

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Minutes
Graham Visitors Center – August 10, 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
- *Excused*, Jack Collins, Mayoral Appointee
- *Excused*, Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Projects & Planning Division, Director

University of Washington

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

Washington State

- David Towne

Other Staff Present:

- Fred Hoyt, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG), Associate Director
- Andy Sheffer, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Construction Manager
- Rachel Acosta, Seattle Parks and Recreation, ABGC Coordinator
- Daniel Sorensen, 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

Opening Items

Jim convenes the meeting at 8:30. He reviews the Agenda.

Budget, Personnel and Other Items

Seattle Parks and Recreation

The Arboretum Loop Trail is on budget and on schedule. SPR staff are being very frugal with the remaining Parks and Greenspaces Levy funds and not hiring additional staff. They will use the remaining funds to focus on long-term planning.

Arboretum Foundation

The Arboretum Foundation is in full party mode. ArbFest was a great success and the Foundation met their financial goal of netting \$10,000. Everyone is excited for next year. The summer party drew in people from the surrounding neighborhood and Paige hopes to bring them in to be regular supporters.

Japanese Garden Annual Summer Party was attended by 250 people, including the Mayor. It was a very nice party. Arboretum Drive was used for parking for the party, which worked well.

Opening night party at the Northwest Flower and Garden Show is in February. This year's theme is edibles – the Arboretum Foundation will be going with a Japanese tea garden theme.

Sarah and Paige put together a team to fundraise for the education building.

Arbor circle/regular membership is down which has created a deficit in the last several years. The parties have been lucrative but the regular donations have decreased. The Arboretum Foundation was forced to cut their grant to the University of Washington. Jim to chair major gifts committee. Partnerships and projects raise the visibility of the Arboretum Foundation, the ABGC remain hopeful for future fundraising because of the current big projects and the exposure they receive.

Fundraising to create a new garden is easy; paying for someone to maintain it is difficult. Pacific Connections and the New Zealand gardeners are paid for by Arboretum Foundation funds.

The Education building and the rentals related to it will offset the cost and it is not as big of a maintenance drain.

Sarah hopes for more permanent funding from the University of Washington. Tom DeLuca wants to push for more TA's, but the timing isn't there since he is leaving soon.

>>Should the ABGC go to the State Legislature for funding for Arboretum staff?

University of Washington

In May, Sarah and Tom went to the Dean to talk about staff raises. Dean Graumlich says she will put 2% more in the budget to help with the expense.

Horticulture Manager left – position has been advertised and they will start interviewing soon.

Linda Mapes did an article in the paper about a UWBG student and invasive insects –the bronze birch beetle. It was a great article.

Tom Deluca is leaving at the end of this year. ABGC will need to help find candidates.

Dan Sorensen's last meeting because he's graduating!!! He wrote his thesis on invasive grasses. Dan says it has been a wonderful journey. He's hoping to find work doing stewardship/natural resource management. The ABGC thank Dan for his contributions. Dan says it is wonderful to see how it all works.

New Graduate Student proposed to give a youth perspective: Eve Rickenbacher – Thesis work is on UW students' interaction with the Arboretum. She previously held an internship at Atlanta Botanic Garden. She has a longstanding interest in public gardens and climbs mountains. She cares about this place.

MPIG

Arboretum Loop Trail: Footings for bridges poured by end of this week, middle of next week. As fall approaches there could be some delays. The contractor is hoping to finish the trail from Madison to Interlocken by the end of 2016. There may be additional tree removals. Fred and Andy will be presenting their findings to the Urban Forestry Commission regarding the potential tree removals. These are trees with interior diseases.

Fiber optics are being installed from Madison Avenue to the Japanese garden and along Arboretum Drive to the Graham Visitors Center.

Stair replacement near Woodland Garden – Andy feels this project is more major maintenance than capital improvement. He will have to look at the cost.

Parking is an issue – MPIG identified limited overflow parking – without impact on the environment using porous surfacing up by the log storage. It will need to be run through Parks maintenance but it could help a lot.

Buses – Create a 1-pager to direct school buses where to drop off, park and return. There needs to be a sign in front of the Graham Visitors Center that tells buses to report to the front desk.

