

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Minutes
Graham Visitors Center – April 9, 2014

The Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee is a Joint effort of the Arboretum Foundation, Seattle Parks and Recreation, and the University of Washington, and designated by Seattle City Council Ordinance 65130, approved December 27, 1934, and Ordinance 116337, approved September 8, 1992.

Voting Members

Arboretum Foundation

- Paige Miller, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director
- Craig Trueblood, Arboretum Foundation Board President

City of Seattle

- Kenan Block, Mayoral Appointee
- Jack Collins, Mayoral Appointee
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Projects & Planning Division, Director

University of Washington

- Theresa Doherty, University of Washington, Asst. Vice President for Regional Affairs
- Sarah Reichard, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG), Director
- Iain Robertson, University of Washington, Associate Professor, Dept. of Landscape Architecture

Washington State

- David Towne

Other Staff Present:

- Fred Hoyt, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG), Associate Director
- Susan Golub, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Strategic Advisor, Superintendent's Office

Standing Committees

Building Committee:

AF: Paige Miller; City: TBD; UW: TBD

Partners Committee:

AF: Paige Miller & Craig Trueblood

City: Donald Harris & Christopher Williams

Michael Shiosaki & Leah Tivoli

UW: Tom DeLuca & Sarah Reichard

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG): AF: Paige Miller & John Wott

City: Michael Shiosaki (lead) & Andy Sheffer

UW: Fred Hoyt & Sarah Reichard

SR520 Technical Committee:

City: David Graves; UW: Theresa Doherty & Fred Hoyt

Opening Items

The April meeting of the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee was called to order at 8:35a.m. The Agenda was approved as were the minutes from the February 12, 2014 meeting as amended.

R.H. Thomson Memorial

Priscilla Arsove of the Seattle Activists Remembered, Celebrated and Honored (ARCH) group presented a proposal to the Committee regarding the effort to preserve the history of the success community activists had in blocking the R.H. Thomson Expressway.

Ms. Arsove:

R.H. Thomson would have cut a 4-block wide path next to the Arboretum, removing hundreds of homes to the south and north, with an estimate of consuming 30% of the Ravenna neighborhood. The “ramps to nowhere” are the evidence of the blocked freeway.

The effort to block the freeway came initially from a group of neighborhood activists, later joined by hundreds of others opposed to the State’s highway plans. The activists mounted a campaign previously unseen in Seattle and perhaps in the nation. They wrote letters, newsletter, flyers, magazine articles; they presented at community councils and other groups throughout the city; testified at public hearings at the City Council; debated highway planners; collected signatures; held rallies; conducted research and consulted air pollution experts; raised funds to support their efforts – they did what was necessary to stop the State from ploughing another freeway through the community.

ARCH was initially interested in preserving a specific arch from the ramps to nowhere that is located in the middle of the Duck Bay wetlands – two pillars and the connecting crossbeam – to be a reminder of what the City was saved from. ARCH now recognizes that the State will be removing all of the ramps, with the concurrence of the ABGC. ARCH understands that ramp removal is necessary for the SR -520 project to proceed, and the ABGC supports removal of the structures from the wetlands.

Instead of an arch in the wetlands to commemorate the historic fight against R.H. Thomson, ARCH now requests ABGC support for an alternative historic memorial. They request a three-prong approach to a memorial:

1. Planning Group: Appoint a planning group to work on development of a memorial, including representatives from ARCH, neighborhood groups, arts groups and the historical community.
2. Salvage Historic Materials: Work with WSDOT to save remnants of the ramps which could be reconstructed as part of a memorial. The pieces could include columns, cross-pieces, and rubble from the removal of the ramps to nowhere. Rainer Metzger and his colleagues at Re:Collective should be part of this design process.
3. Record the History: Support a history project to memorialize the work of the Citizens Against the R.H. Thomson Expressway through video, oral histories and the use of new technologies.

Several additional ARCH supporters spoke about memorializing the fight against R.H. Thomson.

Julee Neuhart:

- Please recognize that the ramps to nowhere are an important historical marker;
- The Montlake community is proud of its history fighting R.H. Thomson.

Rainer Metzger:

- We need to commemorate the history of the fight to stop R.H. Thomson;

- He and others are working on a temporary art installation on the ramps – a last hurrah before they come down;
- Please support ARCH's proposal for a permanent memorial.

Gary Ness:

- He worked on the team to stop the proposal to link Bothell to Seattle via SR 522;
- A history of this fight was written by Margaret Tunks *Citizens Against Freeways*.

Bill McCord:

- He appreciates the irony of wanting to keep concrete after opposing concrete;
- The R.H. Thomson would have cost 40 acres of the Arboretum so we need a reminder in concrete to indicate what would have happened;
- This memorial will pass on the baton of history.

Gayle Foster Bodorff:

- She moved to Montlake in 1968 to a house that was planned to be demolished for R.H. Thomson;
- Her activism against R. H. Thomson started her life as an activist;
- We need to honor Maynard Arsove, a key activist in the fight, much as we honor Victor Steinbrueck for his fight to save the Pike Place Market.

Anna Rudd:

- It is important to be a good fiduciary of public money;
- ARCH wants a collaborative group to get input on a memorial;
- Please move quickly to determine how to save a pillar for a memorial purpose and to begin a video history.

Joan Stewart:

- It is important to pass history on to the next generation;
- She has studied the history of Montlake and it is important to remember what came before.

ABGC Discussion

Iain Robertson cited the J.B Jackson book, "The Necessity of Ruins" in stating the importance of having reminders of history in our communities, including reminders of follies. Our region lacks a folly, and preserving an arch from the failed R.H. Thomson expressway would be the folly of all follies. There should be a memorial on the site and it should be bold: this will enhance, not diminish the landscape experience.

