

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, October 10, 2012

Voting Members

Present:

Arboretum Foundation

- Paige Miller, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director
- Craig Trueblood, Arboretum Foundation Board President

City of Seattle

- Jack Collins, Mayoral Appointee
- Donald Harris, Seattle Parks Property Manager

University of Washington

- Theresa Doherty, University of Washington, Asst. Vice President for Regional Affairs
- Fred Hoyt, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG), Associate Director
- Lynne C. Manzo, University of Washington, Associate Professor, Dept. of Landscape Architecture

Washington State

- Dave Towne, Washington State Governor's Appointee

Excused:

- Kenan Block, Mayoral Appointee

Other Staff Present:

- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Projects & Planning Director
- Sarah Reichard, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG), Director

Washington State Department of Transportation Team (WSDOT) Team

Julie Meredith, SR 520 Program Director, Rob Berman, Planning Manager; and Katie DeLeuw, Communications Manager for SR520 Project

ABGC Staff: Sandy Brooks, Seattle Parks, ABGC Coordinator

Standing Committees

Building Committee:

AF: Paige Miller; City: Donald Harris; UW: TBD

Partners Committee:

AF: Paige Miller & Craig Trueblood

City: Donald Harris & Christopher Williams

Michael Shiosaki & Leah Tivoli

UW: Tom DeLuca & Sarah Reichard

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG):

AF: Paige Miller & Roger Williams

City: Michael Shiosaki (lead) & Rick Nishi

UW: Fred Hoyt & Sarah Reichard

SR520 Technical Committee:

City: David Graves; UW: Theresa Doherty & Fred Hoyt

The meeting was held at Graham Visitors Center at the Arboretum and called to order at 8:30 am.

WSDOT SR520 Team Update

Julie Meredith, SR520 Program Director, and members of the WSDOT team attended this meeting to give an update on the Term Sheet and mitigation funding for the SR 520 project's impacts to the Arboretum.

She stated that, although changes will occur when the new governor takes office in January, Paula Hammond, Washington State Secretary of Transportation, has directed the WSDOT team to move forward on a commitment to construction dollars for some projects:

- WSDOT has funding for the west approach bridge, but funds have not yet been secured for the Foster Island section.
- The North Entry project is also not yet included in the funding.
- WSDOT reviewed the multi-trail and pond projects, which are both scoped, and can commit to funding those projects at this time. However, it cannot yet commit to a dollar figure.

She next referred to the WSDOT Peninsula. Plans are to remove the ramps; however, the east ramp must stay in for now. WSDOT will keep ABGC updated on any plans for the ramps. WSDOT wants to transfer ownership of the peninsula property to the City, but it requires a process to make this transfer. Responding to a question on where WSDOT is on the land acquisition it needs from the City, Julie stated WSDOT needs the Brandt property, Canal property, and one other property in order to move forward with the project.

Paige stated WSDOT could spend the TIFIA funds and not make a decision on the ramps for a long time. Julie stated the safety of the SR520 bridge is of utmost important to WSDOT and it has a strong commitment to complete the project.

She next referred to the roundabout project requested by ABGC and located at the intersection of Lake Washington Boulevard and Foster Island Drive. This project will not be done at this time. The new multi-use trail, designed to fit into the roundabout, will have to connect into the existing area, for the time being. Sarah stated the roundabout is being built for safety purposes and to fit with the multi-use trail and both an interim and long-term design will be required.

Jack will feel assured when WSDOT gives the ABGC a commitment that it will fund the rest of the projects when it gets the remaining funds it needs for the SR520 project. Julie responded that the NEP document is legally binding and the projects are listed there. Craig asked if WSDOT is applying for the permits in phases. Julie answered that all permits are already secured; WSDOT may have to update them if they expire before the needed funding is secured.

Responding to a question from Theresa on next steps, Julie stated that Kerry Pihlstrom of the WSDOT team will prepare the agreement for ABGC signature. Julie agreed this will be done by the end of the year. WSDOT will continue working to secure the City property it needs. Theresa asked if the trail project can then move ahead and Julie agreed. Dave Towne asked if the trail project costs less than \$7.5 million, can the ABGC use the excess funds for other purposes. Julie responded this must be a topic for discussion.

Theresa requested that David Graves pull out the term sheet, add all the projects, and reflect the ones WSDOT plans to fund. Julie stated the Kerry Pihlstrom WSDOT team will do this and distribute to the ABGC prior to the December ABGC meeting.

Introductions

Members introduced themselves and welcomed a new member and guest. Lynne Manzo Associate Professor, Dept. of Landscape Architecture at the UW, joined the ABGC this meeting as a replacement for Iain Robertson, who is studying/teaching in China until July 2013.

In addition, Tom DeLuca, the new Director of the UW School of Environment and Forest Sciences (part of the College of the Environment), introduced himself and spent some time talking about his background and vision and strategy for the School of Environment and Forest Sciences. He:

- is working to re-establish good communications in the school and ensure it is a leader in sustainability
- is a staunch supporter of arboretums and botanical gardens and very supportive of this one
- has a vision of sustainability, considering natural and human needs, and connecting community
- is creating inter-disciplinary links within the school
- will emphasize the Arboretum's role as a laboratory for the University

Donald asked that Tom include convincing the UW Regents that the Arboretum is a classroom for the University – and not a park – be added to his list of challenges.

