

## **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, March 9, 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
- Kjris Lund, Mayoral Appointee

#### **University of Washington**

- Theresa Doherty, University of Washington, Assistant 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

*Absent:*

#### **Washington State**

- Dave Towne, Washington State Governor's Appointee

*Other Staff Present:*

- Stephanie Brown, Seattle Department of Transportation Manager
- Luke Korpi, Seattle Department of Transportation Planner
- David Graves, Seattle Parks, Senior Planner
- Sarah Reichard, UWBG, Professor
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Planning & Development Deputy Director

*WSDOT SR 520 Team Present:*

Katie DeLeuw, Communications Manager for SR520 Project, and Karrie Ruth, Engineering Manager West Side; Shane Cherry, WSDOT's SR 520 Environmental Mitigation Technical Lead

*Members of the Public Present:*

- Jorgen Bader

*ABGC Staff:* Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

## Standing Committees

Building Committee:	Paige (AF); Donald (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):	Michael (lead), Rick Nishi, Fred, Paige, Sarah, & Tom
SR520 Technical Committee:	David Graves (City); Theresa Doherty & Fred Hoyt (UW)

This meeting was held at the Graham Visitors Center. Theresa Doherty, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. The agenda was adjusted to move a discussion on "Where Will Enhancement Funds be Housed/Administered?" to a future meeting. There were no meeting minutes to approve.

WSDOT has delivered the SR 520 Mitigation Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the Graham Visitors Center and ABGC members are in the process of signing it, with expectations that all partners will have signed it within the next couple of weeks.

## Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG)

Michael reported on recent MPIG activities. Part of the report was presented prior to the SDOT and WSDOT presentations. The last portion followed WSDOT's report and news of its June 15 scoping deadline:

- MPIG met on February 14 and is scheduled to next meet on March 14.
- Port-a-potties have been installed at Pacific Connection Gardens; thanked Arboretum Foundation for funding; they are a long-term temporary solution; will move to a more permanent site when the Australia Garden is installed.
- 9 trees removed at New Zealand and Cascadia to prepare for new gardens; Fred and UW staff will send ABGC notice when any trees are being removed so ABGC can answer tree removal questions from public.
- \$675,000 of the \$1.2 million needed for New Zealand Garden has already been raised and the Foundation hasn't yet started its major fundraising efforts. This includes maintenance funding for the first couple of years.
- Sistus Nurseries is somewhat behind on plant propagation for the new gardens. Fred is working closely with Sistus, which has found a European seed source. Paige asked for an update from Sistus on what has been propagated to date.
- Several UW staff will tour Pacific Connections Unit on March 10.
- The Lake Washington Boulevard lighting project is moving slower than hoped. City Light is now in Phase 2 or 3 of the project, with the service connections being a holdup. Responding to a suggestion from Iain to sell the old historic light fixtures as a fundraiser for the Arboretum, Michael will discuss this with City Light and report back to ABGC.
- Berger Partnership prepared a cost estimate on the Camellia Garden update, with a \$750,000 cost to fully develop, and additional funding needed for maintenance and operation. MPIG is not recommending moving forward with this.
- Plans for an historic minka house, donated by the City of Kobe, Japan, are being reviewed. Funds must be secured to move and re-assemble the house, and ownership and use are big issues that must first be determined. The minka could be located outside the Japanese Garden, which would avoid the need to re-open the Arboretum's Master Plan process and could be used for an education center or tea room.
- Paige had an interesting discussion with Seattle Public Utilities Director Ray Hoffman on Arboretum Creek augmentation, with a well considered the cheapest route. Discussion will continue to be looked at, priced, and scoped.
- Michael and MPIG meet on Monday, March 14, and will begin preparing a schedule for scoping the north end projects. This will be brought back to the ABGC for discussion at the April 13 and May 11

ABGC meetings. The ABGC will also meet on June 8, one week before WSDOT's June 15 deadline for the scoping. At least one of the three public meetings must be scheduled before the deadline.

### **Update: Lake Washington Boulevard Traffic Calming**

Luke Korpi, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) traffic planner, and Stephanie Brown, SDOT traffic manager, gave an update on traffic-calming plans for Lake Washington Boulevard. ABGC members have worked with SDOT since November 2009 on this effort.

Luke displayed a large map of Lake Washington Boulevard in the center of the table, showing the conceptual layout of traffic calming measures, safety improvements, and existing and new signage. He described the proposed changes in detail, from the south end of the Boulevard's intersection with East Madison Street and working northwards. A new raised crosswalk will be installed north of the LWB/Interlaken intersection, a marked crosswalk will be installed at the intersection of South Arboretum Drive and LWB, and a new speed cushion will be installed just north of the Japanese Garden on LWB. The speed limit on the Boulevard is 25 mph, with speeds to be reduced to 15 mph at the raised crosswalk and speed cushion.

