

## ***Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Minutes - APPROVED***

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, July 13, 2011**

### ***Voting Members***

*Present:*

#### **Arboretum Foundation**

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

#### **City of Seattle**

- Donald Harris, Seattle Parks Property Manager
- Kjris Lund, Mayoral Appointee

#### **University of Washington**

- Theresa Doherty, University of Washington, Asst. Vice President for Regional Affairs
- Fred Hoyt, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG) Associate Director

#### **Washington State**

- Dave Towne, Washington State Governor's Appointee

*Excused:*

- Jack Collins, Mayoral Appointee
- Iain Robertson, University of Washington Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture

*Other Staff Present:*

- Cheryl Fraser, Seattle Parks, Natural Resources Manager

*ABGC Staff:* Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

### **Standing Committees**

Building Committee:

Paige Miller (AF); Donald Harris (City); TBD (UW)

Partners Committee:

AF: Paige Miller & Della Balick

City: Donald Harris & Christopher Williams

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:

David Graves (City); Theresa Doherty & Fred Hoyt (UW)

This meeting was held at the NHS Hall at the Center for Urban Horticulture. Theresa Doherty, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. The agenda was changed to reflect an update on recent Seattle City Council actions and to remove the *Arboretum Road Closure – Proposed Solution* topic. The minutes from the May 11 and June 8 meetings were approved as corrected, to show Roger Williams of the Arboretum Foundation replacing Tom Hinckley on the Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG).

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

Michael reported on recent MPIG meetings:

Roundabout: Staff from the Berger Partnership presented detailed information on the roundabout proposed to replace the intersection at Foster Island Drive and Lake Washington Boulevard (LWB.) Improvements resulting from the roundabout include: quieter intersection; traffic speed decreased to 15 mph; improved traffic flow; increased pedestrian and vehicle safety; less signage than a traffic signal; and better traffic movement, especially for vehicles attempting to turn south onto Lake Washington Boulevard from Foster Island Drive. Many commuters headed southbound on LWB now use the intersection as a turnaround to access SR 520 and the design process will address this problem.

ABGC members suggested the site where the multi-use trail crosses Foster Island Drive be set back a good ways from the traffic circle. Pete Lagerway, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT), is working with Parks and Berger on the design as SDOT must approve the trail crossing for bicyclists, pedestrians, and drivers.

Multi-Use Trail: The design team members are costing the trail to include a pervious surface, possibly crushed rock, and not intended for skating or roller blading.

Gateway to Chile Plantings: Fred reported that Gretchen Hull (Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks, the Arboretum Foundation, and local garden clubs) has voiced concern about the Gateway to Chile entrance plants that appear dead. UW staff don't believe the plants are dead and will prune and monitor. Paige has heard concerns that the Gateway to Chile is sparse and looks "exotic" compared to the Olmsted gardens. Michael heard comments at the June 29 Master Plan meeting that large species aren't being brought in to the new gardens. ABGC members recognize the size is due to the plants being propagated for planting. Additional information will be posted on the web pages and on signs to help the public's understanding. Cheryl noted that the City has had good results from posting signs that read: "temporary garden" or "new garden" to help the public better understand new plantings.

Holly Collection: As part of the Pacific Connections projects, a number of trees in the holly collection were moved and many are now distressed. Former ABGC Chair Barbara Wright brought this up at a recent Arboretum Foundation Executive Board meeting and stated both she and Gretchen are hearing concerns. Fred responded that staff have learned several lessons from this project; Della requested he contact Gretchen, Barbara, and others who have voiced concerns to discuss.

Lake Washington Boulevard Lighting Project: Seattle City Light has delayed completion of this project, as the State Auditor has determined it must publicly bid the project. City Light expects completion by end of 2011.

Pacific Connection Volunteer Program: Paige and University staff have developed a taskforce focused on volunteer efforts for the new gardens, with good results. The initial volunteer work party was very successful, with nine adults and three youth working three hours each. The gardener was pleased with the effort and stated it was equivalent to one full week of staff time. The next work party is scheduled in August.

Arboretum Road Closure: MPIG will continue its discussions on the road closure's impacts on parking when large events are held. There are two upcoming major events at the Japanese Garden, including a July 22 moon viewing event. It will be helpful to allow access to the Arboretum Drive parking lots for both events. Paige will work with Cheryl and Thomas Hargrave on this.

## SR 520 Update

WSDOT does not yet have a date for when tolling will begin on SR 520. When it does begin, the ABGC will monitor whether commuters, trying to minimize the tolls, will park in the Arboretum's lots and carpool across SR 520.

