

## **Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Minutes Graham Visitors Center, Washington Park Arboretum – April 10, 2019**

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**

- 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

#### **Other Staff Present:**

- Wendy Gible, University of Washington Botanic Gardens, Assistant Director
- Aisling Quinn-Fleming, , Seattle Parks, Projects & Planning Division, Admin Spec II

#### **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**

The meeting is called to order at 8:33 am. The April 10<sup>th</sup> agenda has been approved. The March Minutes have been approved with some minor edits. Moved by Michael Shiosaki, seconded by Jason Morse.

### **Partner Updates: Budget, Personnel and Other Items**

#### **University of Washington**

Fred would like to acknowledge the generous donation from the Arboretum commission for the tree cleanup. It was very helpful with the number of trees that were damaged due to the weather. In all, there was about \$67K in damages to the trees from the snowstorm.

The Arboretum has been receiving new seeds for the New Zealand garden from an intern.

There will be an event in honor of Rachel Jacobson, who recently had a severe stroke and is highly debilitated. Sonya Jacobson, Rachel and Ken's daughter, will be working with Fred to plan the event, which will be held in the New Zealand Garden. He is currently awaiting a list of invitees from Sonya.

Fred has also been working with the Muslim Student Association to plan a tree planting in honor of those killed in Christchurch, New Zealand.

### Seattle Parks and Recreation

Jesús Aguirre has returned as Superintendent of SPR. The good news for SPR is that staff are familiar with his way of doing business. His priorities are the same or similar to when he was here about 15 months ago. The population of the city has increased, but not a lot more is different.

The Strategic Plan is being developed and SPR is moving forward on the next six years of the Park District. Kathleen Conner is still leading the effort and should have the plan completed by the end of the year. This will tee up the different "buckets" of money over the next six years. The rate is not likely to change much. If any updates concern things that could affect the ABGC, the group will be looped in.

### Arboretum Foundation

Fred helped coordinate the new name for the gift shop in honor of Mary Ellen Mulder, a donor who made a significant gift to the Rhododendron Glen. He also assisted with the new signage in the lobby of the Graham Visitors Center.

The target date for the annual volunteer appreciation event is August 8<sup>th</sup>. This date might allow the highest number of participants to attend.

A large grant was made to support the education program for a number of years. The Trustees of the grant might visit on May 14<sup>th</sup>. There is the possibility that the trustees might help fund the education center when the time comes. In the interim, we might want to consider how to approach them.

The Japanese Garden Pond project has been completed successfully. Nearly a foot of silt was removed from the pond and transported to Magnuson to be dried and repurposed elsewhere.

There was some restoration work along the shoreline. Pete was happy to learn that the shoreline was in better shape in many places than previously expected. The SPR Shops crews performed much of the work internally.

The pond is refilled, and the garden re-opened on April 1<sup>st</sup>. It was included in the Free First Thursday citywide event, and the hours were extended until 5:30 that evening. Unfortunately, with the exception of a bus of elementary children, attendance was very low. The strategy of free access to some of the best cultural programming in the city is something that the ABGC wants to trumpet.

The Cultural Access Initiative was on the ballot in 2017, but it lost. The effort to get it back on the ballot in 2020 has started, and the ABGC will monitor what it may look like. Based on the last attempt, the formula for how funds will be divided is likely to have an attendance component. It might be time

to get an updated estimate, as this is likely to come up as a potential need. The Japanese Garden has a formula in place to count overall visitation, which might be a useful point of reference.

The ABGC discusses the best approach to measure who comes to the Arboretum and when. Wendy looked at the initiative a few years ago: what degree of detail they need is unclear.

It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to get a hard number for the Arboretum, considering all of the different entry points. Counts have been done in the past, but they are very challenging to do and usually involve a staff person with a clicker doing visual scans of joggers, dog walkers, etc.

Visitorship has likely increased quite a bit since the Loop Trail opened. We may consider using an intercept methodology every three years, similar model to the one used to track attendance at football games. The data collected could be analyzed to see how it changes over time. For example, we could attempt to gather information on five Wednesdays or Saturdays. The information gathering should definitely take place during different weather conditions, considering how visitation is strongly affected by the weather.

It would be interesting to see if there is a way to track visitorship and take into consideration the number of people who come through the GVC. The amount of people coming through the Center has increased by nearly 50% from 2016 to 2018. This increase in visitation may be due to the Loop Trail. During the last nice weekend around 2,500 people passed through the GVC, which might be the highest number of people we have on record.

