

APPROVED

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, January 13, 2010

Voting Members

Present:

Arboretum Foundation

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

City of Seattle

- Tim Gallagher, Superintendent, Seattle Parks and Recreation

University of Washington

- Sandra Lier, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG) Director
- Iain Robertson, University of Washington Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture

Absent:

- Jack Collins, Mayoral Appointee
- Kjris Lund, Mayoral Appointee
- Theresa Doherty, University of Washington, Assistant Vice President for Regional Affairs
- Dave Towne, Washington State Governor's Appointee

Other Staff Present:

- Donald Harris, Seattle Parks, Property & Acquisitions Manager
- David Graves, Seattle Parks, Project Manager
- Fred Hoyt, UWBG, Associate Director
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Planning & Development Deputy Director

Members of the Public Present:

- Paul Gibson, Neighbor & interested
- Sarah Lewis, UW student

Staff:

- Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Standing Committees

Funding Requests to State Legislature:

Fundraising Policy:

John (AF), Jack (City), & Dave T (Washington State)

AF: Paige Miller & Barbara Wright

City: Tim Gallagher (Chair) & Donald Harris

UW: Tom Hinckley & Sandra Lier

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG)

Mission Statement:

Naming Recognition Guideline:

SR520 Mediation:

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)

Known Absences:

March: Dave Towne

Barbara Wright, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 am and the agenda was approved, as amended, and the December 9 minutes, as corrected.

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG) Update

Michael reported that MPIG met this past Monday. The Sistus plant propagation contract has been signed and is moving forward. A public meeting to present an update on the Master Plan implementation is scheduled tonight (1/13/10) at Graham Visitors Center. Sandra asked that the signs at the entrance of Arboretum Drive, regarding the permanent road closure, be re-worded as the current wording is confusing to the public. Michael responded that clearer language is being developed for the signage.

Budget & Other Updates

Arboretum Foundation. Paige reported:

- the \$600,000 in needed donations for the Gateway to Chile garden have now been raised
- Arboretum Foundation staff are working to secure a grant for an arborist
- Sales for the Flower & Garden Show Preview Gala have been slow. The event is in three weeks, with only 25% of tickets sold. Paige urged ABGC members to attend and to invite friends. Donald responded that the Park Department's Communication Office distributed the invitation to several lists. Sandra and Tom also forwarded it to the UW's faculty.
- The theme for the Arboretum Foundation's exhibit at the Flower and Garden Show will be a winter garden.

University. Sandra reported:

- The UW continues to address its budget deficits. The Provost has asked that the College of the Environment cut its budget an additional 3.5%, or \$465,000. The salary of tenured professors cannot be cut, so the percentage of program/other cuts may actually double to 7%.
- Sandra is preparing UWBG expenses through 2013 and will share the findings with the ABGC.

City. Tim reported:

- The City is short \$40 million for its 2010 budget and as much as half that amount, or \$20 million, may be requested to come from the Parks Department budget. Seattle's parks and programs face a tough road ahead.
- Parks is now implementing the 2008 Parks and Greenspaces Levy. None of the three recent levies (one for community centers and two for parks and green spaces) included any operating and maintenance funds, which worsens the Department's budget outlook.
- He is discussing this with City Councilmembers to determine which programs the Department will need to get out of for 2010, e.g., swimming pools, gardeners, Natural Resources Unit, park rangers, etc.

- A proposal for a fall ballot to create a Metropolitan Park District (MPD) is in discussion and would include \$20-25 million levy to fully operate and maintain what the Department has already been asked to build. Language in the MPD would include a mandate that Parks receives a set figure from the general funding. If this approach is successful, the Department can continue building, maintaining and operating the Levy projects already approved by voters.
- Paige and others are planning a Park Summit this spring, unless Mayor McGinn disagrees. Parks staff cannot work on the summit.

Sandra noted that the UW faces the same problems — they have building capital, but no maintenance funding. The park summit will be a good step in making the public more knowledgeable about what they are voting for in the levies. UW leadership must also be made better informed on maintenance needs.

Tim commented that the voters of Seattle have generously approved the three levies; however, none include maintenance and operation (M&O) funding. Parks' Project Development staff prepared a list of all the facilities and park maintenance needs, which totals \$120 million.

Responding to a question from Barbara on how other cities' parks departments are handling budget shortfalls, Tim responded that many have closed facilities, privatized their park departments, or have let park staff go and have their public works staff maintain the park facilities. Kirkland has removed its trash cans from parks and is asking the public to clean park restrooms; however, this doesn't solve the long-term issue.

Tim has spoken with several City Council members who believe the public would support a maintenance levy. Donald added that the three recent Parks and Greenspaces Levy Opportunity Fund meetings were well attended, with standing room only crowds. The public is clamoring for more park projects to be developed.

