

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Retreat Notes
Center for Urban Horticulture – November 13, 2013

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.

Attendance

Arboretum Foundation

Paige Miller, Craig Trueblood, Rhonda Bush, Randall Hitchin, Sherrey Luetjen, Jim Reid, Skip Vonckx, Roger Williams, Megan Myers, Kristin Price, Niall Dunne, John Wott

City of Seattle

Kenan Block, Jack Collins, Michael Shiosaki, David Graves, Andy Sheffer, Paul Smith, Christopher Williams, Karen O'Connor, Rachel Acosta, Jonna Bell

University of Washington

Sarah Reichard, Iain Robertson, Fred Hoyt, Wendy Gible, Stephanie Harrington, David Zuckerman, Tom DeLuca, Kristin Buckley, Ray Larson, Karl Wirsing, Stanley Asah

Washington State

Dave Towne

Welcome

Acting Superintendent Christopher Williams congratulates the ABGC on all the work that has been accomplished in 2013. The New Zealand garden and the progress made on the multi-use trail are achievements that demonstrate the strength of the relationship between SPR and the partners. The Bonsai project is both an opportunity and a challenge and SPR supports going forward with a feasibility study. This partnership serves as a model for partnerships across other communities.

2013 Accomplishments

Jack mentions the major accomplishments for the ABGC in the year 2013:

- Negotiating with WSDOT for 10 years and ended up with a good settlement.
- New Zealand Garden – A huge project, so much work from all the partners and it turned out extraordinary.
- Fiddlehead Forest School – pre-school started this fall with full enrollment and a waitlist.
- Interpretive and wayfinding signs
- New Interpretive trails – Pinetum, Historic and soon-to-be Kayak
- Major contribution – Norcliffe Foundation and the Piggett Families made significant donations to the New Zealand Garden

Jack thanks Theresa and the UW for paying for the lunches for the retreat.

February 4, 2014 is the date for the celebration of the display garden at the Convention Center for the Northwest Flower and Garden Show.

MPIG

The Master Plan Implementation Guide passed in 2001. The Master Plan established a framework through which the purpose and building parameters of the Arboretum were outlined. The Master Plan emphasized size restrictions for parking and built structures in order to limit the infrastructure. Michael reviewed the priority list that was created in April 2013.

It is noted that according to the Master Plan, limitations on building and parking does not include the new North entry. Also, the Master Plan discusses moving Arboretum drive and that is not happening.

Parking is a big issue. Tom DeLuca suggests thinking strategically and radically about the parking, perhaps underground? Paige mentions that paid events need parking and more usage means less parking. Andy Sheffer thinks efficiencies could be made to existing parking lots, especially the gravel ones. David Graves suggests encouraging people to use other modes of transportation (ie. public transportation) by having better signage and highlighting their options.

Iain notes that renovating the collections is the first priority and keeping this at the forefront of people's mind is very important. Kenan will work on making maintenance of the collections appealing to the general public.

The multi-use trail is not on the priorities list for 2013; Andy reviews the multi-use trail timeline. The multi-use trail runs North-South.

It is discussed that perhaps it is time to update the Master Plan to include the north end of the Arboretum.

Pacific Connections Gardens – Is Australia the next step?

Cascadia garden is a garden that happens over time; as opposed to the New Zealand garden that is planted all at once. This is because it is hard to fundraise for endowment and maintenance. The Curation Committee will look at the Cascadia garden; the garden is young because most of the plants were locally sourced and planted by seed.

Andy Sheffer feels it is important to continue with the current Pacific Connections momentum and get started on the Australia portion of the garden. 2 focal forests are in growth now and it is a good time to start a 3rd. The site of the Australia garden is a small, level area which would be a great site for construction. Australia is mainly vegetation and creates a better buffer for Broadmoor. Paige counters that the Arboretum Foundation is not at a sustainable level to maintain a new garden. There could possibly be some funding from the Legacy Plan. The UW does not have any extra funds for the Arboretum. Tom suggests bringing more classrooms to the Arboretum for a bigger cut of tuition money.

Canal Reserve – The money needs to be converted to endowment for maintenance. Tom and the Dean will be talking with the Provost regarding the funds.

Pacific Rim Bonsai Collection – Everyone agrees the Bonsai Garden is an exciting opportunity. There is concern over the long-term maintenance of the collection. During tough economic years, one cannot cut back on maintenance on Bonsai – They need 100% maintenance all the time.

Iain wonders whether the Bonsai Collection holds enough extraordinary interest to be an international draw.

Paige offers the timeline of events: Weyerhaeuser has taken the 2 proposals and the internal recommendations to George Weyerhaeuser Jr. for the final decision. The Weyerhaeuser people assured Paige that the Arboretum is in the running for the collection. The Bonsai Gardener likes the design created by the Berger Partnership and Bob Hoshide. The Arboretum Foundation would raise \$2million in a capital campaign for this garden.