Much of the discussion focused on the signs. Some ABGC members expressed strong concerns with the number of signs, especially the number of new signs to be installed in conjunction with the changes. Luke spent a good amount of time explaining the regulatory and safety needs of the signs, which must meet City of Seattle standards.

Four new signs will be installed for the speed bump. One from each direction will read "Bump Ahead" and one from each direction will be installed at the bump location. These signs are necessary to notify drivers that the road ahead is different. SDOT must anticipate dark, rainy driving conditions, as well as drivers who are unfamiliar with the road. A traffic-calming bump just cannot appear suddenly in the road; drivers must have advance warning to slow down and have clear indication of the bump's actual location.

Responding to a question from Theresa whether the ABGC has the authority to ask for two, rather than four, signs at the speed bump, City staff answered that traffic bumps are signed this way in other parts of the City and not having the signage could open the City to litigation. This isn't always the first concern, but it does have to be considered.

Jack was especially unhappy with the number of signs. **He moved that two of the four "bump" signs be removed. Motion died for lack of a second.**

Luke and Stephanie agreed to look for ways to reduce the amount of signs and, if there are any opportunities to remove any, will do so. If not, the ABGC understands the constrictions and the plan will move forward.

#### *Other topics of discussion/concern:*

- Arboretum Drive E is now closed to traffic, but when large events happen it is opened one-way southbound. Does it need its own particular sign for these special events? The Arboretum Foundation currently provides volunteers wearing safety vests to direct traffic during the special events. Luke suggested they continue to do so, rather than installing a sign that could be confusing to driver.
- Responding to a suggestion that a sign be installed at the intersection of LWB and the south end of Arboretum Drive E for right turns only, Luke answered that this could be difficult for the public to understand and result in compliance issues. He noted this would require one additional sign to the plan.
- If need to revisit this plan, try to streamline next round – this process has been nearly 18 months in the making. Luke responded that altering the traffic in an area requires that a process be followed.
- Asked why a pedestrian-activated light isn't being installed at the crosswalks, Luke responded that studies have shown poor compliance at these. SDOT's traffic managers believe the current plan for

the sites (signage and marked/raised crosswalks) will be effective. However, the plan isn't static and could be revisited, as necessary.

- The sightlines for the three new installations aren't ideal, as LWB is curvy with many overhanging trees; however, SDOT is comfortable with the locations.

### ***Next Steps***

- SDOT will review the plan and will reduce the number of signs, if at all possible. If not possible, ABGC is in agreement with the proposal.
- SDOT will present the plan to Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks and point out both the existing signs and flag all the new signs. FOSOP also wants traffic improvements for LWB; however, they may voice concern with the number of signs.
- SDOT will prepare a cost estimate and implement the majority of the plan in summer of 2011 and complete remainder by end of year.
- Stephanie will e-mail the ABGC with the cost estimate and information on where and when implementation will begin.

ABGC members thanked Luke and Stephanie and SDOT for all their work on this process.

## **WSDOT Presentation**

The WSDOT team reviewed four handouts (copies of each are attached to the approved version of these minutes.)

Shane Cherry, WSDOT's SR 520 Environmental Mitigation Technical Lead, is a consultant and scientist. He reviewed his role with the SR 520 project and discussed two handouts, a map titled "Figure 4 Location of the Mitigation Sites in Relation to the Project Impact Site" and "Environmental Milestones". This handout included the permitting schedule and timeline.

Jack asked who will select the plants for the new areas. Shane responded that WSDOT will, in consultation with ABGC members. Paige asked if the vegetation plans will be brought back regularly to the ABGC and Shane agreed they will. WSDOT and ABGC must develop a clear idea of how they will interact on these plans.

Shane next reviewed "Figure 5 WSDOT-Owned Peninsula Mitigation Concept" and asked for ABGC feedback on converting a portion of the lagoon to wetland. Paige asked if doing so would help with daylighting the creek for fish. Shane doesn't think the lagoon/wetland area is a good place for fish, as it has warm water and quite a few predators. It would take a great deal of effort to re-route Arboretum Creek to this area; however, it could serve as a mouth to the creek. Paige wondered if the public could get near enough to learn about fish and Shane answered that WSDOT would not want a trail or boat ramp in the area. People could look into the area from a short distance away.

Jack voiced approval of this effort to restore the wetlands. Fred believes it fits well with the Master Plan, and asked how it fits with the daylighting of Arboretum Creek. Shane recommended that this project be scoped early in the process. Following a short discussion, ABGC members agreed that the north entry projects should be scoped quickly. WSDOT will hire a consultant in the near future to help with this. Iain stressed the need for good design and suggested a view mound be built from the ramp debris. ABGC members enthusiastically endorsed this suggestion as a marriage of science and design. The mound (located outside the wetlands) would give some much-sought-after waterfront views. Shane responded that the point about good design is well taken; now it's time for the scoping group to roll up its sleeves and start work. He added that there is some flexibility on the design; however, part of his job is to reduce risk as much as possible and that must be part of the design consideration.

