

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC)

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

Minutes – February 1, 2006

Voting

Members:

Arboretum Foundation

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

City of Seattle

- Jack Collins, Board of Park Commissioner

University of Washington

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

Others:

- David Goldberg, Seattle Parks Project Planner
- David Graves, Seattle Parks Project Planner
- Fred Hoyt, University of Washington Botanic Gardens, Facilities & Grounds Manager
- Michael Shiosaki, Pro Parks Levy Manager

Voting members

Absent/Excused:

- Margaret Ceis, Mayoral Appointee
- Donald Harris, Seattle Parks and Recreation Property Mgmt & Acquisitions Manager

Staff:

- Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

ABGC Chair Donald Harris was out of town. Vice-chair Deb Andrews called the meeting to order at 8:35 am. The minutes were approved as submitted. Sandra commented that the minutes are well done and provide an accurate record of the ABGC meetings.

Update Report: MPIG

Michael Shiosaki gave updates on several projects:

Japanese Garden Entry: An internal team meeting will be held tomorrow and the next project meeting is scheduled for February 13. The contract has been finalized.

Madrona Terrace: Staff met with Portico two weeks ago. An all-day charette is scheduled for February 23. The charette will be followed by a public meeting, tentatively scheduled for March 23. David Goldberg has been meeting with the Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks (FOSOP) to keep them informed of the projects. A representative from FOSOP has been invited to the charette. (See additional discussion below on Madrona Terrace project.)

Irrigation Mainline: Staff are moving ahead quickly on this project and it is on schedule. The budget will be brought to the ABGC's next meeting for discussion. Construction is expected in summer 2006.

Wayfinding & Interpretive Plan: The need for this plan to be implemented is now coming to the forefront. (See additional discussion below.)

Update – Madrona Terrace Holly Relocation

Fred reported that the scope of this project is increasing. The project has always included not only moving the Arboretum's holly collection to a new location, but also making it the best holly collection in the world. Iain Robertson is currently working on the draft design and staff members are reviewing the design. Fred and David M. gave a brief description of the initial design, which includes crescent-shaped planting beds.

David Goldberg is monitoring this project to ensure that it meets all regulatory and environmental requirements. It may require a SEPA checklist. The drawings will be brought to MPIG, then to the ABGC for review.

Members agreed that it is important to keep the public informed of the holly relocation. Some members were concerned that the public may look at this as a new project, rather than a Master Plan project. At the next public meeting on the Madrona Terrace project, it should be clearly stated that the holly re-location is a sub-project of the Madrona Terrace project. Nearby property owners will also be contacted before the meeting.

Parks staff talked briefly with Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks about this project. David M. stated that the Master Plan refers to the enhancement of the holly collection and the collection must be moved. He believes Iain's design is distinguished and unique and he is very excited about it.

In order to move the holly collection, a number of cottonwoods and other invasive trees must be removed. Staff will inform neighbors which trees are to be cut and why before the work is done. To meet the request for an "invasives" exhibit, comprising largely caged European female hollies, Iain has proposed something resembling an "18th Century Folly", with various types of invasive plants growing in it. This would include ivy and other plant species that once were planted by gardeners and have since been designated as invasive plants. These plants would be enclosed in a way that birds could not carry the seeds to other sites.

Sandra stated that it is important for ABGC members to include in talking points that a focus of the Arboretum is to remove invasives and to educate the public on the need for removing them. As the Communication Plan is developed, this should be included. This is especially important when removing large invasive trees, such as cottonwoods.

Update Report: City's Tree Replacement Policy

Fred distributed a two-page paper regarding the Tree Policy statement issued in 2005 by Seattle Mayor Nickels. This policy requires that two trees be planted for every one tree that is removed in Seattle. This could prove problematic for the Arboretum's tree collections. Jack suggested that the policy should be referred to as the City of Seattle tree policy. After some discussion, it was agreed that Michael Shiosaki will take Fred's paper to the Superintendent for review and then it will come back to the ABGC for further discussion/action.

