

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

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

***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.***

***The ABGC is closely monitoring the WSDOT SR520 project for impacts to the Washington Park Arboretum. Please see <http://depts.washington.edu/wpa/520.htm>***

**Meeting Location: Graham Visitors Center, April 14, 2010**

***Voting Members***

*Present:*

**Arboretum Foundation**

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

**City of Seattle**

- Jack Collins, Mayoral Appointee
- Kjris Lund, Mayoral Appointee

**University of Washington**

- Theresa Doherty, University of Washington, Assistant Vice President for Regional Affairs
- Sandra Lier, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG) Director

*Excused:*

- Tim Gallagher, Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation
- Iain Robertson, University of Washington Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture
- Dave Towne, Washington State Governor's Appointee

*Other Staff Present:*

- David Graves, Seattle Parks, Project Manager
- Donald Harris, Seattle Parks, Property Manager
- Fred Hoyt, UWBG, Associate Director
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Planning & Development Deputy Director
- Brian Thompson, Director, UWBG's Miller Library

*Members of the Public Present:*

- Cheryl Trivison, Interested

*ABGC Staff:*

- Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

**Standing Committees**

Building Committee:

Paige (AF); Donald (City); & Sandra (UW)

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

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG)

Mission Statement:

Naming Recognition Guideline:

SR520 Mediation:

UW: Tom Hinckley & Sandra Lier

Michael (lead), Donald, Fred, Julia, Paige, Sandra & Tom

Kathleen Pierce (AF), Donald (City) & Sandra (UW)

Paige (AF), Donald (City), & Sandra (UW)

AF, David Graves (City), & Theresa Doherty (UW)

Barbara Wright, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 am and the agenda was approved, with minor changes. The agenda will not include a report on the proposed tolling bill for the State Legislature; the UW Regents briefing has been canceled and must be re-scheduled before discussion continues; and the ABGC work plan and calendar discussion is delayed until the May meeting.

### **Overview - Miller Library**

Brian Thompson, Director of the UWBG Miller Library, introduced himself and presented an informative overview of the Miller Library. He began his presentation by reading samples of the thousands of questions the Library staff respond to annually.

Brian Mulligan was selected as the Miller Library's first director in the 1940's. He was an avid book collector and world traveler, adding many rare books to the collection. The library experienced a fire in the 1960s, with most of the books saved. It opened as the Elizabeth C. Miller Library in 1985. Merrill Hall, which includes the library, was the site of a domestic terrorist firebombing in May 2001. Fortunately, the rarest of the book collection survived and today is kept in a temperature-controlled area. The Hall and library were rebuilt. Today the library contains 15,000 books, has 285 magazine and other subscriptions, and is an information source to local gardeners. The library has a vast "Gardening Answer Knowledge" database, with staff working in collaboration with the UW and Seattle Library. It is a member of The Council on Botanical and Horticultural Libraries.

The Library has a number of educational programs: story time family programs; children and nature resource guide; curriculum collection; student exhibits; and student and research tools. It also hosts exhibits and programs by artists, holds book sales, and schedules other special programs.

Brian briefly reviewed the Library's financial outlook. He showed a chart and explained the funding sources. During the recent economic recession, donations have increased while endowments have significantly dropped. Library staff have cut their hours by 20% and the number of book purchases has decreased.

The Library's hours are Monday, 9 am-8 pm; Tuesday-Friday, 9 am-3 pm; and Saturday, 9 am-3 pm. The Library is closed on Saturday from June through August, as most gardeners are too busy in their own gardens to visit the library.

ABGC members thanked him for the excellent and informative presentation. Donald asked about the Library's attendance. Brian responded that 18,000 people visited the library in 2009; staff responded to 5,000 questions about plants; and the web page receives an average of 2,000 hits daily. He distributed a two-page handout, with extensive information on botanic art shows at the Library, numerous plant sales and garden tours, and other Library events.

Sandra noted that Brian and his staff have taken on more responsibilities, even as their hours have been cut, and include all the Arboretum's events in their periodical "Handful of Dirt." Barbara added that the Library is an extraordinary resource.

### **SR520**

David Graves reported that the ABGC's response letter to the WSDOT Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement is ready for the Chair's signature and will be sent today. Several ABGC members submitted

comments, which have been incorporated in the letter. Barbara thanked all members, especially David, Paige, Fred, and Nancy Belcher. **Paige moved and Jack seconded that the letter be finalized, signed by the Chair, and sent today. The vote was taken and was unanimous in favor. Motion carried.**

Paige repeated her request that the ABGC ask for tolling because of SR520 traffic impacts on Foster Island. If this request isn't made now, there will not be a later opportunity. Responding to a question from Kjris on the technical aspects of the project, representatives of the three partners all responded to the technical aspects: David noted that the City of Seattle addressed the technical aspects line by line. Fred stated the UW responded to the technical aspects, and Paige added that the Arboretum Foundation did likewise. David noted that the ABGC's response is more general.

Barbara wrote two letters to WSDOT asking how the ABGC can be involved in the process. She has not heard back yet, although project manager Julie Meredith has stated that WSDOT will work with the Parks Technical Committee and she and her team will attend ABGC meetings on a regular basis.

Paige stated that emotion exhibited at the City's three SR 520 public meetings is "white hot". She and Barbara attended the meetings, with Paige testifying at last week's City Council hearing. She distributed a copy of her testimony for the record. Approximately 50 people testified, with half those requesting that the Lake Washington Boulevard ramps be closed.

