

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC)

Web site: <http://depts.washington.edu/wpa/abgc/>

The ABGC is also closely monitoring the WSDOT SR520 project for impacts to the Washington Park Arboretum. Please see

<http://depts.washington.edu/wpa/520.htm>

Joint effort of the Arboretum Foundation, Seattle Parks, and the University of Washington (UW)

Location: Graham Visitors Center

May 13, 2009

Voting

Members

Present:

Arboretum Foundation

- Paige Miller, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director

City of Seattle

- Jack Collins, Mayoral Appointee
- Kjris Lund, Mayoral Appointee
- Donald Harris, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Property & Acquisition Services Manager

University of Washington

- Theresa Doherty, University of Washington, Assistant Vice President for Regional Affairs
- Sandra Lier, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG) Director
- Iain Robertson, University of Washington Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture

Washington State

- Dave Towne, Washington State Governor's Appointee

Excused: Barbara Wright, Arboretum Foundation President

Others

Present:

- Tim Gallagher, Seattle Parks, Superintendent
- Fred Hoyt, UWBG, Facilities & Grounds Manager
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks Deputy Director, Projects and Planning

Staff:

- Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Standing Committees

Funding Requests to State Legislature: John (AF), Jack (City), & Dave T (Washington State)

Fundraising Policy: AF: Paige Miller & Barbara Wright

City: Tim Gallagher (Chair) & Donald Harris

UW: Bruce Bare & Sandra Lier

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG) Michael (lead), Donald, Fred, Julia, Paige, Sandra & Tom Hinkley

Mission Statement: Kathleen Pierce (AF), Donald (City), & Sandra (UW)

Naming Recognition Guideline: Paige (AF), Donald (City), & Sandra (UW)

SR520 Mediation: Paige, representing both the ABGC and AF

ABGC Chair Dave Towne called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. The agenda was approved, as well as the minutes from the April 8 meeting.

Attendance at Upcoming Meetings:

- Sandra and Dave will be absent from the June meeting
- Barbara will be absent from the July meeting; Skip Vonckx will attend as her representative
- Paige will be absent from the August 5 ABGC meeting

Budget Updates

Arboretum Foundation

Paige reported that the Arboretum Foundation currently at first projected a \$226,000 deficit for its approximately \$1,000,000 FY2010 operating budget. With a lot of work and some personnel reductions the projected 2010 deficit is now somewhere between \$70-100,000. The primary reasons for the projected deficit are that membership in the Arboretum Foundation has decreased, the 2010 Flower & Garden Show remains unscheduled at this time, and the UW has asked for additional funding for its two priorities at the Arboretum (which the Arboretum Foundation Board agreed to fund and the ABGC commended the Foundation for doing so.) The Foundation had to lay off one employee, Helen Payton. The 2009 Flower & Garden Show netted just under \$45,000 for the Foundation, while the recent plant sale at Magnuson Park netted \$62,000.

University of Washington

Sandra reviewed the cuts she has recommended, as Acting Director of the University of Washington's Botanic Gardens (UWBG.) She has requested that the budget amounts the UW provides to the Arboretum not be reduced, and expressed gratitude that both the Foundation and the City have done the same.

The UWBG budget has a \$214,000 deficit based on a \$2.1 million annual budget. Elizabeth Loudon's position has already been cut and the library staff will be cut 80%. Sandra is paid 40% of the UWBG Director's salary, which is an annual savings of \$84,000. The salary is paid by the State and she has requested that the Dean of College of Forest Resources direct those salary savings to the UWBG.

Jack appreciates these regular budget updates from the three partners and would like to hear a budget presentation on the Arboretum itself. He expressed regrets on the loss of Elizabeth Loudon as the Education and Outreach Manager for the UWBG.

City of Seattle

Tim reported a mid-year adjustment for Seattle Parks of \$2 million (1.5 %) for the 2009 budget. When the budget was prepared last year, the Department had a 5% increase in its budget and now has a 1.5% decrease. He voiced strong appreciation to the Associated Recreation Council (ARC) for providing a \$400,000 offset to the 2009 \$2 million cut. ARC will provide an additional offset of \$800,000 in 2010, when Seattle Parks expects to have much higher budget cuts. The ARC Board voted unanimously to provide this support, which resulted in no reductions of services at the various centers where ARC sponsors programs. ARC provided this support by reducing its 90-day reserve to a 60-day reserve. The only group that dissented from this decision was the Green Lake Rowing and Sailing component of ARC.

Last week all the City Department heads met with Mayor Nickels to discuss the budget crisis and reviewed the proposed cuts to each, as well as add-ins. The City's budget is currently in fairly good shape, with managers working hard to create savings. Seattle Parks will have no reduction in service or funds to the Arboretum in 2009 and will retain the two gardeners currently assigned there. The ABGC commended the City for this support.

