



Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
Meeting Held at Graham Visitors Center
Washington Park Arboretum
October 25, 2007

Web site: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Jackie Ramels, Acting Chair
Neal Adams
John Barber
Terry Holme
Christine Larsen

Excused:

Amit Ranade, Chair

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

Christopher Williams, Interim Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Park Board Coordinator

Commissioner Ramels called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. **Commissioner Barber moved, and Commissioner Holme seconded, approval of the agenda, as amended. Commissioner Barber moved, and Commissioner Adams seconded, approval of the October 11 minutes as presented. Motions carried.** The Record of Correspondence [correspondence received by the Board since the September 13 meeting and through the October 11 meeting] was approved.

Superintendent's Report

Interim Superintendent Christopher Williams reported on several park items. For more information on Seattle Parks and Recreation, visit the web pages at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

Welcome!: Interim Superintendent Williams welcomed Tim Gallagher to his first Seattle Park Board meeting. Mr. Gallagher has been nominated by Mayor Nickels as the new Seattle Parks Superintendent. Mr. Gallagher appeared before the City Council Parks, Education, Libraries and Labor (PELL) Committee on October 23 for a public hearing for the first of a series of confirmation steps. The public hearing went well. Mr. Gallagher, with 27 years' experience in parks departments, will be the first superintendent in more than 40 years who studied in college to become a park superintendent.

Interim Superintendent Williams also acknowledged that former Park Board member Jack Collins was in tonight's audience and will assist with tonight's Washington Park Arboretum and State Route 520 briefings.

Congratulations!: Commissioner Christine Larsen has been nominated for a 2007 Denny Award for Outstanding Volunteer Stewardship for her role in the 2007 Play Area Coalition, in general, and work to improve Dahl Playfield, in particular. The award ceremony will be held on Tuesday, November 13, 6:00-8:30 pm at Olympic Sculpture Parks' PACCAR Pavilion.

Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center: A recent personnel issue arose at the Center and the Park Board has been cc:'ed on a number of e-mails regarding this issue. All personnel issues are treated as confidential by the Department.

Langston Hughes Cancels Performances of "Dinah Was": Last Friday, Stephanie Hatley, the lead performer in "Dinah Was", was injured during a performance. During a scene transition, the performer missed a step and fell off a stage platform and rushed to the hospital. She broke her foot and will require an 8-week recovery. Unfortunately, she will not be able to continue with the performances. The cast, crew and staff of Langston Hughes are devastated by this unfortunate turn of events and are strategizing options for continuing the production.

Commissioner Ramels asked if there is an understudy for the park of "Dinah" and Interim Superintendent Williams answered that there isn't.

Public Involvement Policy: The Park Board has requested additional information on the Department's public involvement policy and for improved staff briefings. At the November 8 meeting, Parks' communication staff will brief the Park Board on the contents of the policy and how it is practiced by the Department.

Wallingford/Hamilton Public Meetings: Seattle Parks and Seattle Public Schools (SPS) held the first public community meeting last week seeking input on how to use mitigation funds from SPS on improvements to Wallingford Playfield and the surrounding park area. There were between 30-40 participants and with the assistance of Guila Muir, who was hired by SPS to facilitate the process, the meeting was very productive. There are two more meetings and a site visit. The City Council PELL Committee held a public hearing on the exchange of land with the School District this week. Generally testimony was balanced between support for and against the exchange. The Committee passed the legislation out recognizing that the full Council should not act until the Hearing Examiner has ruled on the various appeals.

Lake Washington Boulevard (LWB) Project Advisory Team (PAT): Last month the Public Advisory Team (PAT) for the LWB Vegetation Management Plan, which represents 13 community and interest groups, completed a series of five meetings. Interim Superintendent Williams and Tim Gallagher were in attendance at the last meeting, providing a much earned "thank you" to the citizens on the PAT. Based upon input received from the PAT on the goals and objectives, the Plan will be revised. The final draft of the Lake Washington Blvd VMP will be made available to the public and placed on Seattle Parks' web site in March of 2008, with a Park Board briefing and public hearing in April.

Quick Cards: The new electronic payment card system went active last week as a pilot at eight pools and one community center. The "Quick Cards" replace paper punch cards and are personalized with name and photo. Customers can load the card with multiple prepaid options and can easily reload it by phone or in person. After the pilot is evaluated, the system may be expanded to other sites and services.

Citizen Support for New Outdoor Pool Study: The first of two public meetings was held to gather comments and support from the public about the idea of building one or more outdoor pools east of I-5. The citizen group invited Parks staff to attend and listen to the discussion and answer questions. Those present indicated they would continue to lobby Seattle City Council for 2008 funding for a study of possible locations and feasibility. The information from that study would allow the group to take on fund raising for a project with an identified location.

Nude Swims: Two clothing-optional swim rentals have been scheduled for Ballard Pool, one in November and one in December. This group has rented indoor pools in the past with the conditions that windows be covered. Staff members are free to decline to work these events and younger staff will not be scheduled, so this wording has been added to the contract. Parks is reviewing our rental policies to determine if this is appropriate conduct to allow at our facilities.