The main thoughts from the group regarding the Bonsai collection are as follows:

- This collection is a chance of a lifetime. The collection is a wonderful asset
- Curation - Is this a change in philosophy in terms of what the Arboretum does? Is it a fit?
- There has been enormous support from donors and Arboretum patrons
- There are concerns over parking and the financial ability to maintain the garden
- SPR has moved away from managing specialty gardens/zoos/aquariums
- SPR and UW have a considerable maintenance backlog and therefore feel it's tricky to add a new high maintenance project.

Funding

Parks – Talking with public about maintenance projects – there is currently a \$267 million backlog.

In response to community driven projects there will be a major project opportunity challenge fund with which non-profit partners will be able to apply for matching funds.

The Legacy Committee are discussing and considering the following questions:

- Should the amount stay the same as the current levy?
- Long-term vs. Short-term levy
- Should there be a new taxing authority created (ie. MPD)?

There will be public meetings in January. It is important for the ABGC to be present at those meetings and represent for the Arboretum. Rachel will send out the meeting dates to the ABGC so they can attend and advocate.

University of Washington – They are in the planning phase of their capital campaign. The timeline has yet to be established. The UW raised 2.7billion in the last capital campaign. The ABGC is ready to endorse Sarah's priorities for fundraising needs. Some of the money goes towards scholarships and sustaining basic UW necessities.

Arboretum Foundation – Fundraises 3 ways:

- Sustaining funds
- Capital Campaign
 - New Zealand – still need \$70,000
 - Cascadia - \$200,000 left
- Endowment
 - Giving a lot of money now to last a lifetime
 - Master Plan gardens – pays for gardeners

The University of Washington and the Arboretum Foundation meet to discuss the donor list and avoid being duplicative. It is typically a positive conversation with a common goal.

Outreach

Introductions: Jonna Bell, Nyhus Communications; Karl Wirsing, Director of Communications to the School of Environmental Sciences; Stanley Asah, Assistant Professor, Environmental social psychology; Karen O'Connor, Communications, Seattle Parks and Recreation; Kenan Block

How can we better engage the public?

- Use social media; Tweet and re-tweet to gain momentum.
- Create stronger partnerships between the community centers, the UW and Parks
- Seattle is tech savvy – make people ambassadors and give people hastags – mine their instagrams and tweets back from them for content. Use their photos and tweets to reinforce ownership and pride.
- There is an economic and generational bias when using social media alone.
- Social media does not tell stories; one needs to hear something from 12 sources before it sticks.

How is the Arboretum Special? If we have a selling point then...

- Ownership creates consistent behavior
- Reach out to specific demographics to learn from them what they want – face to face interaction; reach people where they dwell
- Most people use the Arboretum as a park; many of the trees and plants can be used in one's own yard.
- Combine art, communication and experience – this way the environment isn't broken and the art enhances it.
- Sarah mentions Cynthia Welke's Masters Thesis in which she interviewed 498 people and found out that 183 came for the plants, 338 people thought that most people came for the plants even though they were there to play at the park.
- Dr. Asah says that there is a big connection between ego, community and plants – introspection drives people to be stewards.

The visitors to the Arboretum should feel connected and safe.

Communication: We discuss this at every ABGC meeting so that Kenan knows what is happening and what the potential news stories are. Kenan makes a formal proposal for a series of consistent signage for outside the Arboretum (a trail of bread crumbs). One idea was to use fun phrases to pique curiosity but let visitors finish the sentences, which personalizes the message.

Security

There have been issues with damage to plants and infrastructure. There are donors who are hesitant to donate because of crime. SPR has a "no cameras in parks" rule. Fred states the more ownership of the park people take, the less they will vandalize it.

Examples of recent vandalism:

- UW flag torn to shreds
- New Zealand garden plants vandalized
- Maintenance facility broken into
- Equipment theft

It is suggested that they go to the local community centers with volunteering opportunities. The ABGC has not received a reply from Garfield about their letter yet.

Professor Asah suggests patrols which he believes communicates positivity and security for visitors.

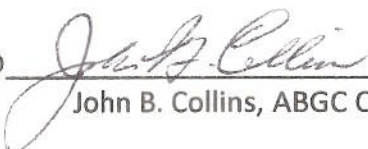
Action Items

- Multi-Use Trail
- Expanding signage – externally
- Outreach – listening to community; what do people love about the Arboretum
- Bonsai
- Australia
- Timelines for priority list
- Security – next steps
- Legacy Plan Input
- Maintenance item – canal reserve

Wrap up

Tom DeLuca runs through the Arboretum almost every day and sees people doing different things and enjoying the Arboretum in their own ways. All the partners on the ABGC love the Arboretum. It has mature and diverse collections, is free, and highly accessible. It is well cared for and a loved product of partnership.

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 10:15am.

APPROVED  _____
John B. Collins, ABGC Chair

DATE 1/8/2014