City Council recently approved the WSDOT mitigation funds for the Lake Washington Boulevard traffic-calming plan to include two crosswalks, a speed cushion, and other elements. Council also approved reimbursement from WSDOT to pay the Berger Partnership for design costs and Parks staff for SR 520-related costs, up to \$350,000.

## Budget Updates

Arboretum Foundation – The Board approved the 2012 budget with a deficit. Paige and the Foundation staff will try to reduce the deficit during the New Zealand campaign endowment. This garden is scheduled for planting in spring 2013. The Foundation has raised \$650,000, with a \$2 million endowment, and needs to raise an additional \$550,000.

City – The Department has submitted information for its 2012 budget. The Mayor's proposed budget will be sent to City Council in early fall and made public at that time. Parks staff cannot say what was submitted in the budget; however, the maintenance cuts are not as bad as in the 2011 budget.

UW – The Center for Urban Horticulture is slated for an additional cut of 5%, or \$30,000, in 2012. Dean Lisa Graumlich of the UW College of the Environment is supportive of CUH and this helped minimize the cut.

## Old/New Business

*Arboretum Head Gardener Position:* Former Seattle Parks' Arboretum head gardener Paul Smith is on a year-long sabbatical. Kevin Smith, another Parks gardener, asked to be transferred to the Arboretum. Kevin has a degree in landscape architecture, is highly organized, a people person, a big thinker, and previously worked at the Arboretum. Paige stated she is thrilled to have Kevin as the new head gardener. Fred will add his contact info to the curation committee.

*June 8 Multi-Use Trail and North Entry Public Meeting:* Andy Sheffer led this well-attended meeting, with 60-70 people present. Several tried to focus the meeting on the SR 520 project; however, Paige effectively turned the discussion back to the multi-use trail and north entry projects. Larry Sinnott of the Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks requested the new visitor building in the north entry project not be located too close to houses surrounding the Arboretum.

There was strong sentiment voiced in favor of removing all ramp remnants from the Arboretum, with none of the material to be used in the north entry design. The ABGC agreed with this sentiment and wants to review the design. **Dave moved that the ABGC recommends no SR 520/freeway ramps/columns/remnants be used in the north entry design. Kjris seconded the motion. The vote was taken with all in favor and the motion carried.** Michael will notify the designers.

The next public meeting is scheduled for August.

*June 29 Master Plan Annual Update Public Meeting:* This was the annual public update of the Arboretum Master Plan implementation. Only 10-12 people attended, with the main concerns voiced being the SR 520 project and the multi-use trail. No comments were received on removal of trees in the New Zealand garden. The removals began on July 12, with the largest tree in the Arboretum (a poplar) slated for removal on July 14.

The low attendance led to a brief discussion on who received notification of the public meeting. Kjris lives near the Arboretum and heard from several neighbors they did not receive notice. Michael responded that

Seattle Parks mails notifications of the meetings and focused on those living near the multi-use trail especially. Donald added that the attendance is small, in part to people's reluctance to give up an evening to attend a public meeting.

*Seattle Parks Foundation Fund Study for Parks:* Dave recently read the Parks Foundations' draft report. Paige added the Parks Foundation is now working on a ballot initiative to bring before the voters. ABGC members felt strongly that Seattle Parks must weigh in on this, especially concerning its maintenance needs. Seattle Parks Division Manager, Robb Courtney, has been working for the past six months to determine the Arboretum's maintenance funding needs, as well as for other Seattle parks.

Paige will call Acting Parks Superintendent Williams to discuss the ABGC's concerns. The ABGC's Partnership Committee meets on July 19 and will discuss this further.

*New Zealand Garden News:* Fred and the horticulture crews have completed planting 150 new plants at this garden, and re-planted some others. The garden looks really good. Lisa Garvey is holding a party at the New Zealand Garden for 20 of her friends as a fundraiser. Cheryl's crew will ensure the area is well mowed before the event.

*Arboretum Marketing Plan:* Paige and Sarah met yesterday on this subject and discussed what to call the Arboretum. Seattle Parks refers to it as the Washington Park Arboretum, while the UW and Foundation call it the Arboretum. Sarah suggested "The Arboretum at Washington Park." (For further discussion.) UW students will develop, and the Arboretum Foundation will pay for, the marketing plan. ABGC members also suggested a marketing firm or firms may also take on this project, pro bono.

August 10 ABGC Meeting: WSDOT is scheduled to attend.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 am.

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Theresa Doherty, ABGC Chair