Preferred Caterers: Parks has held staff training on newly-adopted procedures governing our Preferred Caterers for Facility Rentals and is working on an informational/promotional brochure to give out with rental application packets.

Wawona: The Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board voted unanimously to approve the Certificate of Approval to move the Wawona from Waterway 4 at Lake Union Park to allow the continued redevelopment of the park. The approval also allows the disassembly, storage, and eventual display of the vessel in the park. The City is working closely with Northwest Seaport, the owner of the vessel, on this effort.

Rat Management Program: After a month of work, Parks' rat management program in the Pioneer Square/City Hall Park area seems to be working. Parks is working closely with the Seattle Police West Precinct to discourage illegal feeding programs in the Pioneer Square Neighborhood, especially at City Hall Park and Occidental Square. When staff observes any illegal feeding activities, Seattle Police are notified immediately. Crews have found and removed a number of dead rats. No illegal feeding citations had been issued for several weeks.

Parks Strategic Business Plan: Staff has just completed scheduling 33 public meetings at its 26 community centers and other facilities for late November and early December. The community is invited to attend these meetings and give input to the Parks Strategic Business Plan. Parks will hold public meetings at all 26 Parks community centers and at several other facilities. All Parks staff will also be invited to give input to the plan. This is a five-year plan for the Department and must be completed and submitted to City Council by March 15, 2008. Staff will send the public meeting schedule to the Park Board.

Hing Hay Park Expansion: As reported in the *Seattle Times* and the *Daily Journal of Commerce* last week, the City has signed an agreement to purchase the Post Office site adjoining Hing Hay Park. The size of the park will increase from .31-acres to .64-acres. The Post Office will remain on site under the terms of its lease until it finds a new location in the International District/Chinatown community. Funding for this purchase comes from the Pro Parks Levy Opportunity Fund and King County Conservation Futures.

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to three minutes each and will be timed. The Board's usual process is for 15 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner's business. Four people signed up to testify.

David Lefebvre: He is a member of the Barn Owls, a group who fly model airplanes. The group has been notified that Hangar 27 is no longer available for the group's use. He learned that Arena Sports is negotiating for exclusive use of the building. Last November the City Council voted that Seattle Parks should not give exclusive use to Arena Sports. He questioned whether the Department is following City Council's directive. He spoke at View Ridge Community Council's recent meeting and that organization wants to keep the unique space open for various groups to use.

Interim Superintendent Williams responded that the building is not safe for public use, according to the Fire Marshall, and Seattle Parks does not have the funds to renovate it to make it safe. Public meetings are scheduled to discuss this and he encouraged those with an interest in Magnuson Park to attend.

Kathleen Miller: She is the producer of "The Best of the Northwest Craft Fair." Her organization installed a heating system at Hangar 27 so they could use it and are dismayed that it is to become a dedicated indoor sports facility. Lakeside School has canceled its annual rummage sale at Magnuson Park and instead has scheduled two small ones on the school's grounds. Other community events have been scheduled at the building, as well. It is not okay to close this public gathering space that belongs to the people of Seattle. She represents 500 people who make half their living selling their craft wares there. There is no available space anywhere else in the city for these types of events.

Susan Schmitz aka Darth Skater: She is a member of Rat City Girls' roller derby team and Hanger 27 is the only place they have for their sport. They are #2 in the country and Hanger 27 can hold up to 3,000 people. Arena Sports is not about

helping the community – just making money doesn't help. She asked that Seattle Parks develop a solution where everyone wins. She will attend the public meetings and thanked the Park Board and Parks staff for listening.

Commissioner Holme noted that the Park Board held a public hearing last fall and voted to support the Parks staff recommendation. At that time, staff thought the only option was to negotiate with Arena Sports regarding the Hanger 27 building, as the Department does not have funds to renovate it and Arena Sports does. The Board's discussion and recommendation to the Superintendent are on videotape and available to listen and view. See <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>, scroll down the page and the link is directly below the Park Board's on-line meeting minutes. Commissioner Holme asked if the Board should schedule another public hearing to respond to the City Council's directive. Acting Superintendent Williams answered that the Department responded to the directive by issuing another Request for Proposal. Three public meetings are scheduled to discuss the Sand Point Master Plan: November 17, 19, and 27.

Briefing: Washington Park Arboretum

A number of people briefed the Board on the Washington Park Arboretum. Seattle Parks staff included Property Acquisition Manager Donald Harris, Arboretum Project Manager Andy Sheffer, Parks Resources Manager Royal Alley-Barnes, Northeast Crew Chief for the Arboretum Peggy Pullen, and Japanese Garden Strategic Advisor Belinda Gigliotti. Arboretum Foundation Executive Director Paige Miller and University of Washington Center for Urban Horticulture's Director of Operations' Fred Hoyt; and Mayoral Appointee and Citizen Jack Collins were also part of the briefing team. Commissioners received a written, as well as a verbal, briefing. Prior to the meeting, the Commissioners took a brief tour of the Pacific Connections and holly relocation projects, as well as Foster Island to view the possible footprint of a re-built SR520.