Update Report: Wayfinding and Interpretive Plan

David M. stated that the need for the Wayfinding and Interpretive Plan includes two components: (1) the hierarchy of installing signs for the Master Plan projects, and (2) the strong need for signs at the entrances that announce to the world that this is the Washington Park Arboretum. Facts that are little known about the Arboretum, but very important, are: its maple tree collection is considered the best in North America and probably second best in the world; its Japanese Garden is considered one of the top ten in the world, outside of Japan; it contains the second best collection of holly species and oaks in North America; it contains over 200 of Washington's Champion trees; and it is still the only state arboretum. The public currently has very little way of knowing this or understanding the uniqueness of the Arboretum. It is very urgent to sign the portals, or entrances, to the Arboretum. He recommended that the Wayfinding and Interpretive Plan be implemented first at the outside of the Arboretum, then move inwards with new signage.

The UW paid \$130,000 for consultants to prepare the Wayfinding and Interpretive Plan. The next step is to secure funding to pay for the actual implementation. MPIG has had discussions on how to pay for the signage and which entity (City or UW) would be responsible to maintain the signage. The UW does not have additional funds for this project. It was suggested that Parks' staff discuss the budget with the Superintendent to determine if it has funds that could be utilized.

This led to further discussion on efforts to secure State funding for maintenance and operations (M&O) of the Arboretum. A request for \$500,000 for M&O was put forth by David Maberley and Dean Bruce Bare to the State legislature for the supplemental budget. At this time, it does not appear that the request was successfully relayed to the legislature. Members agreed that, even if the request doesn't succeed in this budget round, it is extremely important to work on it for the next one. Sandra will pursue this with UW financial staff.

Jack moved, and Sandra seconded, that the ABGC endorse the policy of moving forward quickly on the portal entry wayfinding and interpretive plan. The motion passed unanimously.

Update: SR520 and Park Board's Public Hearing

Jack Collins, who is also a Park Board Commissioner, and David Graves, Seattle Parks project manager, gave an update on the January 12 Park Board meeting. At that meeting, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) staff briefed the Park Board on the SR520 widening project and its possible impacts to the Arboretum. The briefing reviewed the 4-lane and 6-lane alternatives, and focused primarily on the newest alternative, the Pacific Interchange. The briefing was immediately followed by a public hearing. The meeting was well attended, with a number of people testifying. Several ABGC members testified. Jack believes it was good for WSDOT to hear these sentiments. David Graves commented that WSDOT staff did not explain the traffic figures (potential increases or decreases) very well. Jack commented that there are excellent minutes from the meeting [posted at the Board's web page: <http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/ParkBoard/minutes/2006/01-12-06.pdf>]

At the conclusion of the public hearing, the Park Board Commissioners agreed to submit questions to WSDOT. Those questions have now been compiled and submitted to both WSDOT and Seattle Department of Transportation. Once responses are received, both the questions and answers will be posted to the Board's web page and will be e-mailed to the ABGC.

The ABGC agreed that it stands firm in its opposition to any alternative that would negatively affect the Arboretum. At the same time, if an alternative is selected that does have a negative impact, mitigation measures must be thoroughly and carefully examined. WSDOT is scheduling workshops with the ABGC, UW, City, and Arboretum Foundation on the Pacific Interchange alternative. It previously held workshops with these agencies on the 4-lane and 6-lane alternatives.

Seattle Audubon testified at the public hearing, while other environmental agencies, such as the Fish & Wildlife agency, have not yet weighed in on the project. It is critical to keep the Arboretum very visible and ensure the public is very aware of this project and its potential negative impact to the Arboretum.

The Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks have requested Seattle City Council to schedule a series of public hearings on the project.

Update: Goals and Objectives

This agenda item was postponed until the March 2006 meeting.

Old/New Business

Review regular meeting date: Jack Collins has a conflict with the current meeting date of the first Wednesday of each month at 8:30 am. He asked if the date can be changed without creating a conflict for other voting members. Seven of the nine voting members agreed to change the meeting to the second Wednesday of each month. The eighth member

will be contacted by phone regarding this request. The ninth position (Washington State representative) is currently vacant. The Coordinator will confirm the availability of Graham Visitor Center for the second Wednesday.

Washington State ABGC Representative: The Governor has received two nominations for this vacant position. The Arboretum President, Dean of College of Forest Resources, and Parks Superintendent each sent letters of recommendation for one candidate, Dave Towne. The name of the second candidate isn't yet known by ABGC members.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 am.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
David Maberley, ABGC Secretary