

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC)

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

Minutes – March 5, 2003

- Members: **Arboretum Foundation**
- ❖ Deb Andrews, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director
 - ❖ Fred Isaac, Arboretum Foundation President
- City of Seattle**
- ❖ Fritz Hedges, Parks and Recreation Department Policy Director
 - ❖ Sarah Neilson, Park Board of Commissioners
- University of Washington**
- ❖ Tom Hinckley, University of Washington Professor
 - ❖ John Wott, Arboretum Director

Permanent

Guests: Neal Lessenger, University of Washington
 Tom Mentele, Director of Development, College of Forest Resources, UW
 Royal Alley-Barnes, Operations Manager, Central East Sector, Parks and Recreation

Guests: Tom Brooke, Puget Sound Japanese Garden Society
 Jerry Sussman, Greater Madison Valley Community Council

Excused: Sandra Lier, University of Washington Associate V-P for Business Services

Absent: John Behnke, Washington State

Staff: Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Acting chair Fritz Hedges called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and everyone introduced themselves.

Approval of agenda and minutes

John moved and Sarah seconded that the March 5 agenda and February 5 minutes be approved, as presented. The vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Puget Sound Japanese Garden Society Proposal

Tom Brooke, representing the Puget Sound Japanese Garden Society (PSJGS), gave a presentation on a proposal to design and install landscaping outside the Japanese Garden to commemorate the Garden's designers.

Background

Several years ago, Tom Brooke, Koichi Kobayashi, and Tom Hinckley met and formed the PSJGS. In August 2004, a three-day symposium on Japanese gardens will be held in Seattle, with 200-300 attendees from around the world. The symposium will include workshops, lectures, and a dozen internationally-known speakers. PSJGS believes the symposium is a great time to call attention to the beautiful Washington Park Japanese Garden by installing a commemorative garden there. The memorial would be

a tribute to the designers of the Garden. Tom B will send copies of the flyer advertising the symposium to the ABGC members. PSJGS has been working with David Goldberg, Parks Department project manager, who is working on the Historical Project of the Arboretum's Master Plan.

Timeline

The proposed schedule is for the site plan and design plan to be complete in spring of 2003, with final project approval by July 1. The Society must know by May 2003 whether the project is a "go/no go". Construction would take about three months and should be completed before the August 2004 symposium.

Proposed Scope

Tom B displayed two models of the proposed design. The memorial would be located outside the entrance to the Japanese Garden, would be approximately 20,000 sq. feet, and cost \$90-100,000.

Funding

Pledges for 50-75% of the cost have already been received, in the form of in-kind services, material, and labor. A maintenance endowment has also been pledged. Iwagi Landscape Academy is anxious to work on the project.

Approval Process

Earlier in the year, Koichi gave a briefing to the Japanese Garden Advisory Council and to John Wott, Arboretum Director. The Japanese Garden Advisory Council does not believe it has the authority to approve this project.

Tom B. asked if the ABGC can approve the project. Neal believes that the ABGC is the primary group to ask approval of, as it has representatives from the Arboretum, City of Seattle, and University of Washington. Fritz said that the Parks Department owns and operates the land and must give any final approval. The Parks Department would follow its public involvement policy. The proposal may be taken before the Park Board, which would give a recommendation to the Parks' Superintendent. Sarah, a current member of the Park Board, said that the Board would want to hear from affected residents. Homeowners living at the top of the steep slope above the site, nearby residents affected by increased parking needs and traffic, and other interested parties would be given the opportunity to give testimony to the Board before it would make a recommendation. The Superintendent would make the final decision. Royal said that the City of Seattle's bid process, which also must be adhered to, could make meeting the deadlines difficult. Tom M said that if the area is designated as a critical area for landslides, a hazard review would take 60-90 days, which also would adversely affect the proposed schedule.

Discussion/Suggestions

Fred said that he was at several of the PSJGS board meetings and there were objections regarding the commemorative project being located at the south entry. A portion of the Arboretum Master Plan calls for an education center to be built very near the proposed commemorative site. Can this project be scaled way back and still meet its objective? Tom B said yes it can and that Koichi is still reviewing the south entry issue. Deb said this is not part of the Arboretum Master Plan and is proposed for a very tight spot on the grounds. It is awkward for landscaping to be installed before construction on the education building is completed. Neal said he is concerned with the projects' size and whether it would conform to the Arboretum's Master Plan.

Barnes asked if the project could be scaled back to a series of commemorative rocks? Tom B said it could be scaled back to 10,000 sq. ft; it needs to be large enough for the design team to have a project to work on and to generate interest and excitement from the Garden's sister city in Japan.

