

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Minutes Graham Visitors Center, Washington Park Arboretum – May 13, 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 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 Gibble, University of Washington Botanic Gardens, Associate Director
- Joey Furuto, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Parks and Environment Division 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 via zoom at 9:05am. The Board introduces themselves.

Partner Updates: Budget, Personnel and Other Items

University of Washington

Fred has been asked to look at budget cuts of 7-15%. There is no budget or backing so these would be permanent cuts. It is disappointing, but understandable. Almost 100% of the state funding goes towards salaries. The cuts will be applied across the college.

Garden staff have been authorized to return to work. Rhododendron Glen plantings will begin in the next couple of weeks. The project is slowly moving forward.

Fred asked his staff if they could take some of their educational programs virtual? This would broaden their reach to the entire state.

Farm manager, Perry Ackworth, was awarded a Distinguished Employee Award from the University of Washington. It is one of the largest interdisciplinary programs in the University. They are partnering with the food pantry and selling the CSA's.

The Na'ah Illahee Fund has asked for more space to grow food.

Virtual classes are doing well. 100 people attended a class at \$20 each, which is great. This is a good movement forward for the UWBG.

The Roundtable decided to postpone the virtual American Public Garden Association meeting in Portland. The roundtable had a good conversation about expectations and challenges during this time.

Fred has been communicating with some of the larger donors; one is interested in supporting the educational programs. One is willing to hold a fundraiser at his house in the fall.

Fred is pleased with how supportive the public has been.

Arboretum Foundation

Give Big and Spring Appeal – The Foundation received good support. The Arboretum is a haven for people and reinforces the importance of parks and greenspaces. Jane is hopeful this will continue to translate and they will meet their goals of supporting their partners.

Unclear whether the NW Flower & Garden Show will happen next year. Some of the guidelines for the Japanese garden – i.e. limiting the capacity of the Japanese garden, also limits the revenue.

Many nonprofits that had guaranteed employment for the first couple of months are starting to furlough and lay off employees. Jane is watching the situation closely.

There will be a Virtual Mother's Day experience at the Arboretum with a big social media push.

June 5 marks the 60th Anniversary of the official ribbon cutting for the Japanese Garden. The Green Legacy Hiroshima seeds were going to be planted on the anniversary of the Japanese Garden. This also marks Kanreki – a traditional 60th birthday celebration in Japan, for the Japanese Garden. Jane is reaching out to dignitaries and Japanese American Community to create a virtual birthday message for the Garden.

Programming, especially for groups, will lag throughout the coming year.

Annual meeting will be virtual this year on June 17, it will be a webinar format. Jane is asking SPR to do a 3-minute update from multiple SPR divisions. Jane to follow up with Deputy Superintendent Williams and SPR staff.

Seattle Parks and Recreation

Joey Furuto, Parks and Environment Division Director, says SPR would like to offer ADA access parking only at the Graham Visitors Center. He asks if there are any thoughts or concerns from this group? The ABGC question how will this be enforced and whether the Boyer parking lot may be more suitable. SPR has created ADA parking at other locations. It does require a redesign of the parking lot to correct the grade and new painted

lines. SPR is spreading these out across the city to allow ADA access to parks and openspaces. Currently, many of the parking lots for our regional parks are closed. Jane voices concerns that opening the GVC lot would provide access to Arboretum Drive. The ABGC suggests opening the Birch parking lot for ADA. Joey will follow-up.

Lisa says SPR has put up many signs around the parks for Social Distancing, and they have also been using Social Distancing Ambassadors at the Arboretum every day.

Japanese Garden update – SPR opened the golf courses because they met the Governor’s guidelines; the Japanese Garden was next on Robert’s list, but it is being evaluated. There would be operational guidelines regarding spacing and sanitation. Belinda is working on a plan that could meet the guidelines, including, limiting the number of people in the garden to 50. The Board ask SPR to think about capacity in terms of a percentage. Lisa Chen’s staff have been maintaining the garden so it looks great and she said she would need about a week to reopen.

Sally has asked about SPR’s approach to requiring masks. Robert says SPR will adhere to the Governor’s guidelines. SPR staff will be masked.

Updated evacuation plan – Jane would like to reiterate her request that an evacuation plan/Shelter-in-place plan needs to be ready before the Japanese Garden reopens.

Should the major trails in the park be one-way only? Joey says it would take a lot of work and thousands of dollars for signage, enforcement, smaller loops for mobility issues, and social distance ambassadors.

With crews from the UW and SPR working closely, Fred wants to ensure that SPR has put procedures in place for a safer work environment. Planning and Development Division has put procedures in place for their construction projects. Parks and Environment is working on these requirements for their employees as their people are returning to work sites. Sally says the UW asks people to attest they are not ill prior to coming in to work. Horticulture staff are being required to take their temperature and affirm they feel okay before they go into work. This assuages Fred’s concerns for his staff.

WSDOT negotiations – David received an updated draft on the Term Sheet for the property transfer. David will circulate the updated draft.

Budget cuts – David is removed from the budget process. Robert says SPR will look at other options before making cuts; there will be a realignment and some positions will not get filled.

Master Plan Implementation Group

Tsutakawa gates – Jane has been in contact with the children of George Tsutakawa; including Jerry. He still has his father’s design. She is working with the Office of Arts and Culture (OAC). One of the gates was recovered, albeit badly damaged. They may not be repairable. They discussed paths for moving forward – replace it; create an updated design in a more visible location, turning it into an art piece, or doing nothing right now. Jerry Tsutakawa will get an estimate. OAC will look to see if there is any insurance money, but the deductible is very high. Would it be tone deaf to try and raise funds for this project? There is a desire to have an end to this story.

Kenan feels Tsutakawa is a local treasure and the gates are beautiful, but he is okay with waiting. Sally mentions there were some donors that had mentioned helping out with the gates and if this is postponed, they may lose interest.

Stone cottage – MPIG is still considering possible uses for the stone cottage if it is not rented out? Highest and best use, provided they can get it repaired. David Graves feels like the building could be a great opportunity. Sally likes the idea of the artist-in-residence and they could duplicate the efforts of other organizations/UW? They are still working to figure out the sewer issue. Most of the plumbing and electrical is updated. It is exciting to see what the future of the stone cottage will look like. Fred and David can work together to form an Memorandum of Understanding and research other “Artist-in-Residence” programs. This is not a money-maker so there will need to be maintenance funding. They will review the expenses that would need to be covered assuming someone is living there.

Compost toilet – The Department of Neighborhoods extended the grant period until September 30. The Operating Agreement is complete and they are working on a schedule for the installation.

Rhododendron Glen – Staff are moving ahead with the work. The contractors and designers will be onsite to oversee the project.

Kenan feels it would be great to do a deeper financial dive at a future meeting so that the ABGC can better advocate for funding. Fred says one priority is protecting maintenance staff at the Arboretum.

Ask Lisa to return at the June meeting to talk about potential impacts to SPR budget and operations.

Old/New Business

There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 10:15 a.m.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Sally Clark, ABGC Chair