

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, May 12, 2010

Voting Members

Present:

Arboretum Foundation

- Barbara Wright, Arboretum Foundation President
- Paige Miller, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director

City of Seattle

- Jack Collins, Mayoral Appointee

University of Washington

- Theresa Doherty, University of Washington, Assistant Vice President for Regional Affairs
- Sandra Lier, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG) Director

State of Washington

- Dave Towne, Washington State Governor's Appointee

Absent:

- Kjris Lund, Mayoral Appointee
- Iain Robertson, University of Washington Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture

Other Staff Present:

- Eric Friedli, Seattle Parks, Acting Deputy Superintendent
- Donald Harris, Seattle Parks, Property Manager
- Fred Hoyt, UWBG, Associate Director
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Planning & Development Deputy Director

Members of the Public Present:

- Susan Black, Arboretum Foundation

ABGC Staff:

- Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Standing Committees

Building Committee:

Paige (AF); Donald (City); & Sandra (UW)

Funding Requests to State Legislature:

John (AF), Jack (City), & Dave T (Washington State)

Fundraising Policy:

AF: Paige Miller & Barbara Wright

City: Donald Harris

UW: Tom Hinckley & Sandra Lier

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG)

Michael (lead), Donald, Fred, Julia, Paige, Sandra & Tom

Mission Statement:

Kathleen Pierce (AF), Donald (City) & Sandra (UW)

Naming Recognition Guideline:

Paige (AF), Donald (City), & Sandra (UW)

SR520 Mediation:

AF, David Graves (City), & Theresa Doherty (UW)

Barbara Wright, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 am and the agenda was approved, with minor changes.

Seattle Parks Superintendent Tim Gallagher, also a member of the ABGC, recently resigned. Acting Superintendent Christopher Williams and Acting Deputy Superintendent Eric Friedli attended today's meeting and introductions were made. They will continue the Department's support of the ABGC's efforts and will attend the meetings on a quarterly basis.

It was moved and seconded that the January 13, February 4, and February 10 minutes be approved as corrected. The vote was taken and was unanimous in approval. Members were asked to review the March 10 and April 14 minutes and send any corrections to Sandy by Monday, May 17. Once she has made any corrections, both sets will be considered approved and will be posted to the ABGC website.

SR520 Updates

Last week Paige and Barbara were invited, with only one days' notice, to attend a meeting with WSDOT, held just before Governor Gregoire announced her decision about the SR520 project. Her announcement included information that the preferred alternative would not include ramps to Lake Washington Boulevard, which runs through the Arboretum. Both Paige and Barbara are members of the Arboretum Foundation. ABGC members questioned why only Foundation members were invited, as it is the three partners (City, UW, and Arboretum Foundation) who make decisions about the Arboretum, with the ABGC being the governing body. Paige and Barbara stated they made this clear to WSDOT.

Paige next reviewed some of the changes to the project that were discussed at the meeting, including: reducing traffic on Lake Washington Boulevard (WSDOT supports); and tolling on the Boulevard (WSDOT interested and will study).

WSDOT staff members are scheduled later on this meeting agenda. The ABGC agreed that it will strongly urge WSDOT to dedicate additional tolls for vehicles that enter/exit SR 520 via Lake Washington Boulevard and the Arboretum, with the tolls used for Arboretum maintenance. ABGC will also discuss where the speed limit drops to 45 mph, as traffic approaches Foster Island.

Paige briefly reviewed the project timeline. There is a great deal of work to accomplish this summer, with a strong focus on reducing traffic, designing to avoid harm, and determining mitigation for any harm to the Arboretum.

The discussion turned to traffic on Lake Washington Boulevard (LWB), as it crosses through the Arboretum, and that tolling could reduce its negative impact on both the Boulevard and the Arboretum. Paige stated that LWB was built to accommodate 4,000 vehicles daily; however, due to drivers using it to access or exit SR 520, it is used by as many as 20,000 vehicles a day. Sandra stated the ABGC must be mindful there are various groups it must consult with on any tolling proposal.