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

MPIG hasn't met recently, but has scheduled an April 26 meeting. The "Gateway to Chile" project will begin in the next couple of weeks. Several public meetings and tours have been held, with a focus on the trees that will be cut for this project. Responding to a question from Jack on an opening ceremony, Paige responded that it is scheduled for June 11 and will be combined with several other celebrations. Cheryl Trivison, a member of the audience, stated that she joined one of the tours. She voiced strong concern that the cutting of 500 existing trees for this new garden has had little public involvement. She asked that some of the mature native trees, which are 75-100 years old, be saved. Donald and Andy agreed to look into the request. Fred responded that at least one big Douglas fir is worth saving. Cheryl has addressed both the Board of Park Commissioners and the Urban Forestry Commission with her concerns. She stated that Parks and Open Space Advocates (POSA) members are unhappy with the tree cutting and promised the ABGC there will be repercussions. Fred noted that the tree cutting will be staged over time and all will not be removed at once.

Donald reported that, as part of the Lake Washington Boulevard traffic calming project, Seattle City Light and Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) will replace 16 of the 26 street light fixtures that have burned out. They are working with Parks staff to ensure any replacements fit with the Arboretum's historic Olmsted design. Lake Washington Boulevard is not a traffic corridor and thus is allowed a lower level of street lighting. The Sistus Nursery plant propagation for the New Zealand garden is moving ahead smoothly.

### **Arboretum Accessibility**

Sandra is concerned with the lack of bus service to the Arboretum. Paige suggested that: (1) Metro train its bus drivers to direct visitors to the Arboretum when they disembark the bus, and (2) install bus stop signs that point to the Arboretum. Theresa suggested that Luke Korpi of SDOT may also be helpful in this problem. Sandra will call both Metro and Luke.

### **Budget Issues**

The Arboretum Foundation will have a \$3,000 deficit for next year. Paige asked that a future agenda include discussion on how the Arboretum will be maintained if City and UW budget/staffing cuts continue. Sandra and Fred reported that the UW is facing major cuts and officials are changing how budget funds are allocated. Donald reported that Parks thought it would be asked to take a mid-year cut of \$1.8 million; however, City Council has directed a \$2.5 cut or 25% of the required mid-year cut for the City. If this 25%

trend continues into 2011, when the City's deficit is expected to be \$50 million, it will be disastrous for the Parks Department.

Discussion next turned to community interest in a Metropolitan Park District and how to support this concept, while following protocol. Jack noted that he heard a great deal of support at the recent Leadership Conference sponsored by the Seattle Parks Foundation. However, the real issue is whether City Council will put it on the ballot for a public vote. Donald reported some Council support of the concept, but Councilmember Conlin has stated that libraries come first. Paige noted that library supporters are strongly organized, while parks supporters aren't. Jack believes the public uses parks more than they use libraries. He will call Karen Daubert, Seattle Parks Foundation Executive Director, to ask that she attend the May 12 ABGC meeting to discuss the MPD concept and ask her to rally park supporters to testify at the budget hearings. The Associated Recreation Council also sent out a notice to park supporters asking that they testify at the hearings.

### **City Council/UW Regents Presentation on Arboretum Master Plan**

Barbara and Tim are scheduled to brief City Council on May 20. This will be discussed further at the May 12 meeting. Sandra will present the UW Regent briefing.

### **Building Committee**

Sandra, Donald, and Paige comprise this committee which has met two times and has a meeting scheduled today. They reported progress in resolving issues in the management of Graham Visitors Center. Donald noted that the remodel of the building's exterior restrooms is nearing completion.

### **Old/New Business**

Lake Washington Blvd Traffic Calming Efforts: Seattle Department of Transportation and City Light are working to replace the burned out lights, which should improve pedestrian safety. Luke Korpi of SDOT will attend an upcoming ABGC meeting to report on other traffic-calming efforts to increase pedestrian safety in the Arboretum.

Arbor Circle Party: Sandra and Tim are invited to attend this May 5 party that acknowledges all donors who gave \$1,000 or more to the Arboretum Foundation. The party is being held at Hillcrest, home of the UW president.

Bio-Blitz Scheduled at Arboretum: UW Professor Sarah Reichard and an Associate Professor will lead a team of students at this May 21-22 event. This is the first bio-blitz to be held in the Northwest, described as "an event in which experts in taxonomic groups take small groups of volunteers out to a defined space to record presence or absence of plant, insect, mammal, bird, spiders, fungi, etc., species in a 24-hour period. More information about bio-blitzes is available at <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/field/project/bioblitz.html>." This event is funded by a \$4,000 grant.

Annual Arboretum Plant Sale: This event is scheduled for the weekend of April 24-25 at Magnuson Park's Building 30. The pre-sale party is scheduled on April 23, at a cost of \$20 each. ABGC members were encouraged to attend, buy plants, and invite family and friends to attend.

Mother's Day at the Arboretum: Mother's Day is one of the most popular days to visit the Arboretum, with many photo opportunities.

Arboretum Foundation 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: This event will be celebrated on Friday, June 11.

Earth Day at the Arboretum: The Student Conservation Corp will spend April 23 at the Arboretum and plans to complete a number of projects. Congressman Jim McDermott will join them.

Friends of Yesler Swamp: This Laurelhurst volunteer group hosted a Magical Mystery Tour last Sunday with proceeds to benefit Yesler Swamp, part of the UW Botanic Garden.

UWBG Strategic Action Plan: Sandra gave a brief report on the development of this Plan. As part of the effort, the Acting Dean of the UW College of Environment asked UWBG staff to count the number of people who use the Arboretum. One such count will be held on Mother's Day.

Search for Dean of the College of the Environment: The search has narrowed to three candidates. Sandra will report on new developments at the May 12 ABGC meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Barbara Wright, ABGC Chair