

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Minutes **Graham Visitors Center, Washington Park Arboretum – September 12, 2018**

The Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee is a Joint effort of the Arboretum Foundation, Seattle Parks and Recreation, 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

- Jane Stonecipher, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director
- Jason Morse, Arboretum Foundation Board President

City of Seattle

- Kenan Block, Mayoral Appointee
- Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks, Projects & Planning Division, Director
- James Fearn, Mayoral Appointee

University of Washington

- *Excused*, 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

Other Staff Present:

- Rachel Acosta, Seattle Parks and Recreation, ABGC Coordinator
- Wendy Gible, University of Washington Botanic Gardens, Assistant Director
- Robert Stowers, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Parks and Environment Division Director
- Charles Ng, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Strategic Advisor
- Jon Jainga, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Natural Resources Unit Manager
- *Excused*, Michael Bradshaw, University of Washington Botanic Gardens

Standing Committees

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG):

AF: Jane Stonecipher & Jason Morse

City: Michael Shiosaki (lead) & Kim Baldwin

UW: Fred Hoyt/Wendy Gible

SR520 Technical Committee:

City: David Graves; UW: Fred Hoyt

Call to Order

Sally is excused, Michael is Chair for the meeting. He calls the meeting to order at 8:38am. Michael asks for approval of the agenda: James moves, Kenan seconds, the Agenda is approved. He asks for approval of the July 11 meeting minutes: Kenan moves, Jason seconds, and the minutes are approved.

Discussion: SPR Bikeshare Agreement

The ABGC has been talking about bikeshare a lot and Michael asked Max to come speak with the Board about the agreement the City is working on with the bikeshare companies. Max Jacobs heads the Real Property and Acquisitions for Seattle Parks and Recreation. The Board introduces themselves to Max.

Max wants to hear the ABGC's concerns, bring feedback to SDOT, and provide clarification of the program goals of bikeshare. Bikeshares are extremely well funded; most are subsidized by local government. The City is interested in accommodating these companies. SPR and SDOT are working to control the pilot to protect parks because bikes strewn all over parks has become a problem. There are controls in the permit – requirements the vendors are supposed to fulfill. There are more bikeshare companies in the pipeline to come to Seattle. Is there a ceiling of bikes Seattle will permit? Yes, it's around 10,000 now.

SDOT has some great information on their website. SDOT is about to enter a 2nd permit but will need to perform a SEPA checklist. This permit will have more requirements and the intent is to control vendors so the bikeshare is not a problem for the people or the city. The city says SPR cannot have different rules than the rest of the city, but SPR wants more stringent enforcement.

SPR is requesting a response time from the bikeshare companies of 2 days instead of a week and that bikes must be parked on hard surfaces and not vegetation.

The Mayor and City Council like the idea of having bikeshare. SDOT is looking at geofencing which would continue the credit card charge until the customers parked the bike in a proper place.

SDOT is amenable to putting a geofence around the Arboretum to curb bicycle parking throughout the Arboretum.

There may be concerns that need to be addressed once the SEPA is finished.

The Board feels electric-assist bikes on multi-use trail are challenging because they move quickly. It's very difficult to enforce rules prohibiting e-assist bikes.

Currently, bikes are allowed on paved trails in parks. There is a pilot project underway on 5 trails in parks to allow E-bikes.

The current permit only applies to right-of-way and is silent on park usage. SDOT has the right to require geofencing if they choose. The vendors have the technology and are ready to use it. The Board discuss the potential geofencing locations and Max suggests it should be near existing bike infrastructure and easy access for their vendor pickups. When asked how specific the geofencing can be, Max says it cannot be dialed down to a specific spot, but it could be parking lot specific. Max says SPR does not want to have vendor parking spots in our parks. Designated bike parking is okay.

Jason points out there is a difference in priorities between whether a spot is better for maintenance vs. better for aesthetics; having several bikes piled up in one location vs. scattered in several locations. Michael adds this is going to be a challenge for SPR's myriad parks.

Can there be a limited number of bikes at a location that would signal the bikeshare companies to retrieve bikes if the limit is reached? Max will follow up on this, but he feels it would be onerous for the bikeshare companies to manage all the locations in this way. Can the ABGC provide input on the locations for the bikeshare parking?

James mentions that there is a public interest served by bikes and a business interest in the rideshare companies, but the City and the ABGC do not have to facilitate their business model. This is a bike problem. If the bikes are left unattended, it is reasonable for SPR staff to dispose of the bikes. Parks policy is not superseded by a street-use permit. Max emphasizes the City wants a bikeshare program and so they need to support the industry.

People are irresponsible about where they park the bikes. If there aren't penalties, people may not be responsible about it. There should be some sort of financial fee to the companies if the bikes need to be removed. There needs to be signage and an education campaign from vendors to the bikeshare customers.

Max to find out timing of SEPA review and 2.0 permit. The ABGC will work on suggestions for the Arboretum about where to park the bikes. Michael says SPR will need to do this for most of the larger parks which will result in much work.

Discussion: Cell Tower

SPR does not want cell towers on any park property whether it is disguised as a tree or not. SPR sent a letter to WSDOT about restrictions in land use on SPR property.

WSDOT initially alerted the ABGC and Seattle Parks and Recreation that they will be using the Montlake Market area and there is a cell tower on top of it that will need to be relocated. They would like to place it on the WSDOT peninsula for a temporary period. SPR could choose to oppose it during permitting. There is a meeting next week to discuss the future location of the cell tower. ABGC could submit comments opposing it.