Michael noted that the ABGC was pleased with the Governor's preferred alternative but the Montlake neighborhood isn't. Barbara added that while Montlake can be a tough opponent, WSDOT doesn't want to alienate the Arboretum's many supporters. She added that former Park Superintendent Gallagher's letter to WSDOT emphasizing that Lake Washington Boulevard (LWB) is a park boulevard and not a city street helped sway the governor's decision. Paige is encouraged but there are still many details to resolve, with the primary one to resolve traffic issues on LWB. The ABGC will need assistance from either the Seattle Department of Transportation or the UW's transportation consultants.

The ABGC asked that the Technical Group (Fred, David, Theresa & Paige) present monthly reports on their work to the ABGC, and will ask WSDOT to attend ABGC meetings on a regular basis. At the June meeting,

the ABGC will discuss how it most effectively moves forward on the project. Barbara recommended that the ABGC commend WSDOT for taking the ramps out of the Arboretum, but not vote its approval.

Partner's Budget Updates

UW: Will know more in May.

Seattle Parks: Christopher reported that Parks is encouraged that it is the only City Department having face-to-face meetings with the Mayor and Budget Director regarding mid-year budget cuts.

Jack contacted the Associated Recreation Council Executive Director, the Park Board Chair, the Parks Foundation Executive Director, and others to discuss a Metropolitan Park District (MPD). Acting Superintendent Williams responded that the Mayor favors some type of Operations & Maintenance (O&M) levy, but not an MPD. Jack still wants to push for an MPD and try to get at least an O&M levy. Paige is concerned with the possibility that some of the City's Parks and Green Spaces Levy projects could be held up, which would impact the propagation for the New Zealand Garden, as well as the Gateway to Chile Garden. Sandra added that there are similar issues with the UW's budget.

Arboretum Foundation: The Board, at the University's request, has agreed to fund a new $\frac{3}{4}$ time gardener for the Pacific Connections garden and Gateway to Chile. This will result in a budget deficit for 2011 for the Foundation.

City Council Briefings: Currently the City Council Parks and Seattle Center Committee briefing is scheduled for May 20, 9:30 am. The focus will be on budget cuts that might affect the Arboretum and on the SR 520 project.

WSDOT – SR 520 Presentation and Discussion

WSDOT Team Members: Julie Meredith, SR 520 Project Manager; Jenifer Young, Environmental Manager Michael Horntvedt, Transportation Manager; Karrie Ruth, Engineering Manager West Side; and Katie D'Leary, Communications for SR520 Project.

Julie gave a brief overview of the project. The planning process began in 1997; the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was issued in 2006 and received 1,700 comments; the governor then directed WSDOT to lead a mediation process; the SDEIS was issued earlier this year; and the governor recently announced her preferred alternative. The project has had hundreds of public meetings and 7,000 pages of technical information have been issued.

Jenifer noted that the SDEIS received 415 comments, with many of those being more lengthy and thoughtful than the 1,700 comments received on the DEIS. The comments were submitted by 339 individuals, 44 community groups, 5 businesses, and 23 agencies, jurisdictions, and tribes. She noted that comments were received from the ABGC, Arboretum Foundation, UW, City of Seattle, and the Board of Park Commissioners.

Much of the comments focused on noise and visual impacts from the project and urged that any impacts to Foster Island be minimized, as well as the traffic on Lake Washington Boulevard. WSDOT received many comments regarding the ramps that connect SR 520 traffic into the Arboretum.

Karrie next reviewed some of the key features of the preferred alternative including: removal of ramps into the Arboretum; construction of a second bridge across the Montlake Cut; readying the corridor for bus and light rail; narrowing the lanes in the corridor; including a longer lid; and designing a friendly urban pedestrian exchange at Montlake.

She next rolled out a very large (approximately 8' x 3') project drawing and she and Julie pointed out various elements including the general purpose lanes; high occupancy vehicle transit; location of highways connecting to local communities; location of the lids; stormwater drainage sites; the pedestrian/bike access; height of the bridge at various locations; and many other details.