Written Briefing

Requested Action

This is a briefing for informational purposes only, with the goal of providing Board members with background information on the Arboretum and information about recent and pending development activities in the Arboretum.

Roles in Ownership and Management of the Washington Park Arboretum

Today the Washington Park Arboretum receives primary support from the City of Seattle, the University of Washington, and the Arboretum Foundation, all of whom are represented on the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee, along with a committee member appointed by the governor. The role and responsibilities of each group are outlined below.

The City of Seattle owns all of the land upon which the Arboretum is situated, including the buildings, with the exception of portions of Foster Island submerged under Lake Washington prior to lowering of the lake. The City is responsible for routine maintenance within the park. In addition, the Japanese Garden within the park is owned, operated, and managed by the City.

The University of Washington owns the plant collections and is responsible for developing and displaying the collections and running educational programs within the Arboretum. University staff members provide maintenance of the collections, seek new acquisitions, document and display the plants, and provide educational programming. In addition, the University owns the portions of Foster Island that were submerged in Lake Washington prior to the lowering of the lake.

The Arboretum Foundation, founded in 1935, is a nonprofit friends group with open membership. The Foundation is the major fund-raising organization for the Arboretum, and provides volunteers.

The Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) was established in the 1930s to assist the City and the University in the planning for development, use, and maintenance of the Arboretum. The committee, as originally established, included three members representing the City, three members from the University, and one designated by the governor. The Arboretum Foundation was added to the committee in 1992 by Seattle ordinance 116337. This advisory committee provides the primary forum for discussion and resolution of issues related to the Arboretum.

Historical Background

In 1934, the University of Washington and the City of Seattle established the Washington Park Arboretum. The history of its development is presented below.

When the University of Washington was sited at its present-day location, it was determined that an offsite location for an arboretum would be needed. Land at the Washington Park site was acquired in 1904, when the Puget Mill Company gave 62 acres to the city in exchange for water main work. After the addition of more land, Lake Washington Boulevard East was designed and constructed in Washington Park in 1904. The City owns most of the Foster Island and Marsh Island area, except for approximately 6 acres at the periphery of Foster Island that emerged as land when Lake Washington was lowered in 1917, creating new University-owned shore lands within the park. By 1924, Washington Park consisted of 175 acres and at that time the Seattle Board of Park Commissioners declared their intent to establish the park as a “botanical garden and arboretum”.

While there was much support for an arboretum at this time, funding was difficult to find during the Depression era. Development of the Washington Park Arboretum finally began in 1934 through an agreement between the University of Washington and the City of Seattle. The City agreed to provide infrastructure for arboretum and botanical garden accessibility, and the University agreed to prepare plans for the arboretum and to establish a plant collection. The University retained full control of the area devoted to the Washington Park Arboretum with the understanding that the area must be made available to the public.

During this time, the Seattle Garden Club donated money to hire the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects to create a master plan for the Washington Park Arboretum. Completed in 1936, the *General Plan for the University of Washington Arboretum* described many of its most popular features today, including Azalea Way, Arboretum Drive East, and the lagoons. One of the elements of the Olmsted Brothers plan was the taxonomic organization of the plant collections.

The Works Progress Administration began construction of the Washington Park Arboretum during the late 1930s. The Arboretum Foundation was founded in 1935 and provided additional funding and donated plants to begin the collections. The Works Progress Administration continued work into the early 1940s and completed several features of the park including Azalea Way, the rock garden, the stone bridge at the pinetum (conifer forest) located west of Lake Washington Boulevard, most of the trail system, and the stone cottage at the south entrance.

After World War II, most of the plantings were completed. Most of the woody plant collections were developed between 1947 and 1972, under the direction of Brian O. Mulligan, the director of the Washington Park Arboretum; his curator, Joseph Witt; and other park staff. Mulligan and Witt made extensive modifications to the Olmsted Brothers plan, siting collections based on ecological needs of the species and arranging displays to match the conditions of the site.

During the 1960s the Japanese garden was built under the direction of Japanese landscape architect Juki Iida. After construction, the University and subsequently the City assumed responsibility for maintenance and operation of the Japanese garden. In 1963, the State appropriated approximately 47 acres of land from the park for state Route (SR) 520. A capital improvement trust fund was created using the money received for condemnation of the land. The funds were to be managed by the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee and used solely for capital improvement projects within the Arboretum.

During this period, the western edge of the park was proposed for construction of the R. H. Thompson Expressway. Sasaki/Walker Associates was hired to adapt the Olmsted Brothers plan to accommodate the new expressway plans. Public opposition to the expressway led to its defeat. The sole feature of the Sasaki/Walker plan to be implemented was the waterfront trail. Some of the trust fund moneys were used to incorporate into the park several properties along its western boundary that had been cleared for the expressway.