Shane next referred to "Figure 7 Arboretum Creek Mitigation Concept." Some discussion followed on the opportunities in this area to create wetlands and planting of natives/non-natives to enhance the wetland buffer – while enhancing/preserving the Arboretum's collections. Responding to a question from Iain whether the riparian enhancement areas could be re-graded and swales added, Shane answered that if those areas are counted as a buffer to the creek, WSDOT can get credit for this enhancement. He noted that the water in this area is shaded cool water that runs to Arboretum Creek. Jack asked why the area must be planted in native trees/shrubs and was told that this is by City and other agency requirements.

Discussion continued on the creek and pond. Following a question from Rob, Shane stated that he isn't precluding water flow to Arboretum Creek – the drawings are just reflecting the buffers in the riparian enhancement areas along the creek. Paige and Michael reported they met with the director of Seattle Public Utilities recently and are very encouraged about ways to get water to the creek.

Kerry gave three short updates: (1) WSDOT has a one-page geo-technical document on its website re: the SR 520 project; (2) WSDOT is closing the Section 106 process and will meet on March 22 to review the final document (WSDOT is working with the Tribes on a separate agreement); and (3) she will send a sample Memorandum of Understanding to Sandy to forward to ABGC members.

Following an inquiry from Kjrjris on how SR 520 tolling will impact the Arboretum and surrounding neighborhoods, WSDOT staff agreed to give the ABGC a briefing on this. WSDOT's tolling division is the lead and wants to monitor the tolling, see the impacts, and then assess the impacts. ABGC members suggested a neighborhood meeting for a presentation to include neighbors and the ABGC.

ABGC members thanked the WSDOT team for their good work and cooperation on the mitigation process.

### **Public Comment**

Jorgen Bader, retired City of Seattle attorney, distributed a two-page handout on the ABGC's Memorandum of Understanding with WSDOT. He addressed the ABGC for several minutes on the grave importance of ensuring the WSDOT peninsula is returned to the City as part of the mitigation for the SR 520 project's damage to the Arboretum and other parks. He urged that "restriction of use" be included in the MOU. His written testimony ended with the following statement: ***"To honor the statements of elected officials, the ABGC must get a commitment to return of the WSDOT peninsula into any future agreement and insist that such a commitment be in the "record of decision" on the SR 520 Bridge Replacement project."***

Jack suggested this language be included in the Memorandum of Agreement. Mr. Bader agreed this should be done, but the wording should also be included in the record of decision.

### **Partners Committee Report**

The Partners Committee, formerly the Joint Fundraising Committee, met on January 18 and is next scheduled to meet on March 15. The Joint Fundraising Committee achieved good results during the past two years. The representatives of the three partners will continue to meet every other month as the Partners Committee. Sarah Reichard will replace Sandra Lier as one of the UW's two members. Sarah will also replace Sandra on the ABGC as a non-voting UW representative.

### **Budget Updates**

Arboretum Foundation: Good news! Paige reported two donors made bequests of \$.5 million each to the Arboretum Foundation.

UW: On a less positive side, the Foundation is concerned about the letter from Acting UW President Wise regarding a possible cut of \$221,000 in State funding of the Arboretum's budget. Paige and Della will meet with Lisa Graumlich, UW Dean of the College of the Environment, next week to discuss this.

ABGC members spent some time discussing how to best lobby to keep the State funding intact. Paige and the Foundation have been asked to take the lead on the lobbying, but they need a clear understanding of what the outcome might be, whether a big campaign or quiet talks with influential legislators will be most effective, and the Foundation Board must agree to this role. Jack suggested he and Kjris write an opinion/editorial for the online newspaper, *Crosscut*. Kjris advised against a large, public campaign and will forward a list of her contacts in the State legislature. ABGC members continued the campaign discussion, with the following suggestions:

- do a quiet process, then let the public know that the Arboretum's fund is saved and needs public support
- must stage communications and determine message — "Save State's Arboretum Funding"
- Repeat the message that the Arboretum's collections are worth \$82 million, it provides undergraduate study, is for the public good, and includes an art gallery and collection
- Michael, Della and Barbara Wright can talk with their legislators in the 43<sup>rd</sup> district, as they live in that district

**Old/New Business:**

February 9 Annual ABGC Retreat: Jack commented that the retreat was helpful and Theresa did a good job as facilitator. The next retreat is scheduled for Wednesday, November 9, 2011.

ABGC Presentation to UW Regents:

Donald, Della and Dean Graumlich gave the presentation. The UW Regents appeared disengaged. Donald stressed to them that the Arboretum is one of the University's classrooms.

Next ABGC Meeting:

- Scheduled for April 13, 8:30-10:30
- Agenda to include presentation on Seattle Parks Funding Study, MPIG report on scoping the north Arboretum mitigation projects, and budget updates

Congratulations: ABGC members congratulated Sarah on publication of her new book The Conscientious Gardener: Cultivating a Garden Ethic.

**Old/New Business**

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

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