½ acre of wetland could be developed for this purpose and Michael answered that it is possible.

Paige asked if the water would then be adequate to sustain fish. Tom responded that the water is storm drainage and would not provide a steady supply of water to the creek. However, he believes the system can be designed to fit future Seattle Park needs.

Responding to a question from Tim on whether this project would take any of the current water flow to the creek, Tom answered that it wouldn't as Arboretum Creek is outside the project's drainage basin.

Design/Olmsted History: Donald noted that SPU is concerned with both the functionality and aesthetics of the storage site and both those are also important to the ABGC. Gail Stegger (SPU) stated that the design shown today is a very preliminary pre-concept design. The direction that SPU is getting from Seattle Parks is a design that looks very similar to how the park looks now: SPU would recreate and re-vegetate the park and add more pedestrian access. In addition, SPU is working with an arborist to save as many trees as possible. A portion of the tank will be exposed above ground and SPU will work with artist Adam Key from Portland to determine what surface will be used to cover the exposed portion of the tank to fit with the parks' Olmsted design and history.

Iain stressed that because this is an Olmsted-designed park, it is vital that the new elements reflect that character. Dave asked if SPU would approach Metro to hire a landscape architect to review the project, as a tradeoff since the project will keep stormwater out of the West Point Treatment Center.

Responding to a question from Barbara, SPU staff answered that the highest point of the tank that will be exposed is 13' above ground and will be visible to the public as they walk along Lake Washington Boulevard. Tim asked what will be used to cover the top of the tank and Tom answered that there will be 2" of soil. Tim stated that the roof needs to be sloped for drainage purposes and SPU staff agreed with this.

Iain noted that a circular design is better than a square one and asked SPU staff to integrate gracious curves into the project. Tom responded that SPU is doing some geo-tech drilling and part of the design depends on the soil, with some of it being fill dirt. Iain commented that the berm wall and the face of the tank should have a stone covering to match the existing Olmsted design of the park – don't cut costs. The berm is a great opportunity to fit with the Olmsted design. Its aesthetics should be so pleasing and integrated with the current design that park users are hardly aware of its existence. Barbara agreed with Iain's comments. Brett stated that City Council has directed SPU to integrate the Olmsted element into the project. Paul Gibson added that it is important to determine whether the design should encourage park visitors to visit the berm. Iain referred to the existing poor drainage of the soil in the area and Michael noted that the area is used for soccer and dogs also play there.

Summary: Dave stated that he understands the drainage plan will allow for future diversion from the initial flow and not divert water from the tank. Brett stated that the timeline is to finish the design in 2009 and begin construction in summer of 2010. This project is funded by the drainage fund and the funding is in place

to move ahead. Completion of this project is a high priority for SPU. Paige asked if SPU might be pressured to reduce the budget and that would in turn remove Parks' opportunities from this project. Brett doesn't think this will happen and Tom added that the work to help Seattle Parks' achieve its goals is a minimal cost.

Motion: Paige moved that the ABGC commend SPU for working with Seattle Parks and the ABGC to find a design that allows future access of flow to augment Arboretum Creek. Donald Harris seconded. After further discussion and information from SPU staff, **Paige amended the motion to read that the design is required to reflect the Olmsted features of this park and that SPU will return to the ABGC as the design is developed. Donald seconded the amendment.** There being no further discussion, the **vote was taken and all voted in favor. Motion carried.**

Paige asked that SPU also make inquiries to Metro regarding this project's possibilities to reduce the amount of stormwater that is treated at the West Point water treatment center.

Additional Comments and What's Next?: Donald thanked Brett for his responsive on this project and commented that he has been great to work with. Michael added that SPU and Parks are working very closely together as this project moves forward. Brett added that this cooperation is the project's path to success. Dave thanked Brett and the staff for the very thorough presentation.

Over the next few months, the design will go back to Seattle Parks' project review team for discussion/input, to the Design Commission on July 1, and then back to the ABGC for review.

Updates

Arboretum Drive Permanent Closure Status: Tim reported the Park Board moved to keep Arboretum Drive closed as is, with the south gate closed all the time and the north gate open during the day. However, the Board didn't designate it as being permanently closed, per the staff recommendation. The Superintendent has made the determination to change Arboretum Drive's to being permanently closed and will announce his decision to the Park Board at the May 14 meeting. Parks staff will now work on signage and other operational aspects. Dave thanked Tim for the good solution. He asked that the ABGC begin a long-term process now to address the traffic issues on Lake Washington Boulevard.