In 1974, amid controversy over the role and rights of the University with regard to the Washington Park Arboretum, the City passed ordinance 103667, based on a citizens initiative, establishing provisions which:

- Established the principle of open public access to the Arboretum in perpetuity;
- Specified that no fencing or other barriers would be allowed that would restrict public access;
- Mandated that no fees or entry charge would be assessed; and
- Prohibited leasing of the property for non-park uses.

In 1975, the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee was reactivated. By 1977 it was widely recognized that a long period of budget cuts and disagreements had led to the deterioration of the park and its facilities. As a result, the committee hired Jones & Jones Landscape Architects to lead the planning and design of an update to the Washington Park Arboretum master plan.

Key measures proposed in the 1978 plan included a visitor center, parking improvements, trail enhancements, maintenance facilities, and circulation improvements. Following the adoption of the Jones & Jones master plan update in 1979, the University of Washington, in an effort to reaffirm its managerial role, created the Center for Urban Horticulture. Located about 1.5 miles from the Arboretum at Union Bay, the center became the University's management office for the Arboretum, providing physical facilities, programs, and staff that could not be accommodated within the park grounds. The Donald G. Graham Visitors Center, a gift to the City of Seattle from the Arboretum Foundation, was completed in 1985 and provides an information lobby, a gift shop, a large public meeting room, administrative offices, and space for volunteer activities. The Park Board's October 25 meeting will be held in this building.

In 1994, Seattle Parks and Recreation prepared a study to determine the scope for a new Washington Park Arboretum master plan. The study determined that a new master plan was necessary in order to address changing conditions, continuing conflicts, stagnant resources and concern for maintaining the quality of collections and increasing community education functions.

In 1996, the master plan update process was undertaken with the goal of developing a strategic, long-term vision for the Arboretum and generating greater public understanding of its role in the community. After an extensive public outreach effort, key issues were identified, including the health and security of the plant collections, programming and visitor facilities, visitor security, accessibility, and circulation. After the draft plan was completed, and a significant controversy ensued, the Seattle Board of Park Commissioners held a number of workshops to address particular issues in the plan. Using the public comments received during this effort, a revised plan was developed.

Following this lengthy public process, in May 2001 the Master Plan, "Renewing the Washington Park Arboretum," was unanimously approved by the City Council and the University of Washington Board of Regents. In 2004, an Implementation Plan to guide development of the Master Plan was adopted. The master plan can be found on the Arboretum web site at: <http://depts.washington.edu/wpa/masterplan.htm>.

Projects Implemented As a Part of the Master Plan

1. The Duck Bay Shoreline

The Duck Bay Shoreline improvement project was the first large project to be completed at the Arboretum following the adoption of the 2001 Master Plan. The Duck Bay project is located at the north end of the Arboretum along the shoreline of Lake Washington's Union Bay. Duck Bay contains one of the largest and most significant wetlands on the lake. The area provides habitat for federally listed (threatened) species such as Chinook salmon and nesting bald eagles. This wetland is part of a popular canoe route, and has a heavily used pathway system along the 1,700 linear feet of shoreline within the project area. The general intent of the project was to restore the eroded shoreline to improve habitat for wildlife and fish, and to provide views and access for park users, including for people with disabilities.

The project is located on a former landfill and marsh area. This created the need for the design to include structural elements and earthwork features that required geotechnical engineering analysis for the bridge as well as the shoreline and pedestrian trail regrading. Pathways were relocated and rebuilt, primarily to provide ADA access. The pedestrian bridge to Foster Island was also replaced. To maintain habitat improvements, carefully located viewpoints and water access points are now in place, encouraging park users toward appropriate locations. Canoe *landing* is permitted at newly installed landing areas, but no boats may be launched in the park.

Public Involvement Process

Three public meetings were held.

Budget

The project budget was \$1,230,000 from the Shoreline Park Improvement Fund. The project was completed within budget.

Schedule

The Duck Bay Shoreline project opened April 2, 2005

2. Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan

The development of an Arboretum-wide Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan was identified as a high priority project in the 2004 Master Plan Implementation Plan. The Wayfinding Plan is intended to guide all future interpretive and wayfinding work in the Arboretum. The University of Washington provided funding and project management for the Plan.

Public Involvement Process

As part of the research in developing the Wayfinding Plan many individuals and organizations were interviewed and two public open houses were held in 2004 as part of the Plan development process.

Issues

The Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan establishes a set of Guiding Principles for the development of interpretive and wayfinding elements at the Arboretum. It identifies key interpretive themes and the locations where those themes can be most appropriately interpreted. It includes a Style Guide which identifies categories of signage, sets standards for materials, color and construction and includes templates for the most common sign types. The Plan also includes information regarding wayfinding and interpretation technology.

Budget

The Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan was prepared for just under \$135,000. The Plan did not include the construction of any permanent signing or exhibits, although a mock-up prototype was developed for review prior to approval of the Plan. It is anticipated that signing and exhibits will be constructed as part of future Arboretum projects, and that they will be guided by the Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan.

Schedule

The Plan was approved by the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee on February 2, 2005.