Education shelter is in construction - staked out and surveyed last week. It is scheduled to be completed by September 23.

Centennial Garden – Parks staff are working on a consultant contract and Memorandum of Agreement between the parties. They are also working on the contract for the design phase now.

Broadmoor – contractor parking is an issue again. ABGC will schedule another meeting with Broadmoor and make sure to have a representative from all three partners.

MPIG is looking to add additional bike parking.

Old/New Business

Kenan commends Sarah for the article in the Seattle Times about the invasive beetles.

Kenan thinks the valuations are interesting and asks if there have been questions from the public. Valuations on the trees are aimed at the contractor and subcontractors as it provides a deeper appreciation of the value of the trees. The public is flummoxed. Kenan feels this could be a great story. Should there be a sign explaining it? It is a human interest story - changes the behavior of people operating the equipment. Sarah to contact Val Easton. Horticulture staff thought this up to keep the trees safe. It would be great to interview the arborist who applies the formula. It also demonstrates nothing is more important to the Arboretum than protecting the collection trees. How valuable is the arboretum? Big number gets paper interested. Total number of plants is approximately 26,000.

Complaints regarding tree removal and stumps has not been as bad as first thought. Communications and public outreach has paid off.

Sarah and Fred pitched the smart phone application to the UW students and did not receive any interest. The website isn't adequate to explain how to use it, but they are making changes. Kenan suggests getting a tech company to provide the development pro bono. Doug mentions Hackathon – at which someone developed a phone application delineating the soft surface trail system in Seattle. >>Doug will look for the name of the person who created the application for Hackathon.

Subject for retreat?

Master Plan – review and reprioritize projects in the Master Plan.
>> Agenda for next MPIG

Partnerships – Public/private partnerships - good ideas and no resources to implement them. Dwight came to see Paige regarding Cultural Access Washington – this is a taxing district to support cultural activities. Representative Chopp worked this in the State Legislature. This would cost 1/10th of 1%. There is a category for groups supporting botany – the Arboretum Foundation could be eligible. Terry Holme will participate in writing the legislation for King County to be eligible. 8% boost in budget targeted to greater access for underserved groups. Ben Mohr is the Executive Director. It will be on the ballot next year. It would bring in \$70million a year.

Equity Committee – They are planning to meet and figure out next steps for the retreat.

Presentation and Discussion: ARCH RH Thompson Memorial Proposal

Presented by Rainer Metzger

Rainer is doing a presentation to retain a section of the "Ramps To Nowhere" to honor citizen activism. The former design wanted to keep pilings in the wetlands. For a variety of reasons, the ABGC did not think this was appropriate, but voted to memorialize it in some way. ARCH has been trying to honor these concerns. After SR520 is finished, there will be a wonderful greenspace returned to the Arboretum. Rainer is coming back with a modest proposal that will provide

recognition and sensitivity to retain part of the former freeway and do it in a way that is fitting. There is a civic dialogue currently happening with the City Council and other groups. Councilmember Juarez has stated she may write a resolution to ask WSDOT to retain one piece.

Rainer has a Masters of Architecture and studied the history of the area around the Arboretum. In general, landscapes are richer when they have layers of history and culture embedded in them. A physical presence people can see and touch creates a more powerful connection, which is the foundation of their proposal.

Gate to Nowhere was an art installation that brought awareness to the "Ramps To Nowhere" as people canoed out through the columns of mirrors.

The original design kept one arch in the water, which was problematic for a number of reasons. The ABGC members agree that Rainer took the ABGC's feedback and the constraints of the freeway replacement project and the second proposal makes a lot of sense in addressing the concerns from the first proposal.

The history is important. This is a fundamental Seattle story – grassroots people's history, which needs to be recognized and honored. North entry project was to have a permanent and meaningful element that would recognize the history.

Bid contract will occur first quarter of next year – there is a memo from Julie Meredith saying they would collect pieces of the ramps and be open to further suggestions.