Tom H suggested that the initial stage of the project include the commemorative rocks *and* display boards depicting what the hillside might look like in the future, if additional phases of the project are implemented. Fred said that commemorating the Garden's designers is a real opportunity and he would support Tom H's suggestion of a phased project. Tom B said the project could be in four phases, with additional plants and rocks added in later phases. Fritz said he is comfortable with a small project at this time, as public process for a large project would not allow PSJGS to meet its deadlines. Sarah also liked the four phases.

What's Next?

Tom B will meet with Koichi to discuss the scale and size of the project and whether a "phased" approach would work. If the project is still viable, PSJGS will continue working with David Goldberg and John W on the design. ABGC members want information on the exact size of the commemorative rock garden and its exact location within the site plan. There was some discussion as to whether the ABGC should meet at the site. Instead, John W and David will continue working on this proposal and report at the April 2 ABGC meeting. Tom was thanked for his presentation.

Washington Park Field House Renovation

Background

Jerry Sussman, Greater Madison Valley Community Council, came to the ABGC to discuss a plan to add badly-needed community meeting space to the Madison Valley area. A preliminary design for renovation of the brick fieldhouse, near the soccer field just south of the Arboretum, has been completed. The design would transform the vacant and locked 1930s building into a community hub with meeting space, a classroom, a small kitchen, and restrooms. The building, which recently had a new roof added, is currently used by the Parks Department for storage.

Costs/Funding

Two years ago, the Community Council received a \$5,000 Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) award from the Department of Neighborhoods to study the feasibility of renovating the field house into a community meeting space. Only \$2,400 of the award was used; the remainder was returned to the NMF. The estimated cost for the renovation is \$200,000. On May 3, the Community Council will submit a Letter of Intent to apply for \$100,000 from the NMF. \$25,000 of the match may be labor; \$75,000 must be monetary. The project has many volunteers ready to assist.

Design

The original building is 1,700 sq. ft. An addition would be added to include a kitchen. At the project's completion, there would be inside and outside restrooms, the kitchen, and two meeting rooms. The two meeting rooms would hold approximately 30 people each.

Support

Jerry said there is very good support from the community for this project and that the Parks Department is very favorable. Barnes applauded the Community Council for its inclusive approach.

Use/scheduling

Jerry said that the Community Council meets infrequently and would not be a heavy user of the facility. The Parks Department would be in charge of scheduling. It has been proposed that a staff person from Montlake Community Center coordinate the scheduling. Fees collected would be used to help pay for the coordinator. Scheduling of the building would take the ballfield use into consideration. Fritz said some groups would not be charged a scheduling fee. John W said this would be a good site for the Japanese Garden to use for some of its classes. The Arboretum could use it for meetings and classroom space.

Discussion/Recommendation

Fred said that there are plans to eventually build an education center at the south entrance of the Arboretum. Neal said that this hasn't been funded and may be 20 years away. He has observed other communities doing similar projects with great results and applauds this idea.

Fritz encouraged the Community Council and other project volunteers to landscape the facility well, in keeping with the appearance of the Arboretum. Jerry said that, unfortunately, there is no money budgeted for landscaping. Deb said that the Arboretum Foundation can assist with this. Tom M said that the University of Washington will also assist. Jerry expressed gratitude for any and all help with the landscaping.

What's Next?

Fritz asked Jerry to keep the ABGC updated on the project and thanked Jerry for his presentation.

Review of Goals and Objectives

Fritz read each of the Goals and Objectives and members discussed the current status of each. An updated copy of the document will be sent to everyone. It was suggested each person look at the tasks assigned to them and add additional information in the "comment" column, if needed for clarification.

New/Old Business:

- (1) There was a short discussion on the status of the SR 520 expansion. The ABGC will continue to monitor this project and its effect on the Arboretum.
- (2) Tom H distributed a news release from the Center for Urban Horticulture announcing the unveiling and opening of the Miller Seed Vault on Friday, March 7, 2:00 p.m. This state-of-the-art seed vault, one of only eight in the United States, will be used to securely store seeds from the region's imperiled, native plants. Washington is home to more than 460 rare plant species. Conservation seed banks, such as Miller Seed Vault, keep plant restoration options open. Scientists can use stored material to study the species and grow plants for plant reintroductions. The grand opening of this vault is a significant boost to the Center for Urban Horticulture's plant conservation program. ABGC members were invited to attend.
- (3) The job description for the new Director of the Center for Urban Horticulture has been posed and will close on March 30, 2003.

There being no other business, Fred moved and Tom H seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 10:00 am.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Deborah Andrews, ABGC Secretary