

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

- *Excused*, Jane Stonecipher, Arboretum Foundation Executive Director
- Jenny Wyatt, Arboretum Foundation Board President
- Jason Morse, Arboretum Foundation Board member

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
- *Excused*, Fred Hoyt, University of Washington Botanic Gardens (UWBG), Director

Other Staff Present:

- Rachel Acosta, Seattle Parks and Recreation, ABGC Coordinator
- Wendy Gibble, University of Washington Botanic Gardens, Associate Director
- Victoria Schoenburg, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Urban Parks Partnership Manager
- Ray Larson, University of Washington Botanic Gardens, Curator

Standing Committees

Master Plan Implementation Group (MPIG):

AF: Jane Stonecipher & Jason Morse

City: David Graves (lead) & Kim Baldwin

UW: Fred Hoyt/Wendy Gibble

SR520 Technical Committee:

City: David Graves; UW: Fred Hoyt

Call to Order

Sally calls the meeting to order at 8:35am. The attendees introduce themselves. There is not a quorum at start so the ABGC postponed approval of the January 8 meeting minutes.

Update: SR520 Projects

Dawn Yankauskas provides background and updates on the various SR520 projects and their timelines. She addresses the questions and concerns from the letter Sally sent into the presentation.

Rest of the West Projects –

- Montlake project is currently in progress.
- The I-5 Express Lane Project will be a 3-year project to be finished in 2023 if funding comes through.
- The Roanoke Lid and Portage Bay Project will extend the regional trail by connecting to local trail systems and it will add open space. WSDOT worked on this a lot over the summer and Request for Proposals (RFPs) will go out in 2021 with an aim to start the project in 2023.
- 2nd Montlake bascule bridge- WSDOT is working with agency stakeholders and community groups to identify solutions.

Montlake area – Matt DeGooyer, from Graham, highlights key pieces of the future Montlake area, including the Montlake lid, pedestrian land bridge, and street improvements on E Lake Washington Boulevard and Montlake Boulevard; construct new west app bridge east structure.

Construction milestones since June 2019

- Have shifted all traffic onto westbound SR520 lanes.
- Open the temporary eastbound on-ramp
- Begin removing the old eastbound bridge
- Begin constructing the temporary work trestle
- Begin building supports for the Montlake lid

Matt reviews the timeline

- 60-70% through design;
- Concurrently removing old eastbound bridge while constructing new eastbound bridge and the Montlake lid with a February 2023 completion date.
- Arboretum on-ramp is closed, the temporary ramp is open through 2021.
- Realigned westbound lane to Montlake Boulevard.

2020 Recent and Upcoming Montlake Project Work

- Replacing a 54" waterline under SR520;
- Creating a temporary shared-use path to parallel the temporary eastbound on ramp.

2020 ongoing activities;

- Strict noise restrictions at night, but working both day and night.
- Daytime pile driving in Lake Washington and on Foster Island.
- Removing the old eastbound bridge.
- Local streets:
 - Utility relocation at Montlake Boulevard and E Lake Washington Boulevard.
 - Activation of the traffic signal at East Lake Washington Boulevard and 24th Avenue.
 - Install flashing beacon at crosswalk of Roanoke Street and Lake Washington Boulevard East.
- Ongoing Montlake lid construction.
- Daytime and nighttime work.
- Partial and full lane closures for drivers.

- Sidewalk and trail closures and detours.

In the letter the ABGC sent to WSDOT earlier this month, Matt says Graham does not plan to close Lake Washington Boulevard in 2020 but there may be closures in 2021. The Arboretum would like to coordinate with the contractors to reduce the amount of time Lake Washington Boulevard needs to close. Jose Prieto is the City Liaison and can work with the Arboretum on coordinating their work on Lake Washington Boulevard. SDOT may also have some closures to coordinate.

Questions about the trees on Lake Washington Boulevard

In June, WSDOT met with the University of Washington and learned about seven *populus simonii* collection trees. WSDOT agreed to protect those trees. Due to oversight, Graham started work very close to the trees, removing topsoil in preparation for a path to be built. The UWBG reminded Graham and WSDOT of the collection trees' importance and Graham is making efforts to protect the trees and alter their design to create minimal impact. Graham is working with SDOT to move the crosswalk to north of the intersection at E Lake Washington Boulevard and Roanoke. There will be vaults that need to be installed in the area which would potentially impact the trees. They have reduced the width of the trail from 14-feet to 8-feet wide to provide the trees with more room. Graham will excavate out the crushed rock and install porous concrete for the trail and arborist chips between the trail and trees. They hired an arborist to perform a pre-inspection of the trees and invited the UWBG to attend their monthly check-ins to ensure the trees are still okay. They will also remove the ivy.