Questions/Comments

Responding to a question from Barbara, Karrie described the pedestrian crossings and stated that WSDOT will continue working with the City on the design and how best to get pedestrians and bikes across 24th. Barbara requested the design be as intuitive as possible. ABGC members then asked a number of questions about traffic flow, bike lanes, and ramp locations. A short summary of WSDOT comments and ABGC questions or observations follow:

WSDOT comments:

- a traffic management plan for the Arboretum is required as part of the project
- the area where the Museum of History and Industry is currently located has not yet been designed
- the phasing of the second bascule bridge is still in discussion; however, it is funded and slated for construction by 2030
- the lids will include ventilation fans; WSDOT staff are unsure whether the fans can be heard outside the tunnel by pedestrians/bikers on the lid
- WSDOT is working with Sound Transit on transit options
- WSDOT will study the speed limits approaching Foster Island to determine the best location to lower the speed to 45 mph. ABGC members requested that it be lowered before vehicles reach the Island
- additional pontoons would be required to accommodate light rail on the bridge
- the ramps to the Arboretum are scheduled for removal in 2014-2016
- WSDOT has completed a decibel level study, with the results posted on the project page
- WSDOT will announce its preferred alternative in late 2010/early 2011, following the Environmental Impact Statement. Any appeals are expected to be filed after the announcement.

ABGC Comments

Dave - appreciates the sensitivity to the ABGC's recommendations; however, the "devil is in the details"

Paige – any light rail impacts are very important to the Arboretum

Susan – voiced thanks from the Arboretum Foundation for the positive changes in the project as it relates to the Arboretum

Next Steps

Senate Bill 6392 requires that WSDOT work with the ABGC as the project moves forward, and Julie and the team will attend ABGC meetings at regular intervals. Julie suggested she meet with Barbara and Paige regarding the mitigation. Theresa requested that she, instead, meet with the full ABGC and that some of the ABGC agendas focus solely on the SR 520 project. Julie and the team will attend the ABGC's June meeting, with approximately one hour allotted on the agenda. Barbara will work with Julie to determine the focus. Responding to a question from Paige on the Foster Island design, Julie answered that WSDOT will first work with the seven tribes to develop an agreement on the fishing and cultural resources. This must be completed before a potential design can be brought to the ABGC.

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG)

Michael reported that the Gateway to Chile project is under way. The trees slated for removal for this new garden were cut back to 4', with the stumps to be ground at a later date. A pre-bid conference was held this morning, with bids due on May 26. Work is scheduled to begin on June 14. Paige reported that the Arboretum Foundation is waiting to present the Foundation's check to City Council for this project.

Concerns were voiced about future maintenance and operation for the new Pacific Connections gardens. These gardens will need extra attention during the first two years, as the plants are getting established. As

reported above, the UW has asked the Foundation to fund a $\frac{3}{4}$ position to help with this work and the Foundation has agreed to do so. Jack asked whether Seattle Parks' Arboretum staffing is threatened by the 2010 and 2011 cuts. Christopher responded that the Arboretum is a priority for Seattle Parks; Mayor McGinn will not announce his proposed budget cuts until late September. Fred suggested a report be presented to ABGC describing how the three partners divide the Arboretum's maintenance costs.

The nearest restrooms to these new gardens are located across busy Lake Washington Boulevard, at the Japanese Gardens. ABGC members briefly discussed that a port-a-potty is badly needed at the new gardens.

Old/New Business

Building Committee: Sandra reported that she, Donald, and Paige are meeting regularly and addressing a list of issues regarding the Graham Visitors Center management agreement, including the recent basement flooding.

Bio-Blitz: Sandra reported that interest and news reports have been positive for the first Northwest Bio-blitz, scheduled at the Arboretum on the weekend of May 21-23. Professor Sarah Reichard is leading this effort, which should result in good baseline information on what species call the Arboretum home.

College of the Environment's Search for a Dean: Sandra has no new information to report and the search continues. She announced that the former College of Forestry Resources, which is now one of the schools in the College of the Environment, has been renamed to the School of Environment and Forest Sciences.

July 14 ABGC Meeting: Councilmember Sally Bagshaw will attend this meeting, from approximately 8:00-8:45 am. The meeting will begin 30 minutes early, at 8:00 am.

Arboretum Circle Dinner: This annual event was held on May 5 at Hillcrest, the home of UW President and Mrs. Mark Emerett. Paige reported that it was a very lovely event.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Barbara Wright, ABGC Chair