This topic seems worth thinking about. Looking ahead, it would be good to know that there will be some questions about attendance and real numbers. It is better to do this information gathering during the summer, when attendance is at its highest. Other applicants are likely to do the same thing.

The UW Transportation Services are likely to be happy to share their attendance record reports. SDOT also may be able to provide some information.

Another avenue for information gathering may be to track fitness app data. A surprising number of people are connected to the web via fitness apps, and we may be able to gather information about attendance through that avenue. We do not know if the UW Transportation Services are compiling that data; they may be more likely to track Lime Bike rental data. It would be interesting to find out what numbers they have from that.

### **Master Plan Implementation Group**

A reporter from the Madison Park Times has been eagerly seeking more information about the Education Center. We need to remember to find out when an authority body could gather to talk to them about it. The reporter needs a message to share in the paper, most likely, and the ABGC would not want him to think that they are hiding things.

Fred wrote to Stephanie to get a status update, in order to report out to donors who contributed to the pre-design phase. They would like to demonstrate that there is some progress.

A potential message we could share now would be that the team is investigating various alternative funding sources to understand what the scope and timeline of a capital timeline might be. Alternate sources could include non-traditional sources.

The ABGC discuss strategies for sharing information about the process of choosing the design and location for the building. From the outside, it seems as though the reporter assumes that there is a concrete option. The ABGC continues the work, but do not yet have a solid choice. They do have a preferred option, but this is a process and could change.

Sally will contact the reporter and update the group on what is discussed. He will be told that nothing is happening immediately: the wheels are slowly turning as the ABGC figure out how business and funding plans will come together. There is not a timeline for the final decision, but there is an overall cost estimate, so progress is definitely being made.

3 main topics were discussed at the MPIG meeting: bike share sites, next steps for water quality study, and Rhododendron Glen restoration work.

Max Jacobs is coordinating the bike share effort for SPR. We would like to designate specific, easily identifiable areas for the bikes to be dropped off after use. We definitely do not want to see bikes scattered throughout the Arboretum. Possible spots that might be good drop-off areas include the north side of the road by Duck Bay, the Japanese Garden parking lot and the Birch lot.

We have been told that the phone application used with these bikeshare programs requires them to be left in a specific area for the meter to shut off. There will be some back and forth, but Max is working to see how precisely we can define those drop-off areas. This program would not be active in all of our parks, but the Arboretum has been identified as a key site.

The MPIG group is following up with Larry Hubbel and Dave Galvan about testing the water quality of the streams by the Japanese Garden. The streams may be a clean source of water that could be used in the creek and in the Japanese Garden pond. Larry and Dave are planning to apply for a grant from King County for about \$250K to put toward this project. The MPIG group is in the process of figuring out how to take over the grant application process and steer it along.

The initial phase of restoration work at Rhododendron Glen began about two weeks ago. The UW ET team is tackling the upper and lower entrances. They are still figuring out the best way to manage the design process, and are exploring the resources available from SPR. The SPR Planning and Development Division is pretty "scoped out" for the year, so this work may go to UW project management. The work may be split into several phases, but the permitting and survey work will go ahead as other parts of the design are developed.

## Old/New Business

### Retreat Planning

The ABGC did not do retreat at top of the year, as people were busy with other things, and another discussion is happening about governance and the futures of governance. Sally and Rachel are discussing what they would like to do, and which month would work best.

The ABGC group has talked about their interest in wanting to discuss the Arboretum's mission and governance regarding water ecology and climate change. They will take into consideration the governance concern about how parties are going forward and how to eliminate the perception that a small group of people have had conversations that have gone further than they have in actuality.

There may be a way to get at them from learning and understanding from other institutions. We would like to hear from The Henry and The Zoo about their efforts around fundraising and mission. There has been great leadership of both groups, and they might be able to give good advice about how those efforts are handled and how to maintain continuity.

The Board wants to have an informational learning retreat. They have said that a half day would be acceptable instead of full day. There may be a calendar appointment for May 8<sup>th</sup> from 8:30-1:00, but that would likely be too soon: it may be better to wait a month or two. What works for the partners, how much gained/lost by moving into June or July? If at same day as meeting, expanded meeting time: June 12 or July 10. What does the group think?

June would likely be a good time for the retreat, but we should keep in mind that as dates drift further into summer, it will be more likely that folks are gone, and may make scheduling more complicated. When choosing a date, remember that the UW will host it's annual meeting on June 12<sup>th</sup> in the Japanese Garden. July would also be hard for Wendy from a staffing perspective.