Additional Information

The entire Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan, as well as the Executive Summary are available at the following web site: <http://depts.washington.edu/wpa>.

3. Pacific Connections (formerly South Entry Madrona Terrace) Project

The Arboretum Botanical Garden Committee prioritized this project because of its visibility and its ability to fulfill the primary elements of the Master Plan - conservation, education and recreation. This is a 12 +/- acre area located on the hill across Lake Washington Blvd. from the Japanese Garden. It is south of the existing overlook and north of the intersection of Lake Washington Blvd. and Arboretum Drive. The Portico Group led development of the design for improvements.

Project Objectives

The project objectives are to improve the southern entry to the Arboretum by renovating existing Arboretum features and developing new elements that are recommended in the Arboretum Master Plan. Portico developed a schematic design based on the master plan, reducing the number of geographic areas from the original concept and enlarging the size of the project to create more intensive environments.

The first phase of the Pacific Connections Garden project consists of the phased development of the following elements:

- Five new eco-geographical botanical collections, containing plant species from other Pacific countries with climates similar to that of the Puget Sound region. This is to replace overgrown and invasive-infested vegetation, which has lately been the scene of much inappropriate behavior;
- A grass meadow with an open-walled interpretive shelter, covered with a green roof;
- Freestanding interpretive signs;
- Crushed-stone pedestrian pathways and associated retaining walls;
- Stone stairways to connect paths; and
- Relocation of the Holly Collection from its current location in the Pacific Connections area to an area to the west of East Lake Washington Boulevard, between East Interlaken Boulevard and Boyer Street East.

The holly collection was moved in early fall 2007. In September 2007 additional work on the project was publicly advertised for construction bids, with a construction start date of late October. The groundbreaking for this project occurred on October 11. The first phase of the Pacific Connections Garden will be complete in April 2008.

Public Involvement Process

Public involvement has been a consistent part of this project. Schematic design benefited from two charrettes involving staff and community stakeholders; two public workshops, and a public review meeting were held to view design development drawings, and several meetings were focused on the issue of tree removal.

Issues

- Fundraising Target: Final design and Phase I construction was based upon the Arboretum Foundation's fundraising efforts.
- Curatorial Concerns: The UW Curatorial Committee is developing recommendations for collections and specimens to be relocated and/or propagated, the costs for doing this and the schedule.
- Maintenance & Operations: The University and Parks are addressing funding for maintenance and operations. A portion will likely be funded through endowments established by the Arboretum Foundation as well as other sources.

Budget

The Pacific Connections budget is \$2.6 million. The Pro Parks Levy provides \$2.3 million for project costs of planning, design and construction of improvements to the Arboretum, which includes funding for the design and some of the construction costs of the Japanese Garden Entry Structure project, and the Pacific Connections project. In addition, the Pro Parks Levy funded the planning, design and construction of the Arboretum's Irrigation Mainline project. Future design and construction of the Pacific Connections project will be funded with a mixture of private and public dollars, with the Arboretum Foundation having raised over \$2 million to date.

Additional Information

The Arboretum web site has additional information on the Pacific Connections project:
http://depts.washington.edu/wpa/pacific_connections.html.

4. Japanese Garden Entry Structure

The Japanese Garden Entry Structure is another high priority of the Master Plan. The Japanese Garden Advisory Council is the main project proponent.

The existing entry is deficient in a number of respects. It is not well integrated into the garden and offers no public rest rooms. Ticket-booth employees do not have a good view of the entry, and cannot easily provide service to large groups. Maintenance staff does not have adequate office space or a place to work with volunteers. The Japanese Garden Advisory Council needs a place for classes, demonstrations, meetings and events.

The Master Plan states: *Expand the Japanese Garden entrance facility to approximately 1,700 square feet to include a ticket window, gift shop, rest room rooms and a small reading/meeting room.* Early staff meetings identified the need to

integrate maintenance staff areas in the building. After a potential donor approached Parks, Parks hired Hoshide Williams Architects and Nakano & Associates to create a schematic design to identify costs and assist with further fundraising. The Garden is eligible as a City landmark. If designated, the design would need the approval of the Landmarks Preservation Board.

Public Involvement

Two public meetings were held at the Graham Visitors Center at the Arboretum. Dozens of people attended the public meetings. A project team representing the Japanese Garden Advisory Council, the Arboretum Foundation, Parks maintenance staff, and Parks planning staff met periodically to review the design.

Next Steps/Budget

Future design and construction will be funded with a mixture of private and public dollars. The total project cost is a little over \$1 million for the building and courtyard. Final design will take about six months. Construction will take six months – ideally in winter, when the Garden is closed.

Other Issues Facing the Arboretum

Implementation of Master Plan projects is one part of the on-going work at the Arboretum. Additional issues that the ABGC will be addressing include:

- Maintenance and Operations issues, such as:
 - Coordination between Parks and the University of Washington
 - Adequate budget resources for base level maintenance of what we have today and funding for new facilities built as a part of the master plan;
- Space and facility issues:
 - Additional space for operations, education, curatorial and Foundation staff
 - Future use of the Museum of History and Industry;
- Responsibility and Programming the Graham Visitor Center;
- Use of volunteers;
- Impacts of I-520 expansion; and
- Encroachments on western boundary.

