

MINUTES

JENSEN-OLSON ARBORETUM ADVISORY BOARD

Zoom Webinar | Wednesday, May 12, 2021 5:15 P.M.

I. Call to Order at 5:17 pm by Chair, Nell McConahey

Present: Nell McConahey, Deborah Rudis, Ed Buyarski, Rose Evans, Peter Froehlich, Patricia Harris, Paulette Schirmer, Sarah Dolan

Absent: Kristin Bartlett

Staff Present: Ginger Hudson, Arboretum Manager; Amanda Babin, Staff Liaison

II. Agenda Changes – Pat White providing Friends of JOA staff report.

E. Buyarski moves to approve agenda, no objection. *Agenda approved.*

III. Public Participation on Non-Agenda Items – None.

IV. Approval of Minutes –

A. Wednesday, February 10, 2021: P. Harris moves to approve minutes, no objection.

Minutes adopted.

V. New Business –

A. Welcome Sarah:

N. McConahey: We have a new board member, Sarah Dolan. Can you please tell us a bit about yourself?

S. Dolan: I've lived in Juneau for about 14 years, avid gardener, I have two young girls age 8 and 10, I love the Arboretum and I'm thrilled to serve on the board.

B. Memorial Policy Proposal:

G. Hudson: The memorial policy came up because folks have been asking if they can put plaques in the garden. Most of the current plaques are for someone who had a direct connection to the garden: board member, SEAL Trust, part of the founding of the garden. What are your thoughts about creating a policy for anybody to put something in the garden? CBJ has a policy but JOA is exempt from that and we can create our own. Our policy could be to not have one but we should have a statement so I can respond appropriately to visitors. All suggestions are welcome, having limitations on quantity, establishing a pricing structure, etc. Folks should know that when purchasing a memorial a large part of that fee is a donation.

E. Buyarski: I know we've done bricks, trees and shrubs in the past. A bench could be another option. Ginger would be the primary person. Consulting the gardener, the board, type of tree or shrub, is there a place for it, do we want that plant at the Arboretum. The gardeners will take care of it but we don't guarantee anything will live forever.

G. Hudson: Does anybody have an opinion on, are there too many benches, plaques, or signage already. Michele Elfers commented that you don't want to be walking around and feel like you're in a graveyard because every sign says in memory or dearly departed. The bricks are a great entry point. If folks want to spend \$5,000 to get a bench, are we fine with that? Donations could go through Friends of the JOA and be put back into the garden faster than if we went through the city.

N. McConahey: I think there's enough seating already at the arboretum, maybe one more bench. I like the idea of some kind of arch. Ginger had a suggestion of a tree with leaves and those leaves could be the names. There could be different sized leaves for different benefits or price points. I think it's a great idea with a lot of potential, income for Friends of JOA and a way for people to remember others that's respectful to the arboretum and people wanting to honor others.

R. Evans: The Lovely Loo took so long to get funding. We could dream up a wish list of things we want. That way people have the option, if they have a bunch of money they can make a big structure or sculpture. For smaller items, have a certain place people could place something, like a rock thinking garden.

E. Buyarski: Over at the Shine, they have a bridge that has a plaque on one end of it for folks who donated to the bridge. If there is a specific item, I'm sure Ginger would like a bigger green house. Folks can contribute to the fundraising and their name would be recognized on a plaque, on the structure or something.

N. McConahey: I agree that the Friends of JOA is a good place for this to go but the Friends would have to be willing to take this on. We could have a discussion and come up with a plan similar to the bricks.

D. Rudis: I was thinking of what the gardens functional needs are. If we need any hardened pathways it could be a memorial walkway with bricks.

E. Buyarski: I was thinking the exact same thing. Whether it be bricks or a gravel path and people could donate by the bucket or ton of gravel.

