

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Minutes
Graham Visitors Center – October 12, 2016

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.

Voting Members

Arboretum Foundation

- Paige Miller, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director
- Jim Reid, Arboretum Foundation Board Vice President

City of Seattle

- Kenan Block, Mayoral Appointee
- Jack Collins, Mayoral Appointee
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Projects & Planning Division, Director

University of Washington

- Sally Clark, University of Washington, Director of Regional and Community Relations
- Fred Hoyt, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG), Acting Director
- *Excused*, Iain Robertson, University of Washington, Associate Professor, Dept. of Landscape Architecture

Washington State

- David Towne

Other Staff Present:

- Andy Sheffer, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Construction Manager
- Rachel Acosta, Seattle Parks and Recreation, ABGC Coordinator
- Eve Rickenbaker, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG)

Standing Committees

Partners Committee:

AF: Sherrey Luetjen & Paige Miller
City: Jesus Aguirre & Michael Shiosaki
UW: Tom DeLuca & Sarah Reichard

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG):

AF: Paige Miller & Jason Morse
City: Michael Shiosaki (lead) & Andy Sheffer
UW: Fred Hoyt & Sarah Reichard

SR520 Technical Committee:

City: David Graves; UW: Fred Hoyt

Jim calls the meeting to order at 8:35am. He adds the July minutes to the Agenda for approval. He adds an update on the RH Thomson memorial – Kenan responds the City Council are including funding for an engineering survey and an independent study.

Jim asks for approval of the October 12 Agenda, Kenan moves and Sally seconds and the Agenda is approved. Jim requests approval of the July 13 minutes - Jack points out Thomson was spelled incorrectly, pending this change, Jack moves and Kenan seconds, and the July 13 minutes are

approved. Jim asks for approval of the September 14 minutes, Sally moves and Michael seconds, the September minutes are approved.

Presentation: The University of Washington Student Perception of the Washington Park Arboretum

Presented by Eve Rickenbaker, University of Washington Botanic Gardens

In June 2015, Eve presented her Master's thesis on the University of Washington Student Perception of the Washington Park Arboretum. There are 45,000 students. She found many of her classmates in the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences had not heard of it. She took a social science approach to answer the following questions: Why haven't they heard of it? Why do they come to the Arboretum? What are the barriers?

Student Benefits of the Arboretum:

- Studies show being in nature reduces stress, provides a mental health outlet.
- Attention Restoration Theory states that nature reduces stress and renews attention after stressful life moments.
- Studies show identifying with a natural place makes people more environmentally responsible.

Creating a connection between students and the Arboretum is important because alumni and future leaders donate to and ensure the future survival of the places they care about.

Methods of research - 6 focus groups over 2 years; recruited in person, in classes – each focus group had a minimum of 6 people and 41 students total. She arranged class visits to recruit students. She chose random professors and advisors and asked them to publicize her research. One of her most effective ways to get people involved was impromptu offers of pizza in exchange for answering some questions.

In an effort to reach and talk with as diverse a group as possible, Eve contacted 40 different departments at the UW.

Her sample questions asked why people do or do not go to the Arboretum and what are the barriers. She conducted her focus groups in library study rooms or classrooms.

Out of 41 students, 19 students said they had visited the Arboretum.

Why do students visit? Most of the students she spoke with said it was the waterfront that brought them to the Arboretum. Other reasons mentioned were its restorative value, education - went because of a class, and they liked learning about the trees.

What prevents students from visiting? Accessibility, her research found students didn't know how to get to the Arboretum. The Welcome Edition of the student newspaper the UW Daily contains a campus map but the map doesn't even show the Arboretum.

Eve suggests wayfinding improvements through campus to make the Arboretum more accessible.

Suggestions by students:

1. Promote Arboretum waterfront for the canoeing and kayaking;
2. Improve the website – it was updated after this research was done;
3. Include it in orientation and Dawg Daze events;
4. Bike path to the Arboretum;
5. Promote in dorms;
6. Include the Washington Park Arboretum on banners;
7. Create a Freshman Interest Group on the Arboretum;
8. Put in a café - a place to drink and eat.
9. Create an attraction - like a tree house or a canopy walk;
10. Encourage international student participation with cultural programs; redefine what it means to be an Arboretum.
11. Activate the Arboretum with programming that brings students together for a community moment.

Accessibility is an issue since there isn't a clear entry.

Conclusion:

The research illustrated why students visit the Arboretum and also what prevents student visitation. It provides suggestions for improved student engagement through: signage around campus, outreach to dorms, orientation and Dawg Daze events, website improvement, and UW Daily newspaper maps.

The Arboretum will be cared for in the future by those who come through the Arboretum now, which is why it is important to foster a love of Botanic Gardens and increase environmental stewardship.

Create student ambassadors:

- Implement outreach to peers through the use of students in the Greek system to serve as ambassadors who could help coordinate events, distribute newsletters.
- Work with Freshman Interest Groups – these are affinity groups who partner with people and/or organizations with like minds in a particular area.

Follow up: Seattle Department of Transportation

Madison and Lake Washington Boulevard – In regards to installing a left turn signal on Madison, Andy is meeting tomorrow to get a schedule by the end of the week.