Additional Information

Donald Harris, Donald.harris@seattle.gov, 206-684-8018.

Verbal Briefing/Board Discussion/Recommendation

A very brief summary of the eight verbal briefings follows:

Mr. Harris, who is also chair of the ABGC, displayed a large map of the Washington Park Arboretum, pointed out various sites on the map, and reviewed information in his written briefing paper. The Implementation Plan is the roadmap that is being used on the Master Plan projects.

Mr. Collins next addressed the Board and talked more about the structure of the ABGC. Three positions are appointed by the mayor, three by the UW's Dean of College of Forest Resources, two by the Arboretum Foundation, and one by the governor. He suggested that the Park Board consider sending one of its members as one of the three mayoral appointees. He gave the names of the various members and some background information about each. He suggested that staff send the Park Board a copy of the implementation plan.

Ms. Barnes and Ms. Pullen next gave a Powerpoint presentation on the Arboretum, with a focus on its maintenance aspects, and described what work the different City crews perform there. Seattle Parks frames the collection that the University maintains. Ms. Barnes also talked about the Department's focused response plan to deal with drug and other illicit activities within the Arboretum. A difficulty at the Arboretum is that it isn't signed very well, making it difficult for Seattle Police to respond to complaints.

Ms. Gigliotti reviewed recent efforts and positive developments at the Japanese Garden. The tea ceremonies are once again being held and are quite successful. Mr. Sheffer described an extensive list of projects that are already completed and those currently being implemented. Mr. Hoyt talked more about the University's role in managing the plant collection at the Arboretum and stated that the UW, City, and Arboretum Foundation are enjoying a good partnership. The University of Washington will soon have a College of the Environment, making this an especially exciting time. The University's three themes for its gardens are conservation, recreation, and education. He pointed out various projects on the map and talked about plant gathering expeditions, the Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan, and the UW's database that currently has information on all the Arboretum's 10,190 specimens. Every single one of them is tracked. He also pointed out the residential areas around the Arboretum, as well as the wetland areas

Mr. Collins praised the Interpretive and Wayfinding Plan and stated that the UW paid \$135,000 to fund it. The information is in the public domain and he suggested Seattle Parks use it as a model. Mr. Hoyt stated that he had three calls last week from groups asking to use the plan.

Mr. Hoyt pointed to two very important issues facing the Arboretum: additional staff and work space for those staff members. Currently, the Arboretum has one staff person for every 38 acres. In comparison, the San Francisco Botanical Garden has one person for every five acres. The other issue facing the Arboretum is space for staff. Mr. Harris stated that another issue is Arboretum neighbors who have encroached on the park.

Ms. Miller has been the Arboretum Foundation's Executive Director for six months. She read the mission statement and described the important support the Foundation provides to the Arboretum in the way of financial donations, volunteers, and as advocates.

Discussion

Commissioner Adams commented that he loves the Arboretum and enjoyed learning about its historical aspects. It appears that the Master Plan is moving ahead very well. What might come to the Board of Park Commissioners? Mr. Harris answered that the ABGC looks to the Park Board for policy oversight. The hot issues that are likely to come to the Board are the SR520 project because of its potential impact to the Arboretum, tree removal, maintenance and operations' needs – which is a high priority for the Arboretum, and the property management and encroachments.

Commissioner Holme commented that the ratio of staff to the number of acres they are expected to maintain is bad news. He referred to the previous legacy of friction between the City and UW and wondered if internal decision making led to the problems and that it wasn't just due to public officials' decisions.

Earlier Mr. Collins suggested that a Park Board Commissioner once again be appointed to the ABGC as a voting member. Commissioner Holme asked him to describe the time commitment. Mr. Collins answered that the ABGC meets the first Wednesday of each month, it holds no public hearings [as the Park Board does], and doesn't face angry citizens [as the Board does on occasion.]

Commissioner Holme then asked about the Capital Improvement Project and recommended some type of signage in the park that shows the progress of the fundraising, especially the Japanese Garden entry structure. Ms. Miller enthusiastically agreed with this suggestion.

Commissioner Barber referred to budget proposals for the Arboretum. Mr. Gallagher commented that one element of the Strategic Business Plan will be to look at what it takes to maintain acreage and buildings and determine how many staff any particular site is short. This strategy would include the Arboretum. Policies and procedures will then be developed from those determinations.

Commissioner Ramels referred to the need for Arboretum staff to expand to new quarters and asked the site of the expansion. Mr. Harris stated that staff have long hoped and dreamed that the Museum of History and Industry building would be available for its use, with the move of MOHAI to South Lake Union Park.

Commissioners thanked all the presenters for the tour and the briefing.

