

## ***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, July 11, 2012**

#### ***Voting Members***

*Present:*

##### **Arboretum Foundation**

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

##### **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:*

- Hillary Burgess, UW Intern
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Projects & Planning Director
- Sarah Reichard, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UBG), Director

*ABGC Staff:* Sandy Brooks, Seattle Parks, ABGC Coordinator

*Public:* Rainer Metzger, UW Student, Montlake community

*Berger Partnership Team:* Jason Henry, Principal; Andy Mitton, Associate

*Washington State Department of Transportation Team (WSDOT) Team*

Rob Berman, Planning Manager; Kerry Pihlstrom, Engineering Manager West Side; Katie DeLeuw, Communications Manager for SR520 Project; and Mahlon Clemens, Urban Design Lead, and Elizabeth Umbanhowar, both of WSDOT Seattle Community Design Process Team.

#### **Standing Committees**

Building Committee:

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

Partners Committee:

AF: Paige Miller & Craig Trueblood

City: Donald Harris & Christopher Williams  
Michael Shiosaki & Leah Tivoli

UW: 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

The meeting was held at Graham Visitors Center at the Arboretum and called to order at 8:30 am. The chair asked everyone to introduce themselves. **Donald Harris moved approval of the June 13 minutes, as corrected. Dave Towne seconded. The vote was taken and motion passed unanimously.**

## **SR 520 Discussion**

The WSDOT SR 520 team attended this meeting to give an update on the Term Sheet and provide additional information on the design process. The team included Rob Berman, Kerry Pihlstrom, and Katie DeLeuw, as well as Mahlon Clements and Elizabeth Umbanhowar of the WSDOT Seattle Community Design Process Team.

### ***Term Sheet/TIFIA Funding/Phasing***

Kerry reviewed the development history of the Term Sheet and stated WSDOT will hold to its strong commitments to the Memorandum of Understanding with the ABGC; however, it cannot yet state a dollar figure for mitigation. The language of the Term Sheet is being changed to make clear the funds are coming. Some issues causing the delay are beyond WSDOT's control, including:

1. A lawsuit: with arguments starting on July 10, which "targets WSDOT's final environmental impact statement (FEIS) for the SR 520, I-5 to Medina: Bridge Replacement and HOV Project and the Federal Highway Administration's Record of Decision (ROD) concluding the analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and is critical of WSDOT for not further considering a four-lane bridge design." If the lawsuit results in an injunction, WSDOT must stop work on the entire project and cannot fund the mitigation.
2. The TIFIA loan: WSDOT remains unsure until September whether it has the loan and the exact amount. Once WSDOT has that information secured, it can determine exactly what it will build. In addition, there is competition for the mitigation dollars and some are above the budgeted amount. All this must be figured out so WSDOT will know how to distribute the pot of dollars.

Theresa understands there are many agencies competing for the pot of mitigation dollars. Jack stated he is frustrated with this process and is getting very nervous. Each month the ABGC is no closer to learning the amount of mitigation funds it will receive. This is an election year, with a new governor taking office in January as well as a new Secretary of Transportation. The mitigation amounts need to be finalized now — yet the process is on hold. Paige agreed; the ABGC wants a firm agreement on the amount of mitigation it will receive for impacts to the Arboretum — regardless of who is in office or is on the WSDOT team. The ABGC has estimated nearly \$21 million of impacts and has no indication what percentage of this amount WSDOT will fund.

Discussion turned briefly to determining the value of the Bryant property. Donald and Michael stated there are established measures for determining property values. However, it may take another 1-1/2 years to settle the Bryant property, as the processes are moving ahead slowly.

Kerry returned to the discussion of Term Sheet dollar amounts; WSDOT is actively working to determine the dollar amounts. WSDOT wants the Peninsula to go to Parks, but it must get something back when it gives away State land. She has gone to the highest levels of State authority and the direction she has received is that ABGC must give WSDOT time to sort out all the land figures and it will then know better what it can fund. WSDOT is motivated to complete this before the end of the year. Theresa asked if Kerry can provide ABGC a dollar range at the September meeting and then ABGC will have an internal discussion of the amount. Kerry will check on this and notify Theresa. Theresa noted the Term Sheet is conceptually complete. It has been reviewed and edited by the City's Law Department and will next be reviewed by the ABGC's small group and then be brought back to the full ABGC.