Lake Washington Boulevard and 24th Avenue - WSDOT plans to put a signal in and cover it; they will use it only if necessary due to backups. The ABGC feel this is counter to what they agreed on early in the SR520 negotiations. The Montlake Boulevard intersection has backups too.

The Montlake lid is scheduled to start in 2018 and last until 2022. West Approach Bridge North will be done next year. West Approach Bridge South (WABS) and the Montlake Lid project will go to bid in 2017.

MPIG

Arboretum Loop Trail - Bridges are in and approaches are complete. Road and curbs are paved. The paving of the south section of trail will be weather dependent. So far the contractor is ahead of schedule.

Maintenance crew quarters – The paint has been scraped off the walls. SPR staff will encapsulate it and paint it this fall. There are air quality issues in the offices in the downstairs - staff are looking for mold.

Education shelter – The Education Shelter is completed, but waiting for final City approval.

Centennial Garden – Jason chosen to do the design work. The contracts are ready to sign.

Timeline: Garden designed by February and finished by September - for the Seattle Garden Club's big Centennial Celebration.

Wayfinding to the Arboretum – Reviewing a GIS map with SDOT to ascertain best locations for SDOT wayfinding signs to get people to the Arboretum from the Sound Transit station and from 23rd and Lynn.

Budget, Personnel and Other Items

University of Washington

The celebration for Sarah is tomorrow. The walk starts at the Arboretum at 2pm. John Wott, Ray Hoffman, and Fred will be at 3 of her favorite spots around the Arboretum and tell stories about Sarah. A more formal reception will occur at 5pm at Don James room at Husky Stadium. The UWBG is expecting 400 for the evening event.

2 director searches underway for Tom and Sarah – They will be happening simultaneously. Search committees are currently being developed. UWBG search will be faster. Jack asks if there are Arboretum people on the search committees. Fred replies that Wendy, from the UWBG is on the search committee for the Director of the School of Environmental and Forest Sciences, but the UWBG committee has not been set yet. There is some concern about getting a replacement for Tom DeLuca that will advocate for the Arboretum.

UW raises – The Dean has agreed to provide the funding for 3 employees, the UWBG is still responsible for paying most of the raises.

UWBG Outreach is the 2nd highest of any department in the UW community.

Ray has been promoted to - Curator of Living Collections and the Herbarium. Eve will continue to manage the Herbarium.

Seattle Parks and Recreation

The Mayor's budget is out and now City Council is working through it.

Arboretum Foundation

Celebration of John Wott: On October 2nd, there was an event to celebrate John Wott with a dedication of John Wott Way, the central spine of the New Zealand Garden. It was a fabulous day. Michael and Tom Hinckley spoke and there were about 200 people in attendance. Andy wrote and recited a poem. So much affection for him and what he has done here.

In the morning of October 2nd, there were approximately 40 New Zealanders here for a volunteer event, followed by beer and meat pies. It was a great time!

Japanese Garden – The training guides are being revamped. Maple viewing is this weekend and a crowd is expected.

Homeless Encampments at the Arboretum

City Council is holding a public hearing at City Hall on Friday, October 14 at 9:30am regarding the homeless legislation. Columbia Legal Services wrote the Ordinance. The public does not seem excited about homeless sleeping in parks. The current language says “not in active areas of parks”. This could result in a detrimental impact on parks and quality of life. It could create public backlash against homeless. Those members of the ABGC who are able to testify should show up at the Council public hearing. The Arboretum Foundation wrote a Resolution opposed to the encampment legislation. The UW School of Forest Sciences is working on it also.

Old/New Business

Equity Committee – Meeting after ABGC today to talk about next steps with Belinda Chin and Charles Ng from the Seattle Parks and Recreation Race and Social Justice Initiative Change team.

ARCH proposal resolution - Council voting for it on Monday. The commissioners ask if WSDOT provided feedback on this proposal. WSDOT has not weighed in on the new proposal, however, when this came up a few years ago Julie Meredith had a list of issues that came up. This Resolution would put money in the budget to have an engineering study and ask WSDOT to look into the feasibility, scope of contract changes and potential costs.

Outreach to University of Washington students: The ABGC will maximize Eve’s suggestions and follow up in a serious way. Eve, Kenan, Wendy and Paige to sit down and work through the suggestions. Sarah’s guiding principle was to engage student body.

UWBG created wayfinding maps for Union Bay Natural Area and Center for Urban Horticulture and they include wayfinding to the Arboretum.

The ABGC discuss ways to bring UW faculty and students to the Arboretum. Many faculty retreats are held at the Graham Visitors Center, but it is not centrally located enough for students. The University is really missing a way to promote itself to environmental students. UWBG is present at UW fairs now – a step in the right direction.

Wellness idea – look at the Wright study – collaborate with the UW Medical Center to incorporate the Arboretum in health programs.

Communications - Loop Trail opening will be huge. The story behind how it was created and what went into it opening. The ABGC will wait for the big opening next year when the whole trail is done.

There being no new business, the meeting adjourns at 10:10am.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Jim Reid, ABGC Chair