

Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Minutes

Via Zoom – September 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 Gibble, 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 Gibble

SR520 Technical Committee:

City: David Graves; UW: Fred Hoyt

Call to Order

Sally calls the meeting to order at 8:35am; WSDOT and Graham Construction will update the ABGC on progress of the SR520 program.

SR520 Project Updates

Rest of the West –

- Project construction on I-5 express connection reversible transit/carpool lane
- Portage Bay Bridge/Roanoke Lid Project;
- HOV transit connection;

- Construction of a lid between 10th and Delmar connecting city trail systems.
- 2nd bascule bridge at Montlake cut needs more work with City of Seattle.

Eastbound bridge, the pedestrian land bridge, and the Montlake lid are being built currently. They are making improvements to the local boulevard, bike and pedestrian infrastructure and stormwater treatment.

Graham provides updates to the project schedule, milestones and major accomplishments:

- 80-85% through the design process – they are finalizing the structure and retaining wall.
- They are removing the eastbound bridge and building the new trestle and new eastbound bridge;
- Construction began on the new pedestrian land bridge;
- Completed construction of pier 2 walls to support the new Montlake lid.
- Shifted traffic on SR 520 to median (newly constructed pier 2 wall) which allows construction of pier 1 and pier 3 support walls.
- Temporary trail has been a big hit; pedestrians and bikes continue to use it despite closures. Graham is partnering with community to ensure continued support.
- Tie eastbound on-ramps to new SR520 configuration; shifting ramps again to allow work on westbound ramps

Landscape Design work is 85% complete. It includes the Montlake Lid and Foster Island. Stakeholder review is ongoing.

Section 106 concurring parties reviewed the package and found it follows the original designs; their feedback:

- Montlake Boulevard median – trees need to be removed; understanding what would happen when trees are removed and what to put in their place? And questions remain about light pole placement and maximizing tree coverage.
- The corner of Montlake Boulevard and Lake Washington Boulevard is complicated. The Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks voiced their concerns about the design of the corner and placement of the stone marker; however, SPU will need to place a new vault lid in that area. Graham made adjustments to the landscaping to incorporate the stone marker.

Update on the poplars – Graham is reviewing the design of the crosswalk at Roanoke and Lake Washington Boulevard to reduce impact of construction to the trees.

Moving the crosswalk to the North side of the street was not feasible for sightlines and traffic patterns. They would need to keep the cross walk to the south. The updated design for the future permanent bike path along Lake Washington Boulevard identifies eight trees for removal. Next to discuss value of trees and verify WSDOT/Graham captured all of the collection trees in the area.

Really close to being able to finalize the replacement costs for the trees. WSDOT and Graham have been working with UWBG to figure out the value.

Trees will be replaced as there are requirements for replacement according to replacement ratios of land owning agencies.

Branches installed on monofir. Gray wall at the base; Crown Castle had some issues with construction of landscaping due to the pandemic. They were delayed in getting permits for water service for irrigation and they are hoping to do it this Fall.

Projects that are ongoing or completed:

- Traffic calming, management and evaluation
- Multi-Use Trail
- Noise Reduction measures (ongoing with the Montlake Project)
- Foster Island Tribal/Cultural Improvements – 3 interpretive signs on Foster Island with plant identification in English and Lushootseed.
- Foster Island Undercrossing (ongoing with the Montlake Project)

WSDOT/Seattle Parks agreement -WSDOT and Seattle Parks are actively exploring options for a multi-property land transfer, which would include:

- Early Sept. 2020 - Property appraisals taking place
- By end of 2020 - Targeting overall agreement finalized.
- Early 2021 - Targeting Seattle City Council action.

UW and the Arboretum Foundation want to have eyes on the property lines and make sure they can review before the property transfer is completed. Nothing in this land transfer agreement negates the Agreement on 1182, the North Entry Agreement.

WSDOT peninsula has wetland mitigation needs and there will be a restrictive covenant on how that land is used that will be transferred to SPR when they take ownership.

Cell tower relocation – Per the conditional use permit and Crown Castle’s lease, WSDOT will begin looking for new permanent location for cellular facility approximately late 2027. As part of lease terms, Crown Castle has to remove the cell tower 6 months after completion of the project. WSDOT will work with them to find another location.

Discussion with ABGC

North Entry Project

Next steps: In the Fall, WSDOT and SPR will develop and clarify, via an agreement, their roles and responsibilities.

When asked about funding to start work on design, WSDOT responds they are experiencing financial issues. The funding impacts due to Covid-19 and I-976 is unclear and they will better be able to speak on this after the legislative session.

Final planting plan will be distributed through David/SPR and it includes the stone marker and planting plan on the corner of the Montlake Boulevard and E Lake Washington Boulevard. There will be a 3-year plant establishment period prior to acceptance of planting and will be the contractors responsibility until they are established. After this period, the land owners will take over the weeding/maintenance/irrigation/replacement of the plants.

