

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Minutes Graham Visitors Center, Washington Park Arboretum – March 11, 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
- Jenny Wyatt, Arboretum Foundation Board Incoming President-elect

City of Seattle

- Kenan Block, Mayoral Appointee
- David Graves, Strategic Advisor, Seattle Parks and Recreation
- *Excused*, 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 Gibble, University of Washington Botanic Gardens, Associate Director

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. She asks for approval of the consent items: the March 11 Agenda, January and February minutes. Kenan moves, Jenny seconds, and the consent items are approved.

Partner Updates: Budget, Personnel and Other Items

University of Washington

Stone cottage at the Arboretum – There is a complete blockage of the pipe that connects to the plumbing. It is not habitable. The cottage is not historically registered. The city would compel a nomination before any work was done. The ABGC discuss packaging the nominations based on the improvements that need to be made. The goal is to get the cottage functional and habitable again. \$60,000 invested so far but the cost could double.

Wifi at the Arboretum is being improved, staff are very appreciative.

Events at the Arboretum – Adult Education has postponed most of the classes; this will have a huge economic impact. Event rentals bring in about \$700,000 annually for the UWBG.

American Public Garden Conference in Portland is reexamining whether to have the conference in June.

No classes at the UW until March 30. UWBG is canceling school field trips.

Fred asks if SPR has trail counters for parks. The Arboretum is trying to get a better count for visitorship; David says there are counters and SPR struggles to get counts for their parks because they are so porous.

Open UWABGC position - Lyle Bicknell has inquired about Iain's position for the ABGC.

Rachel Jacobsen's Celebration of Life – Fred attended, and it was a lovely event. The memorial tree planted in her honor, was prominent in the program and the video.

Arboretum Foundation

Flower & Garden Show Opening Night Party - More than 400 people attended. The Foundation raised approximately \$375,000. Hillary Franz, Commissioner of Public Lands, was the guest speaker. The organizers of the Northwest Flower and Garden Show modified their partnership agreement with the Arboretum. This year, the Arboretum had to pay for some services, but the event organizers did some advertising and had donation stations. The display garden featured rare and vulnerable plants which was well received. It won a gold medal for the garden. An article in the paper critiqued the Philadelphia Garden Show and the horticultural community saying they should be more responsible about messaging around the changing climate.

Opening Day of the Japanese Garden – The Arboretum and Ohara Hiroki from the Ohara School of Ikebana came and taught an ikebana class. The Japanese Consul General attended the opening and made some welcoming greetings.

The Arboretum Foundation finance director has left. The Foundation is in the process to put interim position in until they figure out how to create a system.

Covid-19 – Half the staff are working remotely every day. Jane is concerned about the volunteers; strongly encouraging people to self-select.

Zoo has done a mandatory “no volunteer” programs; they are also concerned about the animal population.

Jane says she's trying to figure out how to compensate the lack of potential revenue.

Replacement of vehicle and repairs on another but holding off on other maintenance needs for now.

Earth Day work party – April 25 is the next big event. The ABGC discuss timing of canceling. They will need to consider staffing and other things.

Jane, David Zuckerman, and Karen Stainer went to the Woodland Park Zoo to discuss partnership ideas. They will start with the Browse program, which takes fresh cuttings from the Arboretum and supplements animals diets. The Zoo will pick up branches and vegetation for the zoo animals. David is looking to improve storage for the yard. This is a fun story for Earth Day. A couple of donors support both the Zoo and the Arboretum and Jane wonders if they would be interested in supporting this project.

Seattle Parks and Recreation

Canceling events through the end of March; Park District public meeting went well, but the remainder were canceled. Most people are working from home or telecommuting. Lifelong, Senior programming is canceled but, at this point, SPR is trying to keep the programs going.

Master Plan Implementation Group

Waterfront Trail – The ABGC discuss the complications around permitting improvements and renovations to the Waterfront Trail. Garrett is working on getting the Phase 1 scope to bid. The work would begin in 2020 or 2021. The Army Corps of Engineers deferred to the Coast Guard. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFW) need to have input. The ABGC discuss writing a letter to the public stating that this project is being actively worked on.

Sally suggests talking with Sarah Castro, federal liaison for the UW.

The funding is sitting waiting to be used.

Composting toilet is ready for shipment; hope to have it installed by Earth Day. Charles Ng was really helpful in getting the operating agreement finalized.

David and Fred spoke with Graham and WSDOT regarding trail closures on Foster Island and signage. David Z. will help determine where they go. The ABGC want to ensure that the signage is clear about the trail closure; and has some language to address the Waterfront Trail to provide clarity.

Rhododendron Glen – The restoration work on the upper portion of Rhododendron Glen will be completed soon. Donor money is covering phases 1 and 2. Phase 3 is around Azalea Way pond – hoping Seattle Garden Club will help with funding and Seattle Parks and Recreation will provide labor on this project and supplement Seattle Garden Club donations.

Old/New Business

WSDOT – David has an updated term sheet. The ABGC would like to see a separation of mitigation dollars from the North Entry Term Sheet.

Trees – Arborist report sent to WSDOT and Graham; the ABGC discuss possible scenarios for moving forward.

Covid-19 has people preoccupied and so much is in the air with how this will impact the Arboretum.

>>>For April or May – The ABGC will have an expanded conversation about zones in the Arboretum.

Park District planning – The ABGC discuss writing a letter. The talking points:

- The Arboretum is a destination park that serves 600,000+ people;
- serves people all over the region;
- offers education and volunteer opportunities that don't stretch other parks resources;
- safety, access and deferred maintenance in the Graham Visitors Center;
- Having a base pool of money to use as a match to leverage other funding sources is useful.

The ABGC may not be the most appropriate vehicle through which to provide this message to the City. Sally suggests they spread the message through the education programs – Fiddleheads parents could advocate for the Arboretum. Jane shares her idea with the Board like the Bus to Trails concept with a Metro loop to specialty gardens/regional parks. Sally suggests this could be financed through the Cultural Access Fund.

Foster Island will be the kitchen door into the Arboretum and it provides a regional connection.

Jane will share the letter from the Arboretum Foundation to the City regarding the Park District.

Governance Task Force – Jim is an excellent facilitator. The committee is asking all the right questions. They are in the investigative phase and had a big discussion about finance in the last meeting and in the next one too. They are laying out all the pieces. The big questions they are asking is: Who needs to approve the recommendation? Does there need to be just one recommendation? What authority does the committee have? Early June is the due date of the committee's work.

Arboretum Foundation and UWBG working on Vision Statement/Guiding Principles for the Arboretum. They will bring it to the ABGC for review.

They will circulate this before the April ABGC.

It has been an interesting conversation and very collegial. There is a group in the room who looks at the Arboretum as a place and another group that looks at it as programs. It is an interesting process to see how to reconcile these identities.

The final report will get delivered to all the partners, but the Task Force instructions do not specify anything about decision-making.

The taskforce is charged to come up with 3 options; with one option being to stay the same. Jane and Fred say they hope, at the least, the work will result in a common brand and a marketing plan.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 9:30 a.m.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Sally Clark, ABGC Chair