Barbara also thanked Tim and commented that she thinks the results have worked out nicely. She asked that Parks address the gates so the Arboretum doesn't look as if it is closed and that the signage be addressed as soon as possible.

Japanese Garden Entry: Michael reported that power was turned on yesterday at the new building and the contractors and staff are working on the finishing touches. The new gate is being installed next week and the ribbon cutting and public celebration will be held on Monday, May 4. Seattle Parks is sponsoring the event, with the Japanese Garden Advisory Council (JGAC) is sponsoring the donor event. Tim noted that the JGAC asked for two extensive signs to be installed that would list the donors. The signs would be against Parks' policy and the names will instead be etched on glass and displayed in the Tatiguchi Room. Dave agreed that the donor recognition should be consistent with Seattle Park's policies for donor recognition.

Update: SR 520 Project

Theresa reported that the State Transportation Committee passed Bill 2211 (<http://www.leg.wa.gov/pub/BillInfo/2009-10/Pdf/Bills/House%20Bills/2211-S.pdf>) this past Monday. The bill does not list a preferred alternative for the SR 520 replacement project, limits what can be spent, and does not allow for tolling on I-90. The bill is currently in the Rules Committee and must still go to the House for consideration. The Environmental Impact Statement schedule remains the same.

Responding to a question from Jack on where the University stands on all this, Theresa answered that any of the three alternatives could meet the UW's needs – with mitigation.

Joint Fundraising Committee & Naming Recognition Guidelines

Sandra reported that this committee has had two meetings and has focused part of its energy to review language in the various agreements that help oversee efforts at the Arboretum. Sandra is leading the development of a flowchart that will help understand and document how all these work together. There are two subcommittees that bring information forth to the Joint Fundraising Committee: Fundraising, which is reported by Donald Harris, and Capital, which is reported by Michael Shiosaki.

The Committee will give an update at the May ABGC meeting.

New/Old Business

Budget Reductions: Sandra gave a brief review of recent budget cuts at the University of Washington (due to the current economic climate) and impacts to the UW Botanic Gardens:

- \$95,000 reduction to UWBG
- Expect endowment for Miller Library to be reduced
- Curator bill died in the State Legislature Ways and Means Committee on Monday. If the UW can raise \$1 million for this position, it can go back and ask for a match of \$1 million. She will continue efforts to fund and fill this position.

Other UWBG updates:

- The UW's reorganization is moving ahead;
- Dean Bruce Bare is retiring as the Dean of College of Forest Resources. A search committee has been appointed to look for a replacement;
- Sandra is currently being paid 40% of the salary of the UWBG director. She has asked that the 60% salary savings be directed to the UWBG; however, this is the prerogative of the Dean of College of Forest Resources.

Each of the three partners is asked to report on their budget reductions, as they affect the Arboretum, at the May ABGC meeting.

Arboretum Use Survey: Sandra is working with staff to develop a survey of who the Arboretum's users are and how they use the Arboretum. There is no funding for the survey so a cost-free method is being sought. Kjrjris will ask her sister, who develops web surveys, if she can assist with this, free of charge. The survey will be ongoing over the next year.

Graham Visitor Center Management: Sandra reported that the GVC management contract is at the UW's real estate office. The City has requested that the UW continue managing GVC and that it be used to support the Arboretum Foundation's fundraising efforts. Jack asked that weddings no longer be allowed to be held in the Arboretum. Fred responded that the UWBG receives \$100,000 in proceeds from the weddings, which is very helpful to the budget. Sandra will send a copy of the draft contract to the ABGC

Invite Councilmember Rasmussen to an ABGC Meeting: Sandy checked with Councilmember Rasmussen's staff and he has two meetings that conflict with the ABGC meeting dates/times. She will work with the ABGC and the Councilmember's staff to find an alternative meeting date for his visit to the ABGC.

UW Regents Tour: Sandra reported that the Regents will visit the Arboretum on Wednesday, July 15, at 5:00 pm. Parks Superintendent Gallagher will lead the tour and several Arboretum Foundation members have been invited.

Washington Park Arboretum's 75th Anniversary Celebration: The three partners are working together to plan events. The Arboretum Foundation's newsletter included a front page article on the celebration. To read more, see http://www.arboretumfoundation.org/events_programs/events_programs.cfm

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be on May 13, 2009, 8:30 am, at Graham Visitors Center.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 am.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Theresa Doherty, ABGC Secretary