Paige stated that, while the WSDOT team must report to its leaders, ABGC members must also report back to their leaders. ABGC has worked with WSDOT on the SR 520 project and has not challenged the project. Now,

she must go back and report to the Arboretum Foundation that doors have closed and she doesn't know if partnering with WSDOT was a good idea – or not.

Michael, Donald, and Fred had a different view. If the Term Agreement isn't yet ready to sign, why must ABGC have the dollar figures now? Paige responded as soon as the dollar amounts are known, she wants a firm commitment from WSDOT on funding to the ABGC. Kerry believes the dollar amount and the amount the ABGC will receive will be determined by the end of the year, and is aiming for October-November. Michael asked that it be ready by November so the agreement can be signed by WSDOT and ABGC members by the end of the year. ABGC will meet on November 14 and December 12.

Iain is hearing all the risk is on ABGC – and it needs reassurance it is not being strung along by WSDOT. ABGC needs a firm dollar figure and not just words, or it risks ending up with whatever leftover dollars WSDOT has from its negotiations with other groups. Dave stated this is a very complex situation for the ABGC. The ABGC has supported WSDOT and now needs backing from WSDOT. He does not want ABGC to be criticized for the partnership. Paige agreed – ABGC has worked in good faith. If this partnership fails, other groups will be more hesitant to partner with WSDOT in the future.

Kerry stated she is also disappointed; however, the WSDOT team is confident it will have the dollar figure for ABGC by November. Kerry gave a quick overview of the dollar amounts WSDOT is working to determine, which include permits and impacts to park land requiring 4f – and which don't have a hard and fast dollar amount. A series of mitigation projects were identified and WSDOT is now trying to establish the amounts for these.

#### Proposed schedule for Term Sheet and Dollar Amounts:

- *Prior to September 12 ABGC meeting:* ABGC asked WSDOT to send its schedule for resolution with other property owners to ABGC members.
- *November:* WSDOT have firm Term Sheet and dollar amounts ready for ABGC in November.
- *December:* ABGC will discuss and sign the Term Sheet by the end of 2012.

The discussion next moved to the design process.

#### ***Design Process***

The final Seattle Community Design Process (SCDP) meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 16, 4:30-7:30 pm, at St. Demetrios. WSDOT staff will review what has been heard from the public during the design process, and ABGC members were encouraged to attend. WSDOT will brief Seattle City Council in September with the SCDP results. By the end of the year, WSDOT believes City Council will request changes to the preferred alternative. The Design Commission will be at the City Council briefing and help determine City Council's preference. Kerry agreed that the Design Commission is an important component of the Council's determination. [See <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/SR520Bridge/I5ToMedina/scdp.htm> for boards and other materials presented at the July 16 meeting.]

Mahlon and Elizabeth displayed a large two-part model of the draft design, as well as drawings, and stated some portions of the model are fixed components and other portions will change. The larger model showed the lid and the smaller showed the interim bridge that will be used during construction of the new bridge. Several drawings were then reviewed, with Jason and Andy from Berger Partnership helping respond to ABGC questions. The drawings included:

1. Concept Planning Legacy: WSDOT has been working with the City's Design Commission and updating the design visions. Drawings showed the area as it looked 100 years ago and how it presently looks.
2. Concept Diagram: Showed the footprint of SR 520, built 50 years ago, and how it is evolving.
3. Montlake Area Options: Described Option A and B (see below for drawings.)
4. Lake Washington Boulevard.

Mahlon referred to the lid and stated there will be some grade where the bridge lifts off the water. He then discussed the views from different areas once the bridge is built, with the Shelby-Hamilton neighborhood looking at a concrete wall.

### **Design comments/questions**

ABGC members had a number of questions and comments for WSDOT's consideration:

*Paige:* Will the bridge design affect homeowners' views of Lake Washington and Mt. Rainier? The ABGC does not want homeowners to lose those views, as that could cause a firestorm. Elizabeth stated that homeowners at 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue do have views of Mt. Rainier and the Cascades. Mahlon stated WSDOT will look at the views on a case-by-case basis.

*Paige:* How busy is 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue during peak rush hours and how many vehicles are currently using it? Kerry will forward that information to ABGC.

*Theresa:* Asked about the divet-shaped piece of property on the lid and Mahlon described its design.

*Theresa:* Noted the northeast area of the pond site is very grassy much of the time.

*Rob:* Residents of the Shelby-Hamlin area are concerned with access parking.

*Mahlon:* WSDOT will add sidewalks, signals, crosswalks, and lane markers along the lid.