Cell Tower Relocation

SDCI issued their decision in May 2019. They feel the monofir is the least obtrusive design. The cell tower is in construction and they are installing equipment for 4 cellular companies. It is a temporary facility and it will be removed in 2029 when WSDOT finishes the project. The Lease specifically stipulates that Crown Castle will work with WSDOT to find a new location for the tower and they will have six months to move. Every time WSDOT returns to the ABGC they will provide an update on the cell tower.

Tree discussions – The UWBG and AF are unhappy about the lack of discussion prior to construction of the temporary ramp. UWBG staff expressed concern over the summer when the trees were tagged with metal markers. The UWBG arborist did an assessment of the trees. In September, the UWBG and WSDOT held a preliminary meeting to discuss which trees would be impacted. In December, UWBG staff noticed trees were impacted and their arborists performed another assessment. Fred sent a letter saying they wanted to be involved in order to keep the trees healthy. Ray says he spoke with Graham Construction earlier this week and made the following points:

- This species of tree does not do well with disturbance to their roots.
- The UWBG staff do not think the trail should be under the trees.
- The trees do not like to be pruned and UWBG is on the hook for maintaining them.
- They debate whether these trees will survive the construction and the amount of impacts already sustained. The UWBG arborists feel the trees are already stressed.

David Graves adds, dropping limbs is a concern. SPR removes trees if they are hazardous. Ray says they are hazardous and he will send the arborist report to Todd and Graham Construction. The trees are very old and coming to the end of their life. There is a column of decay in the trees already and a natural lean is present, so the stress to their roots will hasten their decline.

WSDOT and Graham will continue to monitor the trees. UWBG wants to have the two trees removed because they feel the damage has been done and they are a safety hazard. Sally asks for SPR to be included in continued dialogue moving forward since they are the landowners. Kenan requests some sort of established meetings to work together to avoid miscommunications in the future.

Sally mentions there was a difference of opinion on whether these trees were part of the original mitigation funding. Dawn says that back when the original Agreement was done, WSDOT did not know they would be on this part of the road. No one considered this collection. These poplars were not included in the original mitigation money because the original design did not impact them.

Conversations regarding the compensation for the trees is ongoing depending on whether the trees are removed.

Graham is responsible for quality control. There was a non-conformance issue – there are levels of quality assurance. Graham reviews the plans. Graham planned remove the trees until UWBG noticed the tags and contacted WSDOT. The topsoil was removed before Graham knew of the disagreement.

Graham and WSDOT will discuss liability and whether it is feasible to save the trees. Further conversations will happen with Ray, Fred and David G.

Monopole/monofir conversation

Sally reviews the history of the monofir vs. monopole. SDCI opted to make it look like a monofir. ABGC should have tracked it more closely. As landowners, ABGC and SPR thought the decision-makers would consider their opinion with more weight, which is clearly not the case.

What is the trigger for the 18-month notice for relocation of the cell tower? Dawn says they will work backward from when the contractor is scheduled to remove their equipment. Dawn says there may be an opportunity to start it sooner if they find a new location. The intention is to sell the market property after the Montlake project is done. The commitment WSDOT made is to sell the property to a private entity so they cannot guarantee the cell tower can be returned there. The Arboretum Foundation has received some criticism regarding the cell tower from local residents and donors. Jane, Fred, and WSDOT are working on creating some FAQs to deal with donors and Arboretum visitors. It would be great for the FAQ to explain the background of the cell tower.

WSDOT / City of Seattle Coordination

Overview of Arboretum Mitigation background

- Arboretum Master Plan (2001) – City of Seattle and UW plan for future development of the Washington Park Arboretum
- Implementation Plan (2003) – ABGC plan prioritizing projects identified in the Master Plan
- Arboretum Mitigation Plan (Dec. 2010) – The outcome of legislative direction to develop a mitigation plan for SR 520 effects to the Arboretum.
- Arboretum Mitigation Plan MOU (April 2011) - WSDOT, ABGC, Arboretum Foundation, Seattle Parks and Recreation, UW
- Arboretum Agreement GCB 1182 (Jan. 2013) – WSDOT, Seattle Parks and Recreation, UW, Arboretum Foundation, ABGC
 - Completed/ongoing projects
 - Provided funding to SPR for the Multi-Use Trail
 - Foster Island Tribal/Cultural Improvements
 - Art, Aesthetic, and landscaping improvements at Foster Island crossing
 - Noise reduction measures
 - Traffic calming
 - Traffic management evaluation
 - Foster Island Undercrossing – south par of Foster Island undercrossing to be completed with south side of SR520 completion.
 - Remaining Projects:
 - North Entry Project
 - Interpretive and wayfinding signage
 - WSDOT Peninsula Property Transaction

