

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, December 14, 2011

Voting Members

Present:

Arboretum Foundation

- Della Balick, Arboretum Foundation Board President
- Paige Miller, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director

City of Seattle

- Jack Collins, Mayoral Appointee
- Donald Harris, Seattle Parks Property Manager

University of Washington

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

Washington State

- Dave Towne, Washington State Governor's Appointee

Other Staff Present:

- Sarah Reichard, UWBG, Director
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Projects & Planning Deputy Director

ABGC Staff: Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Standing Committees

Building Committee:

AF: Paige Miller; **City:** Donald Harris; **UW:** TBD

Partners Committee:

AF: Paige Miller & Della Balick

City: Donald Harris & Christopher Williams
Cheryl Fraser & Michael Shiosaki

UW: Tom Hinckley & Sarah Reichard

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG):

AF: Paige Miller & Roger Williams

City: Michael Shiosaki (lead) & Rick Nishi

UW: Fred Hoyt & Sarah Reichard

SR520 Technical Committee:

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

This meeting was held at Graham Visitors Center at the Arboretum. There were no minutes to approve. ABGC Chair Theresa Doherty called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG) Update

Michael reported MPIG met on Monday and gave a number of updates:

New Zealand Garden: The design is almost complete, the bid expected to go out in March, and construction to begin in summer.

SR 520 Mitigation Projects: Staff are moving forward on the following three projects:

- *Arboretum Creek*: the consultant will determine whether it is feasible to augment the Creek for salmon
- *Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan*: Andy Sheffer is working on replacement of signs
- *North Entry and Multi-Use Trail*: The subcommittee, established at the October ABGC meeting, has been working with WSDOT and made significant progress to finalize the Term Sheet. It will be brought to the ABGC in January for discussion and possible approval.

Jack asked if WSDOT is restricting mitigation dollars to only the North Entry and Multi-Use Trail projects. Michael responded there are ten projects on the mitigation list and Parks staff are just focusing on the North Entry and Multi-Use Trail at this point. Paige added that some portions of the others projects are still being defined.

Jack recently read that a \$20 billion transportation packet has been recommended for the November ballot, with consultants Tom Byers, John Howell, and Barbara Wright leading the effort. He asked that staff determine if the SR 520 project funding is included in the packet. Sandy will send the link to the article to ABGC members.

Graham Visitors Center Improvements: At the November 9 retreat, Parks staff member Lisa Chin announced an Arboretum "jamboree" to be held in conjunction with the closure of Lake Washington Boulevard this summer while crosswalks are installed. The jamboree will include a major focus on the Arboretum, including painting Graham Visitors Center. Sarah and Fred will help the crews prioritize the work list.

Partners Group: At the Partners Committee's November 17 meeting, members discussed the Arboretum Master Plan and asked that the list of priorities be updated. Discussion also focused on the Japanese Garden.

Waterfront Trail: At the October 12 meeting, ABGC members discussed the Waterfront Trail with WSDOT to determine if it could be added to the SR 520 mitigation list. WSDOT responded it could be added and prioritized. In the interim, Parks staff have determined that a new source of funding, the Shoreline Plan, may refurbish the Trail.

There was a brief discussion whether WSDOT would fund the continuation of the Trail to connect Montlake Playfield to Boyer; however, Parks staff believe this is unlikely.

Arboretum Coffee Blend Announced: Paige announced that Zeke's Coffee Roasters have developed and packaged a special coffee for the Arboretum, which is for sale at the gift store. Plans are underway to sell it at plant nurseries and grocery stores, with a portion of the sale price going to benefit the Arboretum. Honey from the Arboretum's own bee stands is also for sale.

Japanese Garden Bequest: Recently, a \$250,000 bequest was left to the spending discretion of the Japanese Garden Society (JGS), a 501c3 agency with four members, with the check being routed through the Arboretum Foundation. The Foundation will issue the check to JGS at the end of December. Parks staff, at the request of Acting Superintendent Williams, have prepared a list of Japanese Garden capital projects and will work with JGS to help direct the funds towards these projects.

Budget/Other Updates

City

Cheryl reported Parks staff are reviewing the Japanese Garden fee structure. The Volunteer Park Conservatory had a successful outdoor lighting ceremony on Friday night, December 2. She asked all ABGC members to stop by the Conservatory during the holidays while it is decorated with poinsettias and other holiday decorations.

