



**Seattle  
Parks & Recreation**

healthy people healthy environment strong communities



## **Arboretum & Botanical Garden Committee**

Wednesday, May 11, 2022 9:00-10:30am, Online

### **ABGC Voting Members**

Arboretum Foundation

Jane Stonecipher, Executive Director

Jenny Wyatt, Board President

### **City of Seattle/Seattle Parks Department**

Kenan Block, Mayoral Appointee

James Fearn, Mayoral Appointee

David Graves, Strategic Advisor, Seattle Parks and Recreation

### **University of Washington**

Sally Clark, Director of Regional and Community Relations, ABGC Chair

Christina Owen, Director of UW Botanic Gardens

Ken Yocom, Professor, College of Built Environments

### **ABGC Attendees**

Rachel Acosta, ABGC Coordinator, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Lisa Chen, Specialty Gardens Manager, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Ray Larson, Curator of Living Collections, UW Botanic Gardens

### **9:00am Call to Order and Introductions**

David Graves, ABGC Chair

- Consent Items: May 11, 2022 Agenda  
Changes to Agenda/Minutes:

### **9:05am Partner Updates**

University of Washington:

- The UWBG is hiring 3 new faculty.
- Continuing the partnerships lab work with the Arboretum Foundation and Central Park Conservancy;
- Rhododendron Glen contractor found; working on permit with USACE;
- Great Spring for planting!
- Seminar series focused on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work - here's a link: <https://botanicgardens.uw.edu/about/blog/2022/04/14/2022-speaker-series-new-directions-in-public-gardens/>
- Partners doing a walkthrough with WSDOT of the WSDOT peninsula on Friday
- New Dean for the College of the Environment, Maya Tolstoy, toured the Arboretum and Center for Urban Horticulture. She is a supporter of the gardens.
- There was a kickoff planning meeting for the Greater and Greener Conference Seattle will host in 2024. Maya ask that UWBG be involved.



- UW Strategic Plan is starting; opportunity to engage and have some hard conversations about what is working and what isn't.

**Arboretum Foundation:**

- Working on infrastructure improvements - update of bylaws
- Strategic refresh to be approved at May 14 board meeting; will be shared once approved;
- Operating Agreement with SPR regarding the Japanese Garden. They are hoping to bring legislation to City Council this summer;
- Engaging with SPR planning for Park District; hoping to get capital improvements to the Graham Visitors Center in the budget.
- Working with SPR staff on the approach to project management. The Arboretum Foundation receives matches with philanthropy, Jane wants to make sure there are mechanisms in place to move these projects forward nimbly.
- Arboretum Foundation Board completed an assessment to get feedback on their work;
- Annual Meeting on June 15, Jenny Wyatt will be moving off as President and Peter Rees will be taking on her role. Peter mentions he is looking forward to working with the ABGC. The Board agree that Jenny has been a joy to work with on the Board and he is appreciative of all her efforts!

**Seattle Parks and Recreation:**

- Christopher continues in his role as Acting Superintendent, he thinks the Mayor will have a new Superintendent by July.
- Park District Planning is moving forward;
- The Parks and Environment Division has over 70 vacancies; district crews are getting up to full staffing.
- SPR has hired several project managers in Planning Development and Maintenance; hoping to have 1 project manager for all Arboretum-related projects.
- Amanda Hannah, selected as Longwood Fellows and will be leaving as Lead Gardener. She has been a great partner and helped move a lot of things forward and shared her vision for areas of maintenance. Karen Stener is the new lead gardener

**10:00am MPIG Updates**

**Main Discussion Items/Follow-up:**

- Partner tour of the WSDOT peninsula on Friday with WSDOT



- Tsutakawa gates are being constructed, materials are hard to find right now.
- Waterfront Trail permit hasn't happened yet. Hoping to get the Rhododendron Glen permit moving. Christine mentions it is difficult to maintain momentum when trying to fundraise when so reliant on federal agencies who are unresponsive and slow to permit projects.

### **10:15am Old/New Business**

#### **Main Discussion Items/Follow-up:**

#### **SR520 Project –**

- WSDOT is ready to issue the Request for Proposals for the Portage Bay Project; Montlake will be rapping up their work next year.
- I-5 to SR520 express lanes construction is ongoing.
- Real estate deal between SPR and WSDOT will impact places along the Portage Bay corridor. The WSDOT peninsula is wrapped up in this real estate deal. The real estate deal will have to go to City Council.
- WSDOT wants to write a check for the North Entry. The WSDOT peninsula tour will help people visualize the area in consideration. WSDOT is focused on mitigation dollar amount which started at \$12.5mil in 2012 funding. They are still negotiating the escalation. The ABGC consider other leverage points on how the peninsula is left to SPR in exchange for a reduced amount. Walk will provide a true lay of the land.
- Jane says the Foundation has engaged with Gerry Johnson for land transfer negotiations. She wonders if there are other creative thoughts about how to be smarter about this. Lobbying? Easement payments increase with inflation and goes into mitigation fund? The ABGC wonder whether they could rely too much on what WSDOT says regarding flexibility considering the wetlands/shoreline, and the permitting landscape. Something we don't know, could hurt us. The Commissioners consider an independent look at what can be done with the property instead of leaving it up to WSDOT to determine. David says he will review the permit requirements. If SPR does not have capacity to provide a rundown of what permit requirements are for the WSDOT peninsula, then UW and the Foundation will need to know so they can hire someone to do this work soon. The ABGC will request the permits by a certain date with Dawn in order to move negotiations forward.
- The ABGC discuss inviting Frank Chopp to tour the peninsula with WSDOT and partners.
- After tour and time for ABGC debrief, David will convene a meeting with folks to discuss the real estate deal.
- Tour is Friday at 1pm; small group to look at WSDOT peninsula as part of North Entry negotiations.
- David will send an email to the ABGC following the tour with an update.
- Peter would like to better understand the relationship between North Entry projects and the WSDOT peninsula. The ABGC partners are touring the peninsula to get a better sense of the land out there. The roundabout and daylighting of Arboretum Creek may not be able to be done in a vacuum; requiring some levelling of the WSDOT peninsula.



- The Community survey, if designed well, could serve as preliminary public opinion.
- Funds may come in July and the structure of survey has not been determined. Representatives from the University of Washington and Arboretum Foundation to determine the structure and questions. Surveying to happen in layers; starting with the Japanese Garden. On the ground surveying and mechanisms for reaching groups who do not come will happen later.

Christine mentions equity concerns about how we approach using the land and for defining what we do at the Arboretum. She feels the ABGC should have conversations about thoughtfully approaching groups and the process they will use to determine whether to allow projects on park land. There should be community engagement around use of the Arboretum.

Activists Remembered Celebrated & Honored (ARCH) project status: The Berger Partnership helped with some designs. The remnant arch leftover from the failed RH Thomson Expressway is still in place and it will be integrated into the North Entry project. There is an agreement in writing and the state legislature provided funding to preserve the memorial of the historic effort.

Hybrid meetings or in-person? Rachel to send out a poll gauging interest and feelings of safety for in-person.

**10:30am      Adjourn**