North Entry Project

- Roles & Responsibilities
 - Seattle Parks
 - Lead PS&E design and construction of the North Entry project
 - Coordinate PS&E design review for the North Entry with the ABGC, WSDOT, and others
 - WSDOT
 - Work with Seattle Parks to develop an agreement regarding WSDOT's contribution to the North Entry Project and for Seattle Parks to take on the North Entry Project.
- WSDOT/Seattle Parks agreement - WSDOT and Seattle Parks are actively exploring options for a multi-property land transfer, which would include:
 - Funding to Seattle Parks that will be available for the North Entry project - Including *early elements including day-lighting and roundabout
*(*Timing of early North Entry work is dependent on Graham's construction progress)*
 - Provide a mechanism to transfer the WSDOT Peninsula to Seattle Parks-SR 520 plans to use the area through the end of the SR 520 Program.

Dawn talks about wrapping all property agreements between SPR and WSDOT together. The City of Seattle Law department are reviewing the Term Sheet now. This would allow SPR and the ABGC to

implement some projects earlier. WSDOT would cut a check for the entire amount and future coordination for projects would be coordinated between SPR and the Arboretum Partners. The Roundabout and daylighting of Arboretum Creek could be started sooner if they had the funding. WSDOT and SPR talked about drafting the agreement and cutting the check by late 2021.

Dawn says the value of the WSDOT Peninsula transfer will need to be considered when deciding the dollar amount to be given to SPR for the North Entry project. WSDOT will provide some funding and the ABGC will help look for more funding for the North Entry. What does an early buyout look like? SPR will need to work with WSDOT to determine an amount.

The ABGC will have a smaller group discussion regarding mitigation. The idea of connecting the mitigation funds and the amount of the mitigation funds to the value of the WSDOT peninsula and the property transfer may not be ideal. SPR could decide to use that money elsewhere.

Wetland mitigation & Bent 2

The ABGC would like to be involved in the plantings in the mitigation area because there is a potential for adding some collection trees. This work is targeted for commencement in 2023.

Bent 2 – City of Seattle and WSDOT to preserve a piece of the failed RH Thompson Expressway. \$60,000 allocated for further development of conceptual design of Bent 2. WSDOT will work with ARCH on the Scope of Work and design. Graham will let WSDOT and community members know when the work will start on the demolition of the RH Thompson. The bend is being protected.

Rachel to check with WSDOT staff late April for a May or June project update.

ABGC Discussion regarding SR520 Updates

Communication has been lackluster. There was no tree protection in place. The entire group of trees was assessed at \$750,000. The trees were tagged and noticed by UWBG in August, but WSDOT did not let Graham know until October.

The tree protection on the southern trees is not adequate. If WSDOT has impacted them and they are hazardous, they should be removed.

UWBG recommends removal. The ABGC discuss their options in dealing with the poplars. Does SPR, as landowner, have authority to make WSDOT remove the trees? David Zuckerman should loop in city arborists in order to determine agreement. The ABGC could assert that if WSDOT does not remove them, they are assuming liability. Lack of tree protection and cutting into the top soil has impacted the health of the trees.

SPR coordinates with SDOT arborists for trees on park boulevards.

WSDOT will review tree issue with Graham, SPR and UWBG.

Smaller group to discuss Term Sheet proposed by WSDOT for paying and exiting the North Entry project – Jane, Fred, David G.

Berger cost estimate for North Entry is almost 10-years old. ABGC members present suggest property sales and mitigation payments should be separated. WSDOT Peninsula is zoned single family which is problematic for assessing real value. When related SR 520 property was condemned in the 1960s, the University of Washington was compensated.

Problem solving -- Is there value in the UW receiving the WSDOT Peninsula instead of the City? Frank Chopp could be an ally for North Entry funding and rational property transfer terms.

Old/New Business

Public meetings for Park District Financial Plan – Sally to work with Jane and Niall to figure out speaking points and volunteers to go to public meetings. SPR prioritizing through an equity lens. Rachel reads out the dates of the public meetings:

- Delridge Community Center, Monday, March 2 from 6 to 8 pm
- Lake City Community Center, Thursday March 5 from 6 to 8 pm
- Van Asselt Community Center, Saturday March 7 from 10am to 12pm

Jane returns on February 14. Sally will reach out to her for speaking points. Wendy will get statistics regarding scholarships.

Opening night party for the Northwest Flower and Garden Show are on sale now. Don't forget to buy your tickets!

There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 10:45 a.m.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Sally Clark, ABGC Chair