### Portal/portal edge design (see drawings below)

*Michael & Iain:* Make the edge of the portal more narrow so it will be less attractive to the homeless. Iain noted steep slopes with trees attract the homeless.

*Elizabeth:* There are new opportunities with the Arboretum connections to build up the area in a sculptural design that would include views at the edge of the lid.

*Iain:* Recommended some sweeping rises be added; the model looks like an engineer's design. He asked WSDOT to be bold in the structure and create view opportunities.

*Jason* from Berger Partnership agreed; point well taken.

*Iain:* Suggested the water area be moved over and the grade be made less steep and eliminate the stairs.

*Elizabeth:* WSDOT is constrained from moving the water area by property rights on the north. The stairs are for ADA accessibility.

*Iain:* WSDOT and Seattle Parks (the property owner) aren't communicating well about the possibilities of this change.

*Donald:* As yet, it isn't known which agency will maintain all this new property and Parks is being cautious.

### Ramp Design

*Mahlon:* WSDOT is looking at driveways and encroachments. A 10' buffer has been added between Lake Washington Boulevard (near Montlake Boulevard) and the new SR 520.

*Andy of Berger Partnerships:* Gave more description on the design in this area and how the design will sequence from the parkway into the Arboretum.

*Additional Design comments:* Paige prefers Option A; Option B makes her nervous as the ramp design shows larger slots for vehicles. Theresa also prefers Option A. Jack likes the idea of a sweeping hill.

Option A



Option B



The WSDOT team will attend the ABGC's September 12 meeting with updated information on the design.

## **Budget and other Updates**

### *Arboretum Foundation:*

Paige reported the Allen Foundation made a recent gift of \$100,000 for the Cascadia Garden plantings. The gift was in memory of Paul and Jody Allen's mother, Faye, an avid gardener, who passed away recently. Donald noted the Allen Foundation also donated to the Japanese Garden restoration.

### *City:*

Donald reported no new information, at this point, on the City's budget. Mayor McGinn will release his proposed 2013 budget in late September.

### *University of Washington:*

Sarah stated there is nothing new to report on the University's budget. She noted that Tom DeLuca, the new director of the College of the Environment, will join the staff in September.

On Monday, July 16, she and Fred will lead a tour of the Arboretum and UW Botanic Gardens for UW Provost Ana Mari Cauce and School of Environment Dean Lisa Graumlich. Jack and Dave stated these high-level tours should include representatives of all three partners – the UW, Arboretum Foundation, and City. It is very important the partnership is emphasized. Sarah responded this was a small window of opportunity and she and Fred will stress the partnerships' importance.

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

Lake Washington Boulevard Road Closures: The Boulevard will be closed between the Japanese Garden parking lot and Foster Island Drive the following three weekends to complete the street lighting and traffic-calming projects. Scheduled closures:

- July 15-16: Sunday morning through Monday evening
- August 10-13, Friday at 7:00 p.m. through Monday morning
- September 8-9, Saturday morning through Sunday evening

## **Old/New Business**

*City Council Annual Briefing:* Donald has been working with Councilmember Bagshaw's staff to schedule the ABGC's annual briefing to Council. Suggested topics include maintenance/stewardship program, SR 520, Master Plan, and crime/vandalism at the Arboretum.

*SR 520 Term Sheet Follow Up:* Paige, Iain, and Jack agreed to write a letter to Paula Hammond, Secretary of Transportation, as follow up to today's discussion on the Term Sheet and mitigation funds. The letter will state the ABGC's concerns, request the \$21 million mitigation funds for SR 520 impacts to the Arboretum, and ask for a resolution of concerns by Wednesday, August 15.

ABGC members will also lobby City Council, Mayor McGinn, and the State Legislature and distribute copies of the letter to them. Iain suggested sending the letter to Governor Gregoire, Speaker of the House Frank Murray and Washington State Senator Patti Murray.

*Sister City Program:* Leah Tivoli, Seattle Parks, will report on this at the September meeting.

*ABGC Vacancy:* Donald reported that Acting Superintendent Williams is working with the mayor's office to fill the vacant mayoral position. He will keep the ABGC informed as the process moves forward.

Dave Towne's term ends 12/31/12. Dave contacted the governor's office about re-appointment and learned recent State legislation moved the appointment process to another area of State government. Theresa will help determine which office is now doing the appointing.

*Next ABGC Meeting:* The August ABGC meeting is cancelled. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 12. ABGC members should expect this meeting to last from 8:30-11:00 am.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 10:35 am.

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