Friends of JOA President Pat White: I have a dream of having a stable of walkers and canes for people, so a more established path would be great. Ginger hasn't presented this to the Friends of JOA board yet. The Friends of JOA will have to work on how much and what kind of involvement and how complicated this is going to get before coming to this board.

E. Buyarski: I'm sure folks would like a harden path for walkers and wheelchairs to get around more easily. The Lovely Loo has handicap access.

P. Harris: I think this discussion is really worthwhile so I'm looking forward to discussing this with the Friends of JOA Board. There are a couple signs currently on trees that are too obtrusive. If we're going to have a plaque for a tree I'd like to see it be lower so that it's not the first thing your see. You should see the tree and then see the plaque.

S. Dolan: I agree with that.

VI. Unfinished Business –

N. McConahey: Any unfinished business? We don't have any on the agenda but just a quick check.

P. Harris: Has any progress been made on commercial use?

N. McConahey: I will email Michelle Elfers for an update tomorrow. *Memo included in minutes (pages 5-6)*

VII. Committee Liaison and Staff Reports

A. Chair Report:

N. McConahey: I presented out annual report to the HRC back in March. They asked a couple quick questions, reappointed our current board members and appointed new board member Sarah Dolan to serve for the next three years. I attended the Lovely Loo ribbon cutting in April.

B. Manager's Report: *Included in packet.*

C. Friends of JOA –

Friends of JOA President Pat White: We have a new board member, Sue Baxter. The Lovely Loo ceremony went great. Next we'll be working on getting the inside of the Loo painted. In May we had low tide exploration day. We are hoping to do more events like this. We are looking to spend out raffle money from last year on a large event tent. Last weekend we participated in a spring themed event held by Don Abel. We have 12 volunteers who will begin docent training this week. A field guide is in the last stages of editing and will begin production and then be for sale. It's about 135 pages of photos and descriptions of what's in the garden. Public gardens day is coming up on May 29th and Ginger is going to give two tours that day. We are planning our first Friends of JOA

sponsored event for Solstice on June 20th. We are developing a logo and my hope is that over the next few years everyone will know that logo and say they've been out to the Arboretum.

G. Hudson: I attended the Don Abel spring event and was able to connect with another non-profit, Catholic Community Services. We discussed having seniors out at JOAAB in the future. They had the idea of raised garden beds to have more accessible gardening down the line.

D. Other business

P. Froehlich: Are we supposed to have an Assembly liaison? Could someone prompt Michele Elfers to reach out to the lawyers to get things moving on the tour stuff?

A. Babin: Edric is here and he's out PRAC liaison. I'm not sure about the Assembly, I can look into that. We invited SEAL Trust to attend this meeting but they had a conflicting meeting. They are hoping to attend in August or November.

N. McConahey: I will include the lawyer question in an email to Michele tomorrow.

D. Rudis: In the past, we've had fundraisers where an artist comes out to the Arboretum to hold a painting workshop. Have you been approached with any activities like that Ginger?

G. Hudson: I have not been approached for any painting workshops. The Friends of JOA and I have talked about a photography workshop. I think a botanical painting or drawing workshop would be fantastic.

D. Rudis: I think it would be a really good fundraiser. I suppose any fundraising would be a Friends of JOA task since we can't raise money.

Adjournment – 6:05p.m. *Having no further business before the Board.*

Respectfully submitted by Amanda Babin, Parks & Recreation Administrative Assistant I, 8/12/21.

JOAAB - Follow up questions from May 12, 21 meeting, answered by Michele Elfers

Emails May 12-15, 2021) between Nell and Michele compiled for clarity (NM)

Q: Status update on the Commercial use. Possible timeline for SEAL and CBJ law approval.

A: Commercial Use – SealTrust’s lawyers have it. Krista called a couple of weeks ago and thought it would be reviewed soon and she would send it, but I still haven’t received anything. I will check in with her again. They are really simplifying it, so I think it is likely the CBJ review will move more quickly and it won’t get held up in the commercial use of all of P&R review delay situation.