Briefing: State Route 520 Project and its Potential Impacts to the Washington Park Arboretum

David Graves, Seattle Parks project planner, Jack Collins, and Paige Miller gave a briefing on the Washington State Department of Transportation State Route 520 project and its potential impacts to the Washington Park Arboretum. Commissioners received a 20-page document about the project, which is available to read at http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/24CD3A93-C561-46AD-A7D9-E8C97E9945AD/0/01_SR520DEIS_Ch1.pdf, and an executive summary of the I-5 to Floating Bridge tunnel Concept Review Executive Summary (included below).

Written Briefing **I-5 to Floating Bridge Tunnel Concept Review Executive Summary April 2006**

In the fall of 2005, a group of community members approached the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project with a concept idea for building a tunnel between I-5 and the SR 520 floating bridge as part of the replacement project. The group proposed that building a tunnel through this area would relieve congestion, improve connections to I-5, be better for the environment, and reduce the project cost. In December of 2005, WSDOT began a review of this citizen concept, which highlighted some initial issues such as the transition from the tunnel to the floating bridge, environmental concerns, and difficult interchanges and local access connections.

Following the initial review, WSDOT conducted additional analysis to identify possible solutions to the identified issues. Working with an international tunnel engineering expert, the project team evaluated a revised conceptual plan and profile drawings. The analysis highlighted benefits as well as a number of engineering complexities and environmental concerns associated with the tunnel concept.

- Many issues regarding the built environment would be improved in some local neighborhoods, including noise, visual quality and land use.
- There are net increases in environmental effects due to dredging in the Arboretum, including along Marsh and Foster islands, and the need to build an artificial island in Lake Washington. This would mean that species protected under the Endangered Species Act would be disturbed. These issues would likely create difficulties in acquiring the necessary permits to build a tunnel.
- The concept includes constructing interchanges in tunnels, which is extremely difficult due to structural stability limitations, the size of the interchanges, safety issues, and complex connections.
- The concept involves constructing multiple different types of tunnels (bored, immersed, cut-and-cover, and others), adding additional engineering and construction complexities.
- The soil through the Union Bay area is unstable and considerable fill would be required to provide an adequate foundation for the tunnel. In addition, extremely invasive procedures would need to be conducted to create seismic stability in this area.
- This concept would cost billions of dollars more than any of the current plans.

Based on this analysis, WSDOT recommends that the tunnel concept not be studied further. To review additional details and graphics regarding the tunnel and the project team's engineering and environmental analysis, we can email you a PDF of the full memo (I-5 to Floating Bridge Tunnel Concept Technical Memorandum). Please fill out the contact form (linked in the left navigation bar of the project Web site) if you would like a full report emailed to you.

Verbal Briefing & Board Discussion

Seattle Parks' project manager, David Graves, introduced himself and explained his role in the SR520 project. He reviews the project for Seattle Parks and acts as a liaison with other review agencies and WSDOT. WSDOT has favored the Pacific Interchange alternative. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled for release in 2009. The project impacts not only the Arboretum, but also McCurdy Park, East Montlake Park, and Bagley Viewpoint. Seattle Parks has weighed in on the project, with most of its comments ignored or minimized by WSDOT. He will forward a copy of Parks' comments to the Commissioners.

Ms. Miller is the ABGC's representative to the 34-member mediation group convened by Governor Gregoire as a result of legislation led by State Representative Ed Murray. She is serving because of the impact the SR520 project has on the Arboretum. Her role is to review the project, understand its impacts to the Arboretum, keep the project out of the Arboretum if possible, and secure mitigation funds if it isn't possible. There is a potential for even greater noise and a visual impact to the wetlands in the Arboretum, as well as a loss of habitat due to the project. The configuration of the SR520 entrances and exits will have the biggest impact to the Arboretum.

The mediation group meets once each month for a six-hour meeting. The 34 representatives include six from the east side of Lake Washington and 28 from the west side and represent various interests: community, parks, arboretum, and agencies. All the key players are at this table except a representative of the Native American tribes. Commissioner Ramels asked Ms. Miller to contact the Park Board if she needs the Board's support in this role.

Mr. Collins commented that Mr. Graves has reviewed the history of the SR520 project and Ms. Miller reviewed the mediation process. His role has been working with the neighborhood process. The 10,000+ Arboretum plants can't speak for themselves and must depend on humans to protect them. The ABGC has 9 voting members; many of those members work for agencies that have varying interests in the SR520 project. He doesn't work for any of the agencies and was asked by Mayor Nickels and Deputy Mayor Tim Ceis to serve on the SR520 Advisory Council where he represented both the Park Board and ABGC. The meetings, which have now concluded, were run by Deputy Mayor Ceis and City Councilmembers Jan Drago and Richard Conlin. It seemed to him that the meetings were dominated by information from WSDOT. Following the meetings, City Council then made a resolution that favored the Pacific Interchange. That alternative only has the support of one community group. Council has never adopted that motion.

He noted that there was a nice article about the tunnel alternative in today's Seattle Post Intelligencer. A community group, headed by Fran Conley, continues to meet monthly. That group took a vote on the alternatives and sent the results to the Governor's Mediation Committee. It is hoped that the mediation process will lead to some form of consensus.