UW College of the Environment

Sandra gave an update on the new College of the Environment at the UW. Several current colleges, including the College of Forest Resources, will be merged into this new school to make it the University's third largest

school. The search is underway for the interim dean. Bruce Bare, the current Dean of the College of Forest Resources, is retiring as Dean in early summer 2009.

Donald commented that the UWBG and ABGC have been fortunate to have Sandra Lier return from retirement to serve as Interim Director of the UWBG. Her background as a former vice-president at the University has been invaluable. Paige and others agreed.

Sandra moved that the ABGC write a letter of thanks to Elizabeth Loudon to commend her for all her work on behalf of the Arboretum, and especially for development of the audio guide for the Pacific Connections garden. Jack seconded. The vote was taken and was unanimous in approval.

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG)

Phase II Logistics: Michael reported that MPIG met on Monday and discussed how best to sequence the Chile, Cascadia, and New Zealand components of Phase II. MPIG recommends that the partners next work to implement the New Zealand portion. A large part of the work is the propagation of the 56,000 plants needed for Phase II. Staff met with eight local nurseries to determine their interest in the propagation, with all showing little to none. Recently, Cistus Nursery, located in Oregon, has shown strong interest and bid \$455,000 to propagate and supply the needed plants. The ABGC previously discussed whether UW horticulture students could take on this work; it has since been determined that it would be about the same cost for the students to propagate the plants as it would be for a nursery to provide them.

Phase II Financial Component: The new Parks and Greenspaces Levy will provide \$2.5 million for Phase II of the Master Plan; however, this is not enough for completion and private fundraising has slowed due to the current economy. MPIG recommends that Phase II components be broken down into smaller segments and completed as funding becomes available. Sandra has asked the UW for some funding to help with this and will keep making the request.

MPIG and ABGC Roles: Jack asked for a presentation from MPIG at the June meeting with detailed information on Phase II. As a member of the ABGC, he is not opposed to MPIG's recommendations; however, he believes the ABGC should have regular reports from MPIG and then vote on the recommendations. The June agenda will include time for a further discussion on this. Michael gave the date and time for the next MPIG meeting and stated that all ABGC members are welcome to attend any of the meetings.

Japanese Garden Dedication: The May 4 grand opening of the new entry was an incredible success, with up to 1,000 people attending. The event received great press! Paige noted that, from a logistical sense, it would be helpful to have Arboretum Drive open for the Arboretum's large events to help with overflow parking. Donald stated that Elizabeth Moses and Mary Ann and Bob Wiley, major donors to this project, were elated with the project's success. The project originated from an effort by Parks staff person Belinda Gigliotti encouraging donors to repair the drinking fountain at the entry. That suggestion led to further discussion on what improvements could/should be done at the entry – and evolved into a brand new entry, complete with restrooms and a meeting space.

Paige noted that when the bids came in too high, Superintendent Gallagher redirected Pro Parks Levy funds to enable the project to move forward. The Pro Parks Levy provided a total of \$450,000 in

funds to the project. Tim commended Michael Shiosaki's staff members, Andy Sheffer and Kelly Goold, for their exceptional work as project leads. Paige added that all those involved deserve a big pat on the back for this successful project.

Other: Fred noted that the Japanese Garden Advisory Council provided funds for Arboretum trail maps, which were translated to both Japanese and Spanish. Iain pondered how best to make the Arboretum and Japanese Garden more well known as destination points. It was noted that in a recent commentary by City Councilmember Jean Godden, the Washington Park Arboretum was listed as one of Seattle's exceptional places.

Update: SR 520 Project

Paige noted that the State Legislature has now adjourned for this session. She summarized that work on the SR520 project has been contentious. The Legislature has determined that tolling will begin on SR520 (and not I-90 at this time); however, the Legislature has not yet selected a preferred alternative. There is more public process to be completed on the west (Seattle) side of the project and a Legislative-appointed committee will help resolve the west side alternative. Governor Gregoire is very engaged with this project. Kjris asked about the middle section of the bridge and Paige responded that work will move ahead with the replacement of the pontoons. Paige believes there will be a reduction of traffic on Lake Washington Boulevard, once tolling on SR520 begins in 2010. Kjris asked if traffic counts, as well as traffic projections, are being performed along Lake Washington Boulevard. Paige responded that WSDOT is doing this. She believes that the I-90 trip time will increase when drivers who now use SR520 instead use I-90 to avoid the toll. Theresa added that WSDOT will also monitor for increased commute times on I-90 and toll it, as necessary.

Arboretum Drive

Tim reported that the new signs notifying the public that Arboretum Drive is closed to vehicle traffic have been ordered. The gate has been removed from the south end and bollards have been installed. Dave requested one more bollard be installed, due to staff driving their vehicles around the bollards and onto the grass. Paige noted that many more people are now walking in the Arboretum than before.