Donald, Cheryl, and Michael reported the City Council didn't alter the Mayor's proposed budget for Seattle Parks for 2012, so there were no additional, unexpected cuts for 2012. However, the Department is facing a mid-year reduction for 2012 and the outlook is dire for 2013. The City took unsustainable cuts during the first budget reductions and those sources are no longer available. The City's financial analysts predict a \$30-52 million gap in the 2013 General Fund budget. Historically, Parks absorbs about 20% of General Fund shortfalls, which will result in an additional \$6-10.6 million in cuts for the Department in 2013. Once the gap is known (sometime this spring), the Department will be asked to submit its draft 2013 budget to Mayor McGinn. If the typical budget process is followed, the Department will be under a cone of silence until the Mayor announces his proposed budget in late September.

Jack commented this makes it difficult for ABGC members to weigh in on decisions that affect the Arboretum. In his opinion, City Council usually goes along with most of the Mayor's recommendations. Donald responded that the recent, budget-driven changes in operation of the community centers was a deliberative, six-month public process and a very successful model. Any major recommendations affecting the Arboretum may follow a similar type of public process. Michael added, however, that the City can't do as extensive process as it did for the community centers for all budget cuts.

Arboretum Foundation

Paige reported the Arboretum Foundation had hoped the City's Department of Planning and Development (DPD) would make an exception for uses at Building 30 and allow it to hold its Spring Florabundance plant sale inside the building. DPD has turned down the request, leaving the outside area of Building 30 as the most promising site – but only if the weather cooperates. This is not good news, as the Foundation usually nets \$55-60,000 from this plant sale.

The Arboretum Board held a successful retreat on November 9. However, the net proceeds from various Arboretum events and bequests are down, and increases in membership are flat. The best option at this time is for Pacific Connections stewards to become donors to the Arboretum.

Dave asked if City staff like the new Pacific Connections volunteer program. Cheryl responded that they really like it. The City and UW staff work well together and all realize there is a lot of work at the Arboretum and the volunteers help accomplish a great deal and aren't taking anyone's job. Michael added the new Pacific Connection gardens are coming online and there isn't enough regular staff to do the needed gardening.

Fred noted that UW staff recently measured the volunteer program and found that for each hour of volunteer time, an hour of paid staff time is spent. However, this will decrease as the new steward program matures and the number of volunteers increases. Cheryl noted that the more volunteers become involved with the Arboretum, the better. They are voters, ambassadors of the Arboretum, and possible donors. Paige added that the Arboretum's other donors have been admiring the special vests the Pacific Connections volunteers earn after 24 hours of volunteer service.

Iain asked if this is the new volunteer model. Donald responded the City is removing some impediments to volunteers, such as simplifying the forms that must be filled out and holding a pilot at one off-leash area to allow volunteers to use power tools. Michael added the Pacific Connections gardens has a half-time volunteer coordinator and the City has only five coordinators for over 500 parks. Paige noted the Pacific Connection coordinator is also training volunteers to help with scheduling and other administrative tasks. The New

Zealand Garden is the next to come online and will have a combination of paid staff and volunteers to care for it.

University of Washington

- Sara and her staff are waiting to see what happens in 2012 with the UW's budget. Some good news is UWBG has received \$15,000 in new endowments. And other good news is that Creature, <http://www.welcometocreature.com/>, has agreed to work on pro bono branding for the UWBG. Theresa asked that the UW marketing staff be involved, too.
- Fred stated that UWBG has also applied to Leadership Tomorrow to take on UWBG as a project.
- A new search has begun for the Director of the College of the Environment.
- UW staff are very excited and pleased with the new UW Provost and stated she is very interested in and supportive of the Arboretum.

Old/New Business

2012 Elections: **Della nominated Theresa Doherty as 2012 ABGC Chair, Jack Collins as Vice-chair, and Paige Miller as Secretary. Donald seconded. The vote was taken and unanimous in favor.**

Motion carried. Dave commended Theresa on her leadership this past year.

ABGC Vacancy: Mayoral appointee Kjris Lund resigned in October, due to health issues. Any suggestions for her replacement should be sent to Donald, who will submit them to Acting Superintendent Williams. He will then submit names to Mayor McGinn for consideration.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____

Theresa Doherty, ABGC Chair