SR520 may be severely damaged in a windstorm or earthquake. The State would then move quickly to replace it. It is urgent that a replacement plan is made sooner rather than later that includes input from the greater community. That input should help determine whether the replacement will be an all-surface plan or include some tunnel elements.

The Commissioners asked for update briefings on this project and thanked all tonight's presenters for a job well done.

Old/New Business

Annual Retreat: The Board will hold its annual retreat on Thursday, December 13. A facilitator has been hired for the retreat and will meet with Commissioners Adams and Ranade and Parks staff Sandy Brooks and Susan Golub on Friday morning, November 2.

Vacant Park Board Position: Commissioners agreed to hold an extended meeting on November 8, from 6:00-9:00 pm. The first half of the meeting will be regular business. The second half will be used to review the resumes of the applicants and select the top 2-3 candidates to interview. The cover letters and resumes will all be numbered and forwarded to the Commissioners on October 26, along with the document the Board adopted at its special October 16 meeting. Commissioners will indicate at the November 8 meeting which candidate is their #1, #2, and #3 choice and work together to determine the three top candidates to interview. At the October 16 meeting, Commissioners determined four core values, with ratings of 1-3 points, to use for scoring the candidates. Several other values were determined which will also be used to help determine the top candidates. At the November 8 meeting, each Commissioner will divulge how many points they assigned each candidate for each of these values in a high, medium, or low rank or numerically (0, 1, 2, or 3 points.) Commissioner Adams suggested that everyone first read all the cover letters and resumes and then go back and begin scoring.

Jack Collins suggested that one solution is for one of the current Board members to resign from their City Council- or Mayoral-appointed position and then be appointed by the Board to the 7th position. City Council or the Mayor would then be responsible for appointing the final member to the Board. Commissioners will move ahead with the appointment process that they are developing.

Pool Study: Discussion of Commissioner Larsen’s request that the Park Board supports the feasibility study for outdoor pools and appoints her to speak before City Council as the Board’s representative was postponed from the October 11 meeting. Tonight, she rescinded her request in light of new information.

Cathy Whitman, Seattle Parks’ Aquatics Manager, was present and gave additional information. The question is – should the City of Seattle build more outdoor pools? The City Council has had a great deal of public testimony recently about this topic. Seattle Parks’ is now directing energy into its Strategic Business Plan, which will provide a number of venues to discuss the proposal, which Ms. Whitman described as well written. Commissioner Larsen talked with Jackie Kirn in Mayor Nickels’ office and to Interim Superintendent Williams and some funds for a pool consultant have been designated. Tim Gallagher, Mayor Nickel’s appointee as Parks Superintendent, stated that it is important to remember that neither indoor nor outdoor pools make a profit. Commissioner Larsen believes it is brilliant to schedule the 32 public meetings to get public input on the Department’s Strategic Business Plan. This is a great venue to bring forth the need for outdoor pools.

Retreat Topic: Commissioner Adams asked how projects rise to the top in the Department. If additional outdoor pools are so important, it would seem that the proposal would have risen through the Department, rather than by a citizen group to City Council. If the Department starts spending its time “putting out fires,” how does it plan for where it is going? Mr. Gallagher agreed that it is very unusual for a proposal to come to the Department and Park Board at the last minute. Commissioner Ramels commented that the Board of Park Commissioners is not a forum for its members to lobby the Department of their interests; however, she appreciates innovative new people trying new things. Commissioner Larsen commented that the need is there; if it doesn’t bubble up through the Department, it will bubble up in some other way. Mr. Gallagher commented that when he went to look for other ways things could come to the Department’s attention, he really didn’t see much. Commissioners asked that one retreat topic be a discussion of whether a role of Board of Park Commissioners is to be visionary for the Department.

Support for Mayor’s Proposed 2008 Budget: **Commissioner Holme moved that the Board enthusiastically support the Mayor’s proposed 2008 budget, specific to parks, and encourages City Council to approve it. Commissioner Adams seconded.** Commissioner Adams asked what type of support this would involve and Commissioner Holme stated a letter signed by the Park Board Chair. Commissioners briefly discussed the motion and the chair called for the question. **The vote was taken with Commissioners Barber and Larsen abstaining and Commissioners Holme and Adams voting in favor. Commissioner Barber made a friendly motion to restate the motion as “The Board of Park Commissioners support the Mayor’s proposed budget in principal and are very enthusiastically behind the increases proposed by the Mayor.” Commissioner Holme accepted the friendly amendment. The vote was taken with Commissioner Larsen abstaining and Commissioners Adams, Barber, and Holme voting in favor. The motion carried.** A letter will be sent to City Council and signed by the Park Board chair.

Arboretum & Botanical Garden Committee (ABGC) Representative: Jack Collins earlier suggested that a member of the Park Board once again be assigned as a member of the ABGC. Commissioners asked that discussion of this be added to a future agenda.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Jackie Ramels, Acting Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____