Approve Minutes

Jack moved approval of the September 12 meeting minutes as presented. Donald seconded. The vote was taken and the motion approved.

SR 520 Discussion

Theresa asked if members had further concerns about the information received today from WSDOT. Jack believes the ABGC will get what it wants, sooner or later, and feels okay about the current status. Michael stated it will depend on the specific language in WSDOT's commitment letter – that is key. Paige noted that Julie did not relay what WSDOT Secretary of Transportation Paula Hammond directed.

Michael stated that Julie did say WSDOT will do the projects, but the level of funding it will provide is critical. WSDOT is looking for other funding sources, and gave the trails project as an example. David Graves referred to the list of environmental projects developed by the ABGC and WSDOT. Paige agreed with the list, but is concerned because WSDOT has not yet committed in writing to doing the projects. David will review the record of decision prior to the December ABGC meeting.

Craig asked if the ABGC is comfortable with the three projects WSDOT plans to fund. Paige responded this is all WSDOT can commit to at this time. However, she wants the ABGC to continue pushing on removal of the eastbound ramp. Once the west approach portion is completed, it could be another 10 years before funding is secured to move to the next phase of the SR 520 project.

Michael noted that none of the other mitigation projects are ready to move forward at this time. He added that, even if WSDOT removes the eastbound ramp from the Arboretum, it will still need the property for staging purposes until at least 2028. Craig noted that the permits WSDOT has applied for are the strongest commitment. The Legislature can re-vote on the funding and change its mind; however, the permits are legally binding. Theresa and Paige both recommend the ABGC accept the \$7.5 million and make the future agreement language as strong as possible.

Michael recently attended a meeting with WSDOT where Julie stated WSDOT cannot maintain any plantings underneath a new SR520 bridge. This is a bog area and Fred estimates the maintenance will require at least \$125,000 annually. The Tribes support the plantings and ABGC members believe they should review the language in their agreement/permit and urge WSDOT to fund the maintenance as part of the Tribes' agreement and not as ABGC mitigation. Michael added that the property WSDOT needs from the City can give some added leverage to this negotiation.

Media Presentation

Kenan Block, newer member of the ABGC, is a media consultant and offered to help coordinate a communication plan for the Arboretum with the Arboretum Foundation, Seattle Parks, and University of Washington media staff. The media staff will be invited to the November 14 retreat, where this proposal will be discussed further.

Donald noted that the "Music of Trees" had good press in the Seattle Times and National Public Radio.

Budget & Other Updates

City: Michael and Donald reported that the Mayor's proposed budget is now being considered by City Council and conditions have improved somewhat from recent years. There are no "takes" or "add backs" at the Arboretum. The Department still faces cuts, but those won't be as severe as the past few years. Jack stated that the good news is that the City's revenues have increased and the decline is slowing. Seattle Parks will receive substantial Real Estate and Excise Tax (REET) funds from Vulcan's sale of several buildings to Amazon.

Arboretum Foundation: Craig announced that the Foundation has made an offer to a promising candidate for the position of Development Director. Paige stated the Foundation is donating an electric cart to be used in the maintenance of Azalea Way. The Foundation donated a similar cart to the UW a couple years ago.

The Day of Caring resulted in completion of an astonishing five major projects. Held on Friday, October 5, the volunteer effort produced 481 hours of work with 98 participants. The following day 64 UW fraternity guys worked with the Pacific Connection stewards at the Gateway to Chile Slope. The area was weeded and mulched and looks great. Jack also complimented the New Zealand garden. It looks unbelievable and he urged everyone to go visit.

UW: Staff will know more about any budget or other changes when the new governor is in office. A new funding model is now in use at the UW. Sarah and Fred noted the Arboretum will receive \$6,000 insurance money for two cherry trees which were run over by a vehicle driven by a teen.

MPIG Update

Michael reported on the following:

- Multi-use Trail: Permits have been submitted. This project will move forward when negotiations with WSDOT are completed.
- Pacific Connections: Work at the New Zealand garden is going well. Staff took Kenan and Jack on a site visit a couple weeks ago. Thanks to this fall's long dry spell, much of the grading was completed, with the project right on schedule. Planting is scheduled to begin in June 2013.
- Capital Projects: These are projects outside of the Master Plan. Parks staff are developing a list and will bring to the ABGC to prioritize.
- Arboretum Drive Paving Project: Plans to pave Foster Island Drive and add a stop sign at the intersection of Arboretum Drive were briefly discussed. The stop sign would help with the design of a pathway from Foster Island to the rest of the Arboretum. Michael noted that a three-way stop sign has been contentious for those who use Foster Island Drive to access the Broadmoor neighborhood. Parks staff will talk with SDOT to determine how much of the WSDOT-funded traffic calming dollars remain and whether the funds could be used for this project.

Old/New Business

The ABGC's annual retreat is scheduled for Wednesday, November 14, at the Center for Urban Horticulture from 8 am to approximately 1:00 pm. A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. The planning committee includes Theresa, Paige, and Donald. Members suggested several agenda topics:

- Review the 2001 Master Plan, any new ideas for projects, and is it time to revisit the Master Plan? What does it include, what has been completed, and what remains?
- Discuss the three partner's communication plan for the Arboretum. Kenan is especially interested in this and will be asked to take a lead role.
- Discuss development of a Strategic Plan for the Arboretum
- Discuss revenue producing ideas and constraints in their implementation

There being no other new business, the meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Theresa Doherty, ABGC Chair