

MINUTES
JENSEN-OLSON ARBORETUM ADVISORY BOARD
Zoom Webinar | Wednesday, February 10, 2021 5:15 P.M.

I. Call to Order at 5:23 pm by Pat Harris

Present: Ed Buyarski, Rose Evans, Peter Froehlich, Patricia Harris, Paulette Schirmer

Absent: Kristin Bartlett, Nell McConahey, Deborah Rudis

Staff Present: Ginger Hudson, Arboretum Manager; Michele Elfers, Deputy Director; Lauren Verrelli, Staff Liaison; Amanda Babin, Staff Liaison in training

II. Agenda Changes – None.

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

IV. Approval of Minutes –

A. Wednesday, November 18, 2020: P. Harris requests to add her name to the Friends of JOA Report. P. Froehlich moves to approve updated minutes, no objection.

Minutes adopted.

B. Subcommittee Wednesday, November 18, 2020: P. Schirmer moves to approve minutes, no objection. *Minutes adopted.*

V. New Business –

A. 2020 JOAAB Annual Report: *Included in packet.*

P. Schirmer: Coming in new, it was a really good review for me.

P. Harris: Moves to approve report, no objection. Approved to submit to the HRC.

B. Welcome Ginger:

P. Harris: Welcome Ginger!

C. Manager Residence Maintenance:

G. Hudson: Bathroom update is complete, it's fantastic. Windows need to be repaired which has bumped down renovation of the kitchen.

M. Elfers: Window repairs will be paid out of the CBJ deferred maintenance fund, shouldn't require any extra money from the Arboretum operating budget.

G. Hudson: A full panel test has been requested for the water well. Extreme drought led to salt water infiltration. CBJ is aware that water shortage might need to be addressed in the future. Lots of vegetation on the house will need to be trimmed.

E. Buyarski: The plants next to the house definitely need to be moved away for the health of the house. Has rainwater collection and water storage been considered?

G. Hudson: An assessment would need to be done but it is something we are looking into.

M. Elfers: A cistern is something we looked into with Merrill and it is a good idea, and maybe a piece of the solution, but it couldn't handle the quantity of water needed for the garden.

P. Harris: Ginger, are you considering a cistern for domestic use?

G. Hudson: Yes, but as Michele said, factoring in how much water is needed. Maybe it's two cisterns. Maybe it's a cistern for the house and the well is still used for the garden. It is a big project to assess and see what we can do.

VI. Unfinished Business –

A. Commercial Use Update:

M. Elfers: I met with SEAL Trust in December and explained to them that commercial use had been with our law department but is stalled due to COVID. They agreed to review the version the board had looked at. SEAL Trust explained how they approach supplements and easements and they want a really simple document. I had added

quotes from CBJ regulation and they didn't want anything that was changeable. They don't want the regulations to become obsolete in five years and have to go back and change the administrative supplement. They shared a very preliminary draft with me today. It's short, simple, and I think, gets to the meat of what we're trying to do. I don't know how long it will take for their attorneys to review it but I hope at our next meeting you'll have something to look at again.

P. Froehlich: Michele, do you think having it by May is a realistic goal, with two attorney levels of review?

M. Elfers: I'm an optimistic person, so I'm going to say yes.

P. Harris: I spoke with Allison from SEAL Trust and they would like to have somebody that is on the land trust board or staff to be on the Advisory Board. I'm the current representative and I feel I haven't been representing them very well. I could leave my seat so they could be more involved.

L Verrelli: Someone from SEAL Trust is more than welcome to sit in on meetings.

M. Elfers: I will extend an invitation for them to attend the next meeting.

B. Endowment Update:

M. Elfers: Last year we had two issues that the board requested be brought to our finance director. The first was, the amount of withdrawal from the endowment each year. At the board's recommendation we established 4% of the five year average. The second issue was about creating an account where rental money could go into the endowment and could be held for household needs. I'm going to share a draft memo from the Finance Department. The FY22 Vanguard distribution of 4% was rounded down to 100,000 so that is the amount going into the operating budget this year and is our proposed budget that will go to the Assembly.

P. Harris: What does that represent as a percentage of the Arboretum's budget?

M. Elfers: Our total operating budget is somewhere in the \$250,000 range. We can get exact numbers, for you, for the next meeting.

P. Harris: I think that would be interesting.

M. Elfers: The question we posed this year, was about that rental donations, so the unrestricted balance within the endowment. The unrestricted balance from rents and donations is \$71,099. That means if there's a request by the board or the department to use that money it has to be approved by the Assembly. I asked the Finance Director a few questions and he thought that leaving a balance was a good idea for stability. If the board decides, they want to use some of that money now, I think it would be good to have a discussion now, but then let us do some work on it: the costs, priorities, and other funding sources within the City. The Arboretum pays into the General Maintenance fund every year and receives those maintenance services. The bathroom project came out of the Deferred Maintenance CIP Fund which comes from sales tax. The deferred Maintenance CIP is for bigger projects and is a great source of funding because it doesn't affect the Arboretum budget. There's a lot of needs within the city so the Deferred Maintenance fund gets prioritized. For example, the restroom rose in priority because there was a potential for structural damage from moisture and rot. The kitchen cabinets are functional, not a structural, health, or safety issue so they are a lower priority.

E. Buyarski: I think, based on Ginger's report, the water issues and water quality should be a priority.

G. Hudson: The kitchen is functional. I would say the water and the windows, but as Michele said the windows are part of the operation budget.

P. Harris: One of the problems with this advisory board is we only meet quarterly, so we never get up much steam on anything. How does the board feel about that?

M. Elfers: The endowment subcommittee is an appropriate place.

P. Schirmer: I think we can keep it within the endowment committee and meet more frequently.

L. Verrelli: We can move up the subcommittee meeting. I'll send out an email to arrange the date.

E. Buyarski: What happens if the water tests come back and they say you shouldn't be drinking that stuff?

M. Elfers: If we found out the water wasn't safe we would take immediate steps to find a safe water supply.

VII. Committee Liaison and Staff Reports

A. Chair Report: None.

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

C. Friends of JOA –

Pat White: We had a strategic planning meeting at the end of January. We discussed what's going to work given vaccination rates and all those sort of things. The lovely loo is in and will be functional this spring. We hope to do more advertising, create a brand, increase our memberships, and have more year round events at the Arboretum, like music, or lights and bonfires in the wintertime. Ginger indicated she is interested in working with some members at the garden. I hope that could be a perk for members.

P. Evans: I'd love to do a paint class.

Pat White: We would love to offer one. The photography class and kids programs in the past were very successful.

P. Schirmer: I'm on the JAMM board (Juneau Alaska Music Matters) and could bring it up and see if they want to do something out there.

Pat White: That would be wonderful. The Friends of the Arboretum will be coordinating with CBJ on facility needs and taking on the organization and cataloguing of the basement.

D. Other business— None.

Adjournment – 6:30p.m. *Having no further business before the Board.*

Respectfully submitted by Amanda Babin, Parks & Recreation Administrative Assistant I, 4/26/