Kjris walks in the Arboretum frequently and regularly notes 4-5 cars driving on the road. Paige responded that most of these are using the Arboretum for illegal behavior. Donald asked that any violators be reported to Parks security (684-7088 or 396-0922.) Kjris believes that many people do not yet know that Arboretum Drive is permanently closed and Tim responded that the new signs should help get the word out.

Joint Fundraising Committee & Naming Recognition Guidelines

The Committee's May 7 meeting was cancelled; the next meeting is scheduled for June 4. Michael reported that the two subcommittees are working to bring forth funding proposals to the Joint Committee.

New/Old Business

Earth Day: More than 250 volunteers and staff participated in Earth Day at the Arboretum, including several Boeing employees. The events had very positive publicity and good results. Fred has since met with the Student Conservation supervisor and will meet with Paul Smith and David Zuckerman,

the UW and City's crew chiefs for the Arboretum, to review how things went and suggest ways to improve next year's event.

Graham Visitor Center Management: Sandra reported that she will meet with the UW's Real Estate office on June 22 to review the contract and will report the results to the ABGC.

Invite Councilmember Rasmussen to an ABGC Meeting: The August ABGC meeting has been re-scheduled from the 12th to the 5th and Councilmember Rasmussen will attend. ABGC members commented that Councilmember Rasmussen is a serious gardener and is very fond of the Arboretum. Members suggested that he be invited to all the summer events at the Arboretum and be briefed at the August 5 meeting on the Arboretum and the ABGC and its efforts, as well as how Pro Parks Levy and the new Parks and Greenspaces Levy are helping implement the Arboretum's Master Plan and other projects.

UW Regents Tour: This tour is scheduled for July 15, with Superintendent Tim Gallagher as the lead. All 12 Regents are invited on the tour and will arrive at 4:30 p.m. The tour will be by bus and should be carefully planned, as the Regents are scheduled to be at another event at 6:15. ABGC members urged Tim to give a strong message that the Arboretum is much more than a well-loved park — it is also an education center and is used for marine biology and as an ecological resource. ABGC members will give Tim specific information on the national and international research that is performed at the Arboretum that he can share with the Regents. Iain volunteered to help with this information.

Allow time at the end of the July 8 agenda to review this presentation.

Lake Washington Boulevard: Now that Arboretum Drive has been closed to vehicle traffic, Kjris asked that the ABGC next focus its attention on Lake Washington Boulevard — which runs through the middle of the Arboretum and is heavily used by vehicles. She believes that much of the ABGC's attention has been focused on the Washington State Department of Transportation's SR520 project and that the traffic impacts from Lake Washington Boulevard are another serious matter that requires the ABGC's attention. She distributed a one-page handout regarding lights, signage, and pathways that currently have no crosswalks to allow pedestrians to cross the Boulevard to move safely from one side of the Arboretum to the other. Jack added that there are too many cars on the Boulevard, with many traveling at unsafe speeds.

Donald stated that Seattle's Department of Transportation (SDOT) has primary control of the Boulevard and, although it is a park boulevard, it is also a main traffic arterial. SDOT considers it as a boulevard from the curb side out. He suggested that the ABGC contact SDOT and determine who their lead staff are on the Boulevard. Once the lead is known, Tim and Parks staff will work on the safety issues with SDOT and the Mayor's office. In addition, City Council has scheduled a pedestrian safety public hearing on July 21. Parks staff will forward the agenda to ABGC members, once it is finalized.

Iain noted that a significant, and much needed, safety addition would be a 3-way stop at Boyer Avenue. Kjris summarized that it is a matter of human planning — this beautiful park has a terrible traffic lane running through its middle.

Arboretum Survey: Sandra distributed a copy of a draft survey to determine how visitors use the Arboretum. She will continue working on the survey, with the final cost to be divided between the three partners. Dave asked if a survey of this type has been done previously. Fred responded that one was completed during the Master Plan process and the findings have been invaluable. The surveys help determine how many are doing research in the Arboretum. He noted that people come from around the world to conduct the research; the survey will help staff determine the various ways the Arboretum is used.

Washington Park Arboretum's 75th Anniversary Celebration: All three partners are working on the events, with the Arboretum Foundation as the lead. The events have been scaled back from the original plans, due to budget concerns. Paige listed several events, which include an Art in the Park event and a "Y'all Come" 1930's theme ice cream social, with old cars on display and a barbershop quartet performing.

Special Events: The Arboretum celebrated Mother's Day, with a large number of people visiting. Gifts were presented to the moms who attended. Paige reported that the parking lots were all full; however, traffic seemed to work okay with Arboretum Drive closed.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be on June 10, 8:30 am, at Graham Visitors Center.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 10:05 am.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Theresa Doherty, ABGC Secretary