A potential solution to the scheduling issue could be to cancel the ABGC meeting that month and shift the focus into a different day. An additional idea that surfaced is to look to other local groups and/or arboretums in different cities to find out how they define their mission, vision, and approach to modern issues

The Brooklyn Botanical Garden Director might be in town for Dr. Watt's sendoff event on July 25<sup>th</sup>. If we wanted that sort of voice at the table, he could be a good speaker and the ABGC would like to capitalize on having him here. If there is an opportunity to switch the July meeting to a time when he could attend, it might be helpful to have this conversation with him. Another option could be to hold separate meetings. Sally will ask Colleen to send out a Doodle Poll to try to pin down dates that might work for the group.

Scheduling the retreat is likely to be difficult, given all of the issues mentioned. If it doesn't need to take place this quarter, we might want to consider waiting until September. Sally will ask the group that is holding these governance meetings if waiting that long would be problematic. Jason would suggest that having it sooner would be better and would feel more timely. He has a meeting every

Thursday morning, but could miss that meeting, if necessary. Wednesday, May 29<sup>th</sup> might be a date that would work for all present. Sally will follow up and Fred will look for a location. The invitation will also be sent out to Jesús Aguirre and/or Christopher Williams. In the past, SPR leadership has been asked to say something at the top of the day and to stay as long as they can.

Sally will reach out to Ian to ask about the best ways to include themes of climate change and about ways to incorporate water quality and climate change into the conversation for the retreat. How should the group stage these visitors to talk about governance and fundraising? When they think about this, the question of what the Arboretum might look like in the future comes up. This could be put into part of the overall question about what the vision is going forward. It could alternately be incorporated into a broad discussion of what the future of the Arboretum might look like.

The ABGC should also ask the folks involved with governance discussions how this retreat could be most useful in their conversations. What would help to figure out what questions they are trying to solve, such as: what does it mean to have different responsibilities under a government model, who is in the room, what do you want to do with it, what direction do you need to spark those conversations, and what are the different facilitative needs? This is an opportunity for SPR to elevate that conversation. Michael has kept the conversation on this active with Deputy Superintendent Christopher Williams. There is a concern that the ABGC don't understand what the impacts could be, or how it could change their relationship.

Jason held a retreat with the Board on these topics. Their discussions made it clear that there is lots to understand. They do want to assess the "lay of the land, think in broad terms about mutable factors, and start to get feedback." They want the people attending the retreat to go away more comfortable with this information and feel their voices have been heard. Jason feels they accomplished this in their retreat.

Jason and Dan may lead this part of the conversation, since they have already had a lot of meetings and discussions about the topic. They may give an overview of what currently exists, conversations that have already taken place and why. If they had this updated visioning conversation vs. jumping right into what the ABGC thinks about different government models, then they should start with what exactly is it they want to accomplish. They should ask themselves where they want to go, and if they are in the right model to achieve that. If they define what this means on clear terms, then will the Arboretum still be in line with the Master Plan?

There has been some talk about fundraising for the Education Center: fundraising tends to be more successful if it is centered around a vision rather than just a building. Education is likely to be another theme along with climate change, water equality, etc.

Not all of the UW Botanic Garden staff will be invited to this retreat. There are staff that participate in all levels, but not here at the Arboretum. The ABGC might want to think about the Botanic Garden and Arboretum as two separate organizations, and this discussion encompasses more than just the Arboretum. The commissioners discuss spreading the conversation to include the Center for Urban

Horticulture: if talking about governance and combining organizations, the discussion has to include the whole staff on their side (although they may have a very different focus).

This is all preliminary thinking about differing governance structures. If timed right on the agenda, leadership and decision-makers could be present to hear what the considerations are. It could be a good opportunity to start to flesh this out and define whether to move ahead or not. It would be unrealistic to have this conversation in a group of 30, too many attendees would mean that it would not be a good venue for attempting to decide anything. It would be good for leadership to get together, but make it clear that it is more dreaming and information at this stage, and not decisions and negotiations.

It will be Christopher and Jesús' first times at the table. Parks was not involved in the early stages, so keep in mind that this will be brand new to us. Many of the conversations to date have just been about learning. As far as guests from other organizations; the most valuable part of the experience has been talking to other directors, former directors, and folks who were involved when governance changes were made. Dave Town has talked about shifts at The Zoo. Burke has had less changes but has an interesting model to consider. The Aquarium and Waterfront have had many things to figure out in terms of new three-way agreements, etc.

