

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Minutes Graham Visitors Center, Washington Park Arboretum – January 8, 2020

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
- David Graves, Strategic Advisor, Seattle Parks and Recreation
- James Fearn, Mayoral Appointee

University of Washington

- Sally Clark, University of Washington, Director of Regional and Community Relations
- Fred Hoyt, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG), Director

Other Staff Present:

- Rachel Acosta, Seattle Parks and Recreation, ABGC Coordinator
- Wendy Gible, University of Washington Botanic Gardens, Associate Director
- *Excused*, Michael Bradshaw, University of Washington Botanic Gardens
- Patrick Merriam, Interim Director Parks and Environment, Seattle Parks and Recreation
- Charles Ng, Strategic Advisor, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Standing Committees

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG):

AF: Jane Stonecipher & Jason Morse

City: David Graves (lead) & Kim Baldwin

UW: Fred Hoyt/Wendy Gible

SR520 Technical Committee:

City: David Graves; UW: Fred Hoyt

Call to Order

Sally calls the meeting to order at 8:30am. They add a discussion about WSDOT to the current agenda. Kenan moves to approve the minutes, James seconds, and the minutes are approved.

Discussion: WSDOT Preparation

The ABGC discuss several issues they want to discuss with WSDOT at the upcoming meeting.
Cell tower-

- Cell tower - WSDOT has gone with the monofir instead of the cell tower, as the ABGC requested and they did not let the ABGC know.

- Trees on Lake Washington Boulevard – the poplars on Lake Washington Boulevard were compromised by Graham Construction. Fred sent a letter requesting reimbursement. WSDOT acknowledged in the meeting that WSDOT assumed the trees were part of the Canal Reserve mitigation money. Fred feels if WSDOT had communicated with the ABGC sooner, there may have been another solution. Graham made a change to the design that has resulted in collection loss.
- Construction and closure of Lake Washington Boulevard – Coordinate boulevard closures for work in the Arboretum. Ascertain from Graham the dates they will be closing the Boulevard so the city and UWBG could work on some projects along the Boulevard concurrently. This work is anticipated for 2020; potentially a good time for doing the curb cut at Boyer.
- Timing for work on North Entry – Working backwards from 2023 timeframe, the ABGC needs to start planning and permitting for the work to be done after their project is completed. Contact Jason Berger to see if ABGC can get a quick estimate for the North Entry. The more money WSDOT gives the Arboretum now could impact what they receive for the WSDOT peninsula. The ABGC discuss how to request funding, whether it is for specific projects or a certain amount of funding doled out over the life of the project. Feasibility of the project and identifying cost estimates will be important to move forward. Some of this work in the north entry is part of the mitigation.
 - SEND WSDOT agreement to ABGC members
 - What will it take to refine the design for some estimates (30% design) which could help with fundraising.
 - What will it take to refine to get to construction documents?
 - Fred to follow-up with Berger
- Lack of communication – line item on monthly meetings; WSDOT discussion in old/new business
 - Formal letter to lay out the lack of communication – there shouldn't be this level of disconnect after all these years. The letter should go out prior to the February meeting.
 - Cc to Nathan Torgelson (SDCI)
 - Sally will work on a letter
 - Need confirmation the cell tower will go away in 10 years and commitment to \$12million mitigation funding.
 - Cc State representatives
- Confirm David and Jenny will be here for February meeting.

Partner Updates: Budget, Personnel and Other Items

University of Washington

Solstice event went really well. There was great attendance.

UWBG is discussing ways to help the gardens in Australia. Fred is connecting with the Honorary consulate in Australia, to find out need and try to help.

Living Museum in Palm Springs, they are doing an Australia garden in the coming week and want to collaborate with UWBG.

Cottage on South End – Funds have maxed out. They cannot locate where the sewer connects to the sewer line. There are no city records showing the connection. It is not even a landmarked building; looking at alternatives.

