



Arboretum & Botanical Garden Committee

January 20, 2026 9:00 – 10:30AM, Online

Join on your computer or mobile app: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

Arboretum Foundation

Elizabeth Lunney, Interim Executive Director

Maribeth O'Connor, Board President

City of Seattle/Seattle Parks Department

Kim Baldwin, Seattle Parks and Recreation Representative

University of Washington

Aaron Hoard, Director of Regional and Community Relations, ABGC Chair

Christina Owen, Director of UW Botanic Gardens, ABGC Vice Chair

ABGC Attendees

Ray Larson, Curator, UW Botanic Gardens

David Graves, Strategic Advisor, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Peter Rees, Board Vice President

9:00AM Call to Order & Introductions

- Land Acknowledgement: The ABGC acknowledges and affirms the indigenous Coast Salish as the original caretakers of our waters and landscape, who nurtured and shaped today's parkland. We honor their legacy with gratitude and appreciation and will safeguard their knowledge and stewardship as enduring treasures to promote community welfare, cultivate inclusive expressions of nature and recreation and commit to land acknowledgment for each ensuing generation.
- Minute Approval: Dec 16, 2026 meeting notes

9:05AM 520 Subgroup Update

- Continued signage frustrations
 - David will double check with SDOT
 - Poses a safety issue
- David has scheduled a punch list with Graham
 - If no movement occurs, plan to write a letter for action

9:12AM MPIG Subgroup Update

- Pacific pathways
 - Planning process for Design phase

- Received good comments and feedback
 - Planning for an Open House in March to inform the public
 - estimated attendance from surrounding neighborhoods
 - SPR taking the lead for communication
 - Next stage (60%) - Donor Engagement
 - Imaging, graphics, and materials are in the process for next month
- Graham Visitor Center trellis
 - Currently no movement on repairs, goal is to replace
 - Contractor will be out soon to repair a few items
- Waterfront trail
 - Phase 1 out for bid
 - More details to come Jan 28
- Japanese Garden Wall
 - Project bids are back and found a contractor that they are confident with
 - Needing to reevaluate fundraising strategy
 - Site work would start as early as mid-April until end of year

9:20AM Partner Updates

UW

- UW Botanical Gardens and the Arboretum Foundation signed an agreement to become the Seattle Botanic Gardens
- Short session in Olympia, with the expectation of financial cuts
- Preparing for expected FIFA practices on UW Campus
- Revive I-5 continued impacts on operations

Arboretum Foundation

- Parking lot for the Center of Horticulture will be changed into a paid parking lot
 - Currently negotiating the pay rate for \$5/day
 - Looking for UW Botanic Garden to validate parking for volunteers,
 - Finding a way for better infrastructure and transportation
- Participation in a conservation project in Chile in March
- Climate adaptation is live on website
- Hiring and planning
 - Recruiting new board members
 - President/CEO position to fill

Seattle Parks

- Reorganization within Parks and Rec
 - Hiring a new park engineer
 - New parks logo created

9:35AM Old/New Business

- New Seattle Botanic Gardens partnership
 - By the end of the year, Arboretum will dissolve and become Seattle Botanic Gardens

- Agreement signed for the next 15 years; Seattle Botanical Gardens will manage its assets, providing occupancy and financial support for maintenance of UW collection
- Future communication to come
 - <https://www.washington.edu/news/2026/01/09/arboretum-foundation-and-uw-botanic-gardens-unite-after-decades-of-partnership/>
 - <https://uw-s3-cdn.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2025/12/30120155/2026-01-F-6.pdf>
- Future of ABGC - what that will look like and next steps
 - Working group to set parameters and future plans to run by council
 - Having quarterly meetings and setting a strict agenda would help get additional committee members
- Encampments
 - A portion of the encampments have been removed, plans for continued removal
 - Encampments in park lands and arboretum
 - Poses a safety issue

10:10AM Adjourn