Budget, Personnel and Other Items

University of Washington

UWBG director search did not prove fruitful. They are analyzing the process and looking to broaden the scope of their search. There were some viable candidates, but the negotiations did not result in a candidate being chosen. The UW is considering recruiting for an Executive Director position or Research Committee position. This would allow someone with no academic affiliation to apply. Fred is staying in the position for another year.

The UWBG is working on a brochure on medicinal plants found in the Arboretum. This will be available to the public soon. Kenan mentions this is a good news story to promote.

Ray met with Seattle Times and there will be an article about the Arboretum.

UWBG is working with the Arboretum Foundation and the Student Conservation Association (SCA) on Lake Washington Boulevard and renovating the Viburnum collection. This is a great program with SCA. They have been putting new plants in along the boulevard. UWBG hired 3 people to work on this project. SCA crew were in a front-page story in the Madison Park Times with nice photographs. The donor went out to view the trail and talk about the plans. She invited the Arboretum Foundation to return to her in 2019 for a similar scope. The Arboretum Foundation will use the project priority list to suggest ideas to her.

An unloved area between Azalea Way and Arboretum Loop Trail will get some love and new plantings this month.

The Youth Supervisor for the Education Program position has received 88 applicants and UWBG are reviewing those resumé's.

Fiddleheads starts next week for fall quarter. UWBG expanded the program to two afternoon classes and all the programs are full.

Wrapping up the punch list on the Loop Trail with Garrett. The plantings are growing and looking established.

Seattle Parks and Recreation

Superintendent hiring process has not started yet. Michele Finnegan is acting Deputy Superintendent; she has been the head of HR, Finance, and Recreation over the last 15 years.

City budget process is continuing. September 24 the Mayor will announce the budget. There has been significant belt tightening because of the cost of doing business increasing faster than tax increases.

Encampments have been a problem in every park in the city. Homeless structure for the city has changed. Department of Human Services is overseeing the homeless issue now. SPR plays a big role in cleanup with dedicated teams. SPR hired a new manager to lead the Parks Response Unit to homeless

encampments. The count for people living unsheltered continues to rise. This is an “all hands-on deck” approach -- encompassing all City departments. There is a big encampment at Myers Way with 66 structures. SPR will lead the efforts to clean that encampment.

Conservation Corps team partnering with Navigation Team to provide additional cleanup support.

Arboretum Foundation

Day of Caring is this Friday. 250+ registered to work in the Arboretum and it will be a nice event.

Japanese Garden – Attendance has increased significantly this year.

Olmsted book – Jennifer Ott wrote a book about the Olmsted’s work in Seattle. She is doing a walking tour at Volunteer Park.

Master Plan Implementation Group

Master Plan priorities for the next 2 years.

Buy off on this today – the priority list has a new column justifying the need.

3 categories –

- Master Plan Projects
 - Education building
 - Crabapple meadow
 - Rhododendron Glen/stream corridor
 - Pacific Connections electrical service
 - Next Pacific Connections Garden – Australia
- Minor capital projects
 - New path from Azalea Way to the overlook
 - Pacific Connections – composting toilet
- Renovation projects
 - Waterfront trail
 - Lake Washington Boulevard landscape renovation – this is underway
 - Japanese garden pond
 - Graham Visitors Center – there is some significant leaking and water damage
 - Camellia collection
 - Lindens
 - Mediterranean garden

James moves approval of project priorities for 2019 and 2020, Fred seconds. The Board approve the project priorities as drafted, unanimously.

The crosswalk at Boyer will be completed this fall.

Wayfinding signs are almost done.

Education Center Project – Reviewed the predesign with the architects. There will be a public meeting in October. The architects will report to the ABGC prior to the public meeting.

Old/New Business

Discussion: Tree Protection Ordinance

There was an article about a proposed Tree Protection Ordinance that would prohibit people from cutting trees with a trunk 6" or greater without a permit. Jane noticed a September 5 comment date. Jon mentions he goes to core team meetings with the Office of Sustainability and Environment, Seattle Department of Construction and Inspection, Seattle Public Utilities, Seattle City Light, SDOT and Urban Forestry. The Urban Forestry Commission is working with Councilmember Johnson about tree protection language. This ordinance evolved as a solution to increase tree canopy with all of the development.

Main change from current ruling – permit to remove exceptional trees; new language says that any tree 6" or greater would require a permit – public or private. Clarification from SDCI on this because this will impact a lot of city processes.

The ABGC discuss how the UWBG needs to be able to manage their collections. The Arboretum and UW could send letters to the UFC, SDCI and Councilmember Johnson and Interim Superintendent Williams regarding the exceptional situation at the Arboretum and managing their collections without dealing with the permitting issues.

Jason and Fred will talk about it. Robert thinks an exception to the specialty gardens will be supported.

Jason suggests they need to be clear about the goal of their letter; the Arboretum collections are managed by the UW.

SDOT and SPR are looking for an exception for safety and emergencies.

Fred would love to talk to the folks who are reviewing this opportunity. Fred could talk with Jessica Finn-Coven, head of OSE. Michael or Robert can help him make that connection. Arboretum Foundation will support this in any way they can. There should be different zoning for park land than other types of public lands.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 10:00 a.m.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Sally Clark, ABGC Chair