Q: Can you share an Arboretum budget with the board? (this from the February minutes).

A: Budget – I will let Ginger share this and I can help her answer questions as needed.

Q: Regarding the proposed 25% of revenues to be withheld for 'household' use- did this ever happen? Is there some accounting for it? Or will all the 'income' for the arboretum go into the endowment as "unrestricted" funds? Who takes care of this? If the 25% is 'held', does it need to be spent this fiscal year (June)? If so, how much \$\$\$. Will it get 'swept' away or go to the endowment if not used?

A: 25% withholding of revenues for household use – we talked about this at the last JOAAB meeting after some emails with Jeff. The unrestricted funds are the funds available for household use at any time and they include the rental fees for the house. So they can be withdrawn as needed. The funds are carried over year to year and can be spent in any fiscal year, however the Assembly will have to approve appropriation of the funds from the endowment and they will likely be transferred to a CIP. If it happens during budget time, we would just add that to the budget preparation and approval would go through with the budget. Or we can do it at another time during the year and the Assembly will hear it as a separate appropriation request. I don’t think the money could be “swept away” because it is endowment and it will be in a CIP so it will be tracked, so we might have to transfer it back into the endowment if it is not used. However, we should only appropriate things for discrete defined projects as I think this is how we will get Assembly support. Jeff had a draft memo on this topic that I screen shared at the last meeting, but he never finalized it. I sent him an email today asking him to finalize this.

Some thoughts on use of the funds: windows – these are on Facility Maintenance priority list and will likely rise to the top next year. I don’t recommend using the endowment funds for the windows as they will be paid for by another source of funding. Also, funds from the endowment will be transferred into a CIP which will then be managed by Engineering. There are additional costs for management which I can explain in detail if you want, that don’t exist when the project is run through facility maintenance. Regarding water, I suggest we watch water usage for a couple of years, we had a bad year

2 years ago in our hot dry summer, but since then we have not had an issue. Also, EVC hauls all their water by truck, with bond funding from last fall we are planning to drill for a well this summer. This will give us some really good info on costs and other construction issues and needs. Let's watch this project and use this information as needed if we have more dry years coming up (I do hope for a little bit of dryness!). One thought is kitchen cabinet upgrade, this is unlikely to rise to the top of facility maintenance priorities as it is not a structural issue. Jeff suggests keeping some reserves in the unrestricted funds for unanticipated needs and not spending this to zero.

Q: The Endowment Committee agreed to meet in August (as opposed to waiting until December). Knowing that the 'unrestricted funds' will not disappear at the end of the fiscal year relieves some pressure. How can I find the dollar amount in 'unrestricted funds' in the CBJ budget-or is this in the JOA budget? From the Feb Minutes, "71,099" is in there. Am I understanding correctly that spending this money still needs Assembly approval? Is it just a matter of getting approval for a certain project and taking that question to the assembly? Is this usually a 2-6 week approval or longer?

Currently, my understanding is: If unrestricted funds were requested by JOAAB for 'Project house', the request would go to the Assembly for approval of spending, funds would be transferred to a CIP fund and JOA could pay for 'project house' out of that account. Am I close??

A: These are all good questions. I am hoping I get Jeff's final memo soon as I think the unrestricted funds number is in there. It is not itemized in the budget documents. And yes, I remember \$70k is about right. The process would be that JOAAB would make a motion to recommend the use of funds for a specific project for the Arboretum. P&R would take that recommendation to the Assembly (ideally with our support) and request the appropriation of funds to a CIP. This is a two meeting process, one for introduction and one for a public hearing and a vote. Upon approval the funds would be put in the CIP for use on the project and the project would be managed by the Engineering department. Depending on the time of year, the Assembly process will take 2.5-3 months with time needed to get on the agenda and get a packet together, and get through the two meetings. Usually, the money transfer can happen quickly. Then we need Eng to schedule the project to happen. Their capacity depends on time of year/other projects going. Right now they are very busy with bond projects. But we can talk to them prior to the Assembly approval to get a sense of when a project can happen.