Staging the day will have some challenges: think about how to capture Stephanie, Christopher and Jesús for the right portion of the day. The ABGC will need to call out what should be called out and/or incorporated. The broader public is not likely to think of the Arboretum as educational in itself, but think of it primarily as a pretty place. As the ABGC puts out more information, this could rise as a part of that effort and become part of the broader narrative.

The discussion about **regrinding and vision can jump to discussions with guests**, then go into what those conversations are trying to achieve. Background information and efforts are still missing from the list. It is exceedingly complicated. Jason's group did a 30-minute PowerPoint on the subject that could be sent out as 'homework' to the invitees.

The goal of Governance section could include a general discussion about which conversations have taken place, increasing an understanding of the existing model, and high-level discussion about what the variables are that could potentially be shifted around. The ABGC will need to consider the timing of the conversations: earlier would be better, and it is important that staff feel involved. The ABGC could use this opportunity to raise people's level of knowledge about a subject, explore possibilities and gather knowledge. People will walk away with a sense of being on the same level and will be better prepared to discuss these topics.

Sally will make a to-do list and circulate it to make sure everything is captured. We need to resolve the question about hosting the Brooklyn Botanical Garden Director and how we might take advantage of his visit in July. Fred will check on the CUH for the 29<sup>th</sup>. The ABGC needs to resolve the question about what the appropriate spread of people would be and send a Save the Date out to those folks.

Michael will check on Christopher and Jesús' calendars, and will try to schedule them to attend during the first hour. It would likely be more valuable for them to be a part of the governance section. In Jason's experience, this would be the richest part for all of the guests. They might be familiar with the zoo and aquarium models, which don't need their ears, but it would be good time to solicit their feedback.

Unfortunately, the ABGC does not want all 50 staff members to show up. The meetings may have been inclusive of staff in the past, but including everyone could drive attendance to 100 people. The partners might ask leadership to take the responsibility to share the information and hold separate conversations on these topics.

Wendy has noticed a lot of discussion among staff about this topic. They are concerned about the timeline and have a sense that it is not moving fast enough. They are anxious to see where they stand and where they are moving. It will require more thought to find a middle ground.

From speaking to lawyers involved in other deals, Jason estimates that it is likely to take a bare minimum of three years, with 10-years being more typical for similar processes. He has told staff about the typical timeframe and how the conversations that have taken place are not likely to impact the timeline much when thinking of the full scope. There is pressure to manage expectations from the staff.

Wendy lost a faculty position, which changes the dynamic of how they operate within a school. Staff want to move forward, but feel like they have had transitional changes and are waiting to see how governance impacts the structure of how they operate. With the change of Dan coming along, they may feel as though there is no continuity to what was happening before.

Jason would like to put in a vote to have more CUH staffing specifically attend. He feels appreciation from previous retreats that included on the ground staff. One of the things that could happen if more staff are included is that they could get a better explanation of what has been going on, hopefully eliminating the perception of "nothing happening." It would be a preliminary but important step to get those folks in the room, help them understand that things *have* been happening, and give them a chance to weigh in on the process. It could help them feel like they are a part of it, not just managers.

Unfortunately, including that many staff may not leave enough time in the schedule for meaningful discussions. Perhaps the UW issues could take place as a separate discussion, since Jesús and Christopher are not involved in UW staffing issues. There have been a number of things going on that they've been trying to report out on. A special staff meeting has been scheduled for that conversation.

Wendy suggests that the right approach might be to have all units represented, but not necessarily all staff.

We could look at the way the specialty gardens are handled: just like we're hearing about context of how CUH impacts how the UW thinks about certain things and faculty issues. It could be good for SPR



to get an idea of how their issues impact the greater group. We could explore what challenges are happening that the partners don't necessarily see, and perhaps discuss how to tackle those.

Gathering of Directors

An email was sent out about the gathering of directors around Puget Sound at Miller Garden tomorrow. They will talk about collections and conservation policies. They're working toward a similar model to the one in Philadelphia: the idea is to begin to market *all* of the gardens as a whole. Marketing materials would be put out as a cohesive unit.

WSDOT Letter

The letter to WSDOT will be out soon, if it has not been sent out already. We will want to keep a lot of eyes on it. So far, it seems good: it memorializes the concerns that were voiced after they exited. It would be good to have this in writing to help everyone remember the next time they return to see us.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 9:52 a.m.

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Sally Clark, ABGC Chair