

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Minutes

Via Zoom – July 9, 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 Gible, University of Washington Botanic Gardens, Associate Director
- Lisa Chen, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Natural Resources Unit Manager
- Robert Stowers, Seattle Parks and Recreation, EPIC Division Director

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 9:10am. The virtual ABGC meeting is called to order at 9:07 a.m. The Board introduces themselves. Sally calls for a motion to approve the June 10 meeting minutes and the July Agenda; Jane moves and David seconds. The Consent Items are approved.

Partner Updates: Budget, Personnel and Other Items

University of Washington

Education: Staff started summer programs at reduced capacity with a ratio of 8 students and 2 teachers per class. Summer camps reduced from 6 to 3 groups each with 9 kids instead of 12. They used a lottery to choose the campers due to the amount of people wanting to attend in the 2nd week. Families are happy to have this opportunity for their kids.

The UW Botanic Gardens is coordinating with Oregon State, Utah University and University of Arizona at Tucson on an ornamental plant evaluation. It will be an ongoing program to study the impacts of climate change. It is a fairly extensive research program and will be housed at the Center for Urban Horticulture. It is a great way to take a future look at what plants will do well in upcoming climate situations.

Sally and Fred met with WSDOT about the Simonii poplars. Several the poplars will be removed at Roanoke and Lake Washington Boulevard. It was a fruitful meeting with WSDOT. Sally mentions with design/build there is no way to know what will happen to the design as the process moves forward; and there can be changes that are not reviewed with stakeholders.

Fred says they lost a giant oak along Azalea Way.

Fred furloughed 13 personnel on staff and there were also reductions in hours. He expresses concern that if things do not change, they will not be hired back.

Arboretum Foundation

The Arboretum held their Annual Meeting via Zoom at which over 60 people attended. They welcomed 4 new board members. Two will join the Japanese Garden Steering Committee. Jenny Wyatt is the new President. They published an annual report that reviews all the successes of the previous year. Jane mentions how easy it is to forget that a few months ago, the Foundation was hitting all sorts of new records and there was so much good energy. Now, the Foundation is reaching out to large funders to ask for additional support.

Earned revenue sources have ceased with the gift shop and Japanese Garden closed. Even with the Japanese Garden reopening, limited attendance means less revenue. She notes that there are good trends on the philanthropy side but it is not enough to compensate for the lack of earned revenue.

Focus has been reopening activities at the Japanese Garden. Belinda has been driving that and Arb Foundation supporting with communications.

Tsutakawa gate – Gerry Tsutakawa estimates \$110-130,000 range to replace the gates. They met on-site for different installation options for the gate to further firm up a plan for the replacement. There are donors who are willing to support the recreation of the gate. Calandra Childers, from Seattle's Office of Arts and Culture is representing the City.

Seattle Parks and Recreation

Robert, Director of the Enterprises, Partnerships in Community division – Belinda and Jane presented a proposal to the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent to reopen the Japanese Garden. They figured out

the restrooms. SPR staff sent a list of activities and outdoor facilities SPR wants to open, but due to the spike in covid-19, all was turned down except for the Japanese Garden. The Japanese Garden is scheduled for August 14 opening date. They raised fees to compensate for less people in the garden. Staff have done a wonderful job getting the garden ready for opening. The athletic fields are open and permitted for small group practices so will need to coordinate parking in the Japanese Garden parking lot.

Joey, Director of the Parks and Environment Division – He has 55 staff out and 3 weeks ago 84 people were out. Parks and Environment has 60 temporary staff which results in over 100 shifts less per week. Many things have not been accomplished because they do not have the staff to get it done. The Graham Visitors Center and other Arboretum parking lots are opening today. Safety plans are in place for Natural Resources Unit.

The ABGC ask if there will be safety protocols for the parking lots – Joey says that all spaces are open. They will not be converting the ADA stalls in the Birch lot yet, maybe they will change in the fall.

Summer camps and Fiddleheads are using Arboretum Drive for pick up/drop off. Every parent is required to review the covid-19 symptom list. They will post additional signage with clarifying language regarding who can use Arboretum Drive.

Fritz Hedges Waterway Park, which was part of the mitigation for the SR520 project, is opening in August.

Master Plan Implementation Group

Rhododendron Glen – This is one of those rare months when MPIG happens after ABGC. They are expanding their next meeting to have other folks from SPR because Berger will present a 10% design and estimate for the project. The members present invited Amanda, Andy Sheffer and Lisa to attend. They received mixed news on the cost estimate. The wetland work is much more expensive; however, part of the area presumed to be a wetland is not, which lowers the cost a bit.

Permitting for Japanese Garden Pond – David traded emails with Peter and Lisa for this. David feels SPR should get permit applications submitted and then the permits will be in hand when they are needed. The Arboretum Foundation committed an additional \$80,000 for the pond project and will need to understand if that will happen this fiscal year or not July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 fiscal year.

Composting toilet – It is at preview right now. They are hoping to move forward with installation and they will need to discuss the cleaning schedule.

Old/New Business

The ABGC discuss the challenges and opportunities presented through the upswell in the Black Lives Matter movement and being intentional about whether they will respond collectively or if it is best left to each individual partner to carry out.

The Arboretum Foundation issued a statement that was trickier to put together. The Foundation is focused on operational processes and in terms of outreach and making the Arboretum more accessible. They are also thinking about how they do outreach for volunteers and core programs that are still on hiatus.

Governance Taskforce – feasibility study; 6-week pause in meeting; go to stakeholder groups for feedback; there is a little more work on the report that needs to be done until it is ready.

There was a Crosscut article about the City’s efforts to preserving the art that has popped up around town during covid-19 and the BLM protests.

The greatest monument the ABGC could have in the Arboretum would be a truly representative population playing and working. SPR staff spent hundreds of hours helping with the protests. The tree crew took down the fist from Bobby Morris. The Office of Arts and Culture has all of the art and Joey is happy to facilitate a conversation if the Arboretum has interest in displaying some of it.

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

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
Sally Clark, ABGC Chair