Hopeful work on Foster Island Waterfront Trail to commence in Fall 2021; it would be great to have the interpretive signage done at the same time as the trail. David Graves is involved with the coordination of the interpretive signs. Dawn is working on the financial agreement and it should be ready soon. SPR to coordinate with Graham to ensure the Foster Island Trail and Waterfront Trail are done at the same time.

All of the partner agencies will need to continue to look for grant opportunities. Review the initial designs to see if there are places to reduce costs.

In order to pursue larger grants for implementation, the design concepts need to be taken further and developed more.

WSDOT peninsula – The ABGC should discuss this and the utility of acquiring this space especially regards to the North Entry project.

Sally asks Dawn to overlay the mitigation area over the North Entry so they can see how much the mitigation area will change the North Entry Project.

People are cutting through the construction fencing to access the WSDOT peninsula. Is additional signage needed to educate parks patrons? Todd doesn't know, he will find out.

Smaller group to discuss the WSDOT peninsula land swap deal. WSDOT update to ABGC in January?

The negotiation will be about the trails and the WSDOT mitigation area that is required in the contract.

Are they trying to offset other phases of the project at the WSDOT peninsula? What are their motivations? What are the problems they are trying to solve?

Letter to WSDOT to clarify wetland mitigation and the property transfer of WSDOT peninsula.

- Requesting advanced funding for design to move forward with grants;
- Coordinating Foster Island signage to be part of timing of opening of the Waterfront Trail;
- The ABGC discuss whether to again thank them for confirming 2027 date for removal of the cell tower. WSDOT provided a firm year and there may be other recessions or construction impacts.
- Articulate that the ABGC cannot move the North Entry design discussion forward until we understand what the mitigation is.

Sally to draft letter.

Partner Updates: Budget, Personnel and Other Items

University of Washington

- Began fall plantings in the Arboretum;
- In the process of hiring a new arborist;
- Finished removing a big stump in lower Woodland Pond and put in some new plantings.
- Continue to have budget issues; 13 more people added months on temporary layoff; there are looming budget cuts.
- Oral history project is moving forward. Japanese Garden will be included. Dan Hinkley and Iain Robertson will be the first two interviewed.
- Fully licensed pre-school for half day; pending final UW approval. This will start in October.
- Meeting with the Naha Ilahee farm for the Indigenous Foods Project; they have some garden beds adjacent to the Arboretum.
- Working with Warren King George from the Muckleshoots on plant identification and will have Lushootseed language translations.

Arboretum Foundation

- Submitted a couple of education grants;
- Researching funding possibilities for Tsutakawa gates; submitted grant application to "4Culture" and with the funds the insurance claims from Seattle Arts and Culture, hope to have enough to start a fundraising campaign.
- Budget issues consume a lot of the day. The Graham Visitor Center closure without a path for reopening means no rental or gift shop revenue and it makes it difficult for volunteer programs to resume.
- Virtual programs are moving forward. They have a Butoh program next week. The Japanese Garden has received a grant; 80-90% of grants are being filled but that is 25% of normal capacity. Staff are busy figuring out ways to stay engaged with supporter base.
- Committees are starting to kick off with the new board. The Board is in good shape and the Foundation is doing everything it can.

Seattle Parks and Recreation

- Still dealing with permitting issues with the Waterfront Trail - the Army Corps is very slow and U.S. Fish and Wildlife coordinating with other agencies takes time.
- Japanese Garden – Work on the south half of the pond is targeted for November. The Army Corps said they would get the permitting done pretty quickly since they are amending an existing permit.

- Sewer line at the Stone Cottage – Plumber says the sewer line moves to the north and they think it can be routed out. The Agreement for the stone cottage will go to the property committee.

Master Plan Implementation Group

- Rhododendron Glen – Design process has continued moving along. They are adding an interpretive loop that will circle around the meadow area above Azalea Way Pond and the Centennial Garden. Seattle Garden Club is interested in applying for some grant funding.
- Neighborhood playground – SPR presented 3 replacement options to replace the “tot lot” at the Lynn Street entrance. The project moved forward without obtaining input from the ABGC; Kim will return to the group with more information.
- Composting toilet is scheduled for installation later this month; Jane is working to ensure that it will be ready to be serviced once it is installed.

Old/New Business

Kenan has brought up renaming the Multi-Use Trail and this will be discussed in an upcoming meeting.

Jane had a communication issue she wants to bring up. The Arboretum was designated as having an early closure and Jane heard about it through Facebook. When there are changes to fundamental things like operating hours and access, there needs to be a mechanism in place to let the partners know when SPR makes changes. They want to provide that information as a courtesy to their members in their communication.

Jane would like to know when the Graham Visitors Center and adjacent restrooms will be opened. She will schedule a meeting with Joey, Robert, Pam, Jane, and Fred to figure it out.

They discuss convene a small meeting to talk about mitigation and support David in his discussion with WSDOT. The meeting should include Jane, Fred and David. Dawn will provide the rules regarding the potential transfer and a graphic of the mitigation site.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourns at 10:35 a.m.

APPROVED _____ DATE _____
 Sally Clark, ABGC Chair