Also, a point of clarification from my last email: The rental funds do not go into the endowment, they are held separately but contribute to the fund balance. I was re reading some of Jeff's old emails and saw this. I accidentally said the rental funds would come out of the endowment in my email below.

Jensen-Olson Arboretum, Manager's Report to the Advisory Board

May 12, 2021

- JOA has a Covid mitigation plan posted on our website and on the entry panel by the gate. Groups holding events are required to submit their mitigation plans before approval for use of space. Calendar of events attached with this report. The first event held this year was an Intertidal Exploration workshop for families hosted by FJOA. Pat Harris arranged for multiple volunteer leaders to keep family groups separated.
- Late season snow melted rapidly mid- to end-April, primroses, corydalis, and daffodils are stars right now. Trees and shrubs budding out, veggie garden mostly planted.
- Ribbon Cutting on April 3 for the Lovely Loo, went lovely. Decent weather, attended by approx. 20 folks plus walk-in visitors, Mayor Beth Weldon cut the TP decorated ribbon. Nell McConahey is working with FJOA to acquire art to liven up the loo's appearance.
- The potable water supply continues to be an area of concern, for quality. I have contracted with Alaska Spring Water for delivery of bottled water for drinking, cooking, and a cold and hot water dispenser for the gardener's shed.
- Last December the heavy flooding caused the septic system of the manager's residence to overflow on the lawn. Overflow is partially caused by the regular overflow drain being clogged with shells and sand. CBJ maintenance is aware of the issue.
- There is a water leak in the sunroom where its roof joins the house roof. Discovered this winter, the water infiltrates the wall and comes out at an electrical outlet. Maintenance is aware of the issue.
- Two European mountain ash, *Sorbus acuparia*, on west and east side of gardener's shed were removed in April taking advantage of late winter conditions. Trees were downed without incident, wood will be firewood, some select straight pieces may be used for onsite benches or craft projects.
- A twisted snag hemlock was taken down near the entry gate on the north side of path. The snag leaned toward the path creating a safety hazard. The snag came down without incident, one log will be turned into a bench near the entry panel. Other wood may be planked, dispersed, or firewood.
- JOA seasonal staff began on April 23. They each bring special talent, interest, and enthusiasm for working at JOA. Khalil English, grew up in Juneau and has family here. Currently he is working on a horticulture degree. The second garden assistant Mattheus Tempel also grew up here, he is returning after half a season last summer. Mattheus is a ski-patroller at Eaglecrest in the winter.

- I will be presenting a video at the American Public Gardens Association annual conference the week of June 7-11. The topics are a virtual tour of JOA, the importance of small public gardens, their contributions to a community and gardening network.
- After several failed attempts to act as a presenter for online meetings, it has been determined that the internet at JOA cannot support the bandwidth. I can view and listen to other presentations. This is an issue Merrill did not have to work with because he did not act as a presenter, and 2020 was a challenging year for his schedule. CBJ MIS dept has provided me with a laptop, I will have to travel to other CBJ facilities with more robust internet capabilities to present at meetings.
- The BLM in conjunction with the UAA Herbarium and regional Fish & Wildlife Dept will be at JOA on June 9 and 10 to instruct staff on bumblebee identification, collection, and collection of associated data. This is to help fill in gaps of knowledge on native bumblebees, their habitats, and their part in pollination of wild and cultivated plants.
- Sealaska Heritage will conduct a devil's club, S'áxt', *Oplopanax horrida*, harvesting workshop at JOA on May 12 at 9am. The goal is to remove overgrown specimens by the manager's residence and driveway; to harvest for personal use; and to demonstrate proper harvesting and trimming techniques.

Thank you for your support of the arboretum.

Submitted by Ginger Hudson