Barbara stated that it would be a shame to close Seattle's pools, as this would be a terrible blow to the future generation's main opportunity to learn to swim. Tim agreed and stated that the lack of inadequate funding for parks will have tremendous implications down the line.

Update: SR 520 Project

Barbara noted that Julie Meredith and the WSDOT team are scheduled to attend the February 10 ABGC meeting to review the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS). The agenda will reflect public comment time near the end of WSDOT's presentation and the ABGC's discussion.

David reviewed the schedule, with the DSEIS scheduled for a January 22 release and comment period extending through early March [March 8.] WSDOT will hold one public hearing. He has seen advance drafts of the DSEIS, which includes the three options of A, K, & L and sub-options. The City and UW will have comments separate from the ABGC.

Barbara asked that the ABGC strategize its response to the DSEIS. It was agreed that the February 4 Joint Fundraising meeting, 7:30-9:00 am at Graham Visitors Center, will instead be used for a special ABGC meeting to discuss the DSEIS, prior to WSDOT's February 10 presentation. All ABGC members and staff who regularly attend the meeting were urged to attend. The public is also invited.

The process is moving quickly:

- Paige referred to the December 9 Seattle Channel interview in which she participated with State Representative Judy Cliburn. She heard Senator Cliburn state her support for moving ahead with Alternative A+.
- Mayor McGinn has scheduled an SR 520 meeting in his office on January 14. Paige, Sierra Club members, and others will attend.
- Seattle City Council is scheduled to take a position on January 25. The rumor is that Council will recommend that the State move ahead with the East Side portion of the project, and delay the West Side decision. Councilmember Conlin took the ABGC's December 2009 Guiding Principles to his recent meeting with Seattle Department of Transportation to discuss the project.

David noted that the Federal Highways Commissions (FHC) is the ultimate decision maker on this project and will issue the record of decision. Paige agreed and noted that FHC has stated that its decision must be based on the entire project, both East and West Side, even if the actual work will not take place for ten or more years in the future.

Iain asked that the ABGC be brought up to speed on the alternatives at the next meeting. David will do this at the special February 4 ABGC meeting, prior to the WSDOT presentation at the February 10 ABGC meeting.

At the January Joint Fundraising meeting, the members discussed how the costs for WSDOT to use Lake Washington Boulevard (park land) as a transportation corridor could be calculated, based on property rental. Donald and his staff are working to develop these figures and will report back to the ABGC. An initial estimate is that the property would rent for \$100 per sq. ft, with 8% of the traffic coming from SR 520, for an annual value of \$1.6 million.

Sandra announced that the tolling bill (tolling costs that would be directed to the Arboretum from SR 520 traffic using Lake Washington Boulevard) has been introduced and will go to the State Transportation Committee on January 21.

ABGC 2010 Calendar and Work Plan

Barbara presented a draft calendar and work plan to help determine 2010 meeting agendas and to strategize when to tackle issues before the ABGC. Both documents are a work in progress and will be updated monthly and sent out with the meeting agenda packet.

Sandra requested that the work of the Building Committee and its meeting dates be added. Donald commented that both documents will be helpful for the ABGC's work.

Lake Washington Boulevard Traffic-calming Measures

Donald reported that Fred, Paige, Donald, UW's transportation manager, and others accompanied Seattle Department of Transportation traffic project manager, Luke Korpi, on an Arboretum/Japanese Garden/Lake Washington Boulevard walk-through on Friday, January 8, as a part of the effort to calm traffic on this park road.

Luke will now prepare a written report on the walk-through findings and report back to the ABGC at its March 10 meeting. He is looking at adding raised crosswalks and cushions to improve pedestrian safety.

SDOT will work with City Light for improved lighting safety for crosswalks. SDOT will pay for any upgrades from street curb to street curb. Parks will pay for any linkage from the curbs into park land.

Responding to a question from Paige whether lighting improvements could affect the collections, Fred answered that he doesn't believe it will. Staff have discussed with Luke that this is an Olmsted-designed park, as well as the aesthetics of an arboretum. Luke has acknowledged that this is a park and Fred commented that he appreciates this recognition by SDOT.

Barbara thanked the group for this excellent progress on calming traffic on Lake Washington Boulevard and increasing pedestrian safety at the Arboretum and Japanese Garden.

Building Committee

At the January 7 Joint Fundraising Committee, the partners agreed to form a temporary Building Committee to help resolve remaining conflicts between the Arboretum and Foundation's for the management agreement of Graham Visitors Center. Donald, Paige, and Sandra are on the committee and hope their work is completed within a few months.

Brief UW Regents and City Councilmembers

Sandra has scheduled a briefing to the UW Regents in August 2010. Sandy will contact the Parks and Seattle Center Committee to schedule a briefing before PASC in early-mid spring.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____

Barbara Wright, ABGC Chair