The restroom issue is discussed. Patrick mentions that there are a couple of reasons for closing restrooms during the winter. Many of the restrooms are not protected from the freeze and SPR does not have enough people during the winter to maintain the restrooms that could be open. Patrick will investigate the specific restroom at the athletic fields in the Arboretum and respond to Jane.

Directors Roundtable of Puget Sound Gardens – This group is creating a draft website for marketing purposes. It will include a map of Puget Sound gardens with nearby restaurants. Fred and 3 others from local gardens have been accepted to speak at the American Public Garden Association Conference in Portland June 22 – 26.

UWBG staff are researching what it would entail to license the preschool. Improvements would need to be done to the shelter. This is a high priority for UWBG; licensing would allow them to provide 8-hrs and serve a wider demographic. What do you have to do to create a space for warming? Sally mentions it could be a potential studio project for College for The Built Environment.

Summer camps – Registration opens February 3. Looking at changes to Fiddleheads registration to a lottery system that could be more equitable.

There are complaints from staff and visitors about human waste in the preschool area and around the Arboretum.

Arboretum Foundation

Graham Visitors Center – There are leaks happening all over the building. At the December MPIG, Garrett, SPR Project Manager, provided a preliminary report prioritizing safety and accessibility. Roof work will start later this month.

Flower Power! Opening Night Party at the Northwest Flower and Garden Show – Staff are busy working on the party and display garden. Jane invited Hillary Franz, Commissioner Of Public Lands, to speak at the event; theme is “Flower Power”.

Display garden will have themes about conservation and sustainability. Andy and Pam, had asked to explore a model for a 3rd party contractor to do the work. The contractor is doing it for free this year, but are hoping to be paid for it in future years. SPR has always partnered with the Arboretum and UW for creating the display. Last year’s garden was labor intensive and mismanaged but typically it runs very smoothly. It is the main fundraiser for the Arboretum.

Composting toilet – The agreement is ready to sign. It is a 2-year trial from the time of installation. This could be a good, cost-effective, environmentally-friendly solution to the restroom problem. They would like the compost toilet to be ready for use for the April 25 Earth Day event. SPR will recommend a lock for the compost toilet.

Safety issues at the GVC – Staff received active shooter training. They are working to create more links between the GVC and Japanese Garden for communication.

Japanese Garden – 60th Anniversary – Arboretum Foundation staff are working to create a series of events to commemorate the anniversary, such as the June 5 anniversary of the ribbon cutting and other things planned throughout the season.

Reviving an oral history project – The ABGC discuss different opportunities to collecting and sharing stories about the Arboretum; Jennifer Ott, HistoryLink and Olmsted book author, branch libraries can house/display/promote items in their neighborhood. Interview subjects for the arboretum, Jane is looking for suggestions.

ABGC retreat – The recommendation to look at governance to make sure the Arboretum is well-positioned for 30 years. The committee has been moving ahead on that.

Lunch with Amazon in the spheres before the holidays. Jane and Fred see nice parallels between programs here and there; potential collaboration. They have an interest in preschool programs. The College of Education is having a conversation with the Bezos family for early learning.

Seattle Parks and Recreation

Strategic plan – Financial planning is starting; Specialty Garden funding is being reviewed. 13 proposals worth \$15million. SPR is starting to prioritize.

The ABGC feels SPR needs more staff for maintenance; the Arboretum is having issues with encampment and the results of a lack of open restrooms. Donna Waters is the Encampment Manager, email her to let her know what is happening.

Jane asks if the partners can do anything to help elevate the restroom funds. Patrick states restrooms are the number one concern for Seattle residents. As the density of the city increases, the park usage and restroom usage continues to increase.

Outreach dates and decision points for financial plan.

Master Plan Implementation Group

MPIG has not met yet and will provide an update at the next meeting.

Old/New Business

Elections: The ABGC propose that Sally chair for the next year. Kenan thinks it is fabulous that Sally will chair for another year. SPR person to be chair the following year.

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

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Sally Clark, ABGC Chair