Rainer presents an overview of the site and the ramps that are set for removal. Everyone wants to see this area return to light of day. This commemorates the end of the freeway mania period of the 1950's and 60's. This defined Seattle values; from a race and social justice perspective it was the path of least resistance. It was a movement to save the Arboretum – led by UW students but joined by so many community groups. The new design would keep the front face of the RH Thompson main line, 520 eastbound on ramp, and includes 4 columns and a beam across the top. This creates a ruin elegantly positioned; a gateway to green into the Arboretum. This would be a very small percentage of concrete – a modest structure, but the symbolism of history looms large over the site.

The new design is evocative of a roman ruin or a landscape folly in the Olmsted tradition. This will pique people's curiosity and the questions people ask will keep the history alive.

It is suggested that plants could be put onto it to avoid graffiti.

WSDOT says the City needs to agree.

Some questions and comments the ABGC have:

- How structurally sound would the remnant be if the ramps were removed? Rainer is asking the City to do an engineering study.
- What happens if there's an earthquake? Rainer says the City would take responsibility for maintaining and dealing with retrofitting.
- This is a good candidate for a neighborhood matching fund project.

- The ABGC wonders if it would require significant regrading?
- Paige thinks it's a nifty idea. Sarah agrees and she is glad Rainer listened to their feedback in the new design.

Dimensions of the Memorial: 70ft long with 5ft wide columns and the height between 20-25ft. The columns are hollow.

Max Jacobs thinks this is a beautiful idea.

Advocacy for this? People find this project exciting. It was a divisive time in United States history; this movement was Seattle at it's best – Black Panthers, UW students, Garden club – reminiscent to the activism of Victor Steinbrueck saving the Pike's Place Market. It will serve as a reminder of what the city can do.

What are the next steps?

Michael is not here but he does not feel this is appropriate. The ABGC members present feel the modified plan is more fitting and appropriate. No wetland maintenance needed, planning is early enough to be designed into north entry and put into WSDOT bid for West Approach Bridge South (WABS). It could be a real amenity to the Arboretum. Could be informed, more authentic to the Arboretum.

Iain says the Arboretum is an Olmsted space – the original Master Plan did not have monuments. The Arboretum flows amorphously, there are no markers that orient people. The mound could be graded and shaped to fit into the landscape and accentuate the memorial. This will become a feature that people could relate to and helps the Arboretum.

There are engineering and maintenance issues. There would need to be a conversation with maintenance staff to find out what kind of things would need to happen and what are their concerns?

Rainer mentions the design minimizes the amount of concrete poured into this area and reminds the ABGC that the activists weren't against concrete in general, they were trying to stop a highway.

Paige says she would like to have more questions answered in terms of maintenance, and someone to talk with Michael.

Kenan emphasizes his concern that Michael cannot be here for this discussion. Out of deference to that he would like the record to show his strong feelings in opposition to this project. After the last vote, Michael had mentioned to Kenan, he did not understand the idea of keeping concrete ramps in the beautiful greenspace. Kenan stresses Michael's strong feeling about this, even if he is not present today, this should be reflected.

Dave brings up the Gasworks sculpture and how he had reservations against it. Even though his reservations were correct, the park is iconic. He feels this is a sensitive treatment of a great piece of history.

Jim thinks this presentation is great and feels the project is interesting.

Kenan will draft a letter. Andy and Iain will talk to Michael. The letter will state that the ABGC responded to the idea with a lot of interest and enthusiasm, but there are reservations. Iain will write a letter to articulate his views to the City Council.

It is very important that Michael be briefed and that it be recorded clearly in the minutes that he was not at the ABGC meeting for the presentation and discussion of the proposed new design of the RH Thompson Memorial. The ABGC understands he has reservations and concerns to be addressed at the next meeting.

Old/New Business: Continued

Retreat: November 9

Form planning committee: Fred, Michael, and Jim

Rachel will look into reserving the Graham Visitors Center again for the retreat.

Letter from WSDOT regarding traffic signal: Dawn did not address their concerns about directing more traffic into the Arboretum. Her letter said they were going to put it in but not signalize it yet. The whole idea was to make it harder to go through the Arboretum. A signal will not reduce traffic through the Arboretum. If it is going to happen then the city would like to happen sooner so WSDOT pays for it. Andy to circle back to Mark Bandy at SDOT and follow up with everyone. The ABGC wonders how 2030 projections are relevant?

There being no new business, the meeting adjourns at 10:40am.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Jim Reid, ABGC Chair