Paige Miller thanked the citizens for the work they did to stop the R.H. Thomson. The impacts would have been terrible, not only in taking out 40 acres of the Arboretum, but in the noise and air pollution as well. Based on what the ABGC originally asked WSDOT to do with the ramps to nowhere (remove them from the wetlands), the ABGC is not in a position to do exactly what ARCH originally wanted. However, she supports keeping something in place, perhaps during phase 2 work in the WSDOT peninsula – WSDOT shouldn't take it all away.

Sarah Reichard suggested ARCH get the Museum of History and Industry (MOHAI) involved as they are charged with preserving local history. The oral history part of the memorial should be done soon, and MOHAI could display pieces of the ramps in the interim before a permanent memorial is finished.

Jack Collins responded that he had spoken with MOHAI and they are interested in helping. The problem he sees with preserving an arch is that it doesn't explain what happened – there is no

context. He noted that the subcommittee working on the north entry could integrate an appropriate memorial into that project. In the future, there is \$12 million of SR 520 mitigation funding for the North Entry project which might be able to help pay for an appropriate memorial.

Michael Shiosaki thanked the community members for stopping R.H. Thomson from ruining the Arboretum. Perhaps there are pieces of the ramps to nowhere that could be saved and used in a future memorial.

Julie Meredith from WSDOT commented that, based on earlier direction from ABGC and others, the State is working on the permits to remove the ramps from the wetlands. The redevelopment of the north entry to the Arboretum could provide an opportunity for a memorial. There is also a Native American/tribal context that could be included in a memorial, as this area was a significant place for tribes.

Kenan Block favors leaving two pilings in the wetland; history is what matters most and this story is not well known. We need to honor history so we don't make the same mistakes; also it is easier to not notice something that isn't done than it is to notice something bad that is done. There should be an important, significant memorial with careful, professional design. If a memorial at the north entry is pursued, this project is five to ten years out which leaves considerable time to create a process to develop the memorial, retain pieces of the ramps and work with MOHAI on preserving this important history.

Craig Trueblood noted the Arboretum Foundation Board talked about the ARCH proposal and reached consensus that they should find a way to honor the anti R.H. Thomson effort, but also protect the Arboretum. In the 1970s Congress passed laws to prohibit highways in parks, laws that led to the current mitigation fund for the SR 520 impacts on parks.

Dave Towne remembers the fight against the R.H. Thomson – it was a tough, uphill battle. He worked in the Mayor's Office at the time and appreciates the efforts of the community. There should be something that symbolizes this effort.

MOTION:

Paige Miller moved approval of a motion that included the three points proposed by Ms. Arsove:

1. Planning Group: Appoint a planning group to work on development of a memorial, including representatives from ARCH, neighborhood groups, arts groups and the historical community;
2. Salvage Historic Materials: Work with WSDOT to save remnants of the ramps which could be reconstructed as part of a memorial. The pieces could include columns, cross-pieces, and rubble from the removal of the ramps to nowhere. Rainer Metzger and his colleagues at Recollective could be part of this design process.
3. Record the History: Support a history project to memorialize the work of the Citizens Against the R.H. Thomson Expressway through video, oral histories and the use of new technologies.

Plus the commemoration should be significant and done as an integral part of the new north entry as part of a future phase of the SR 520 project.

Sarah Reichard seconded the motion.

Discussion of the Motion

Kenan Block pointed out the importance of the memorial being significant, and that time is an issue: don't lose the passion of the ARCH group.

Michael Shiosaki said it was important to include in the motion the specific organizations mentioned by ARCH (included above).

Julie Meredith said the State would provide removal plans for the existing demolition contract.

Vote on the Motion

The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Jack volunteered to be the ABGC lead on the memorial project.

Updates

Parks

- Parks Legacy Plan: There will be a public hearing before the City Council's Select Committee on Parks Funding regarding the proposed ballot measure on Monday, April 7.
- City Council Parks Committee: There will be a presentation on the Arboretum trail at the Committee's April 15 meeting.
- Staff Changes: There were two recent retirements (Linda Hubert and Chris Jewel). Parks created a new, combined position of Construction/Major Maintenance Manager and have appointed Andy Sheffer to the position. Therefore there will be a new project manager for capital projects in the Arboretum.

MPIG

- The main topic for MPIG is the design of bridges from the loop trail. The design needs to fit with the character of the Arboretum. The Berger Partnership has been exploring options that better reflect the context of the Arboretum.

Arboretum Foundation

- The Foundation plant sale will be April 25-27 in Building 30 at Magnuson Park. We are way ahead of last year in ticket sales.
- The recently hired Finance Manager is leaving. There is an interim manager in place while the hiring process proceeds.
- The cherry tree dedication at the Japanese Garden will be May 20th.

University of Washington

- There was a celebration honoring education staff who were nominated for an award.
- Additional cherry trees were added at the Japanese Garden.

Broadmoor Parking Problem

Michael reported that the problem with contractors working at homes in Broadmoor and parking in the Duck Bay parking lot is worsening. Workers are blocking entry to the Arboretum in the morning as Broadmoor does not open their back gate to let the contractors in and a long line forms. Broadmoor does not allow the contractors to enter through their front gate which is staffed 24 hours and could allow the early entry of contractors.

Theresa, Sarah and Michael volunteered to work on this problem. The plan is to meet with the Homeowners Association and Country Club and eventually there will be a letter from the ABGC to Broadmoor.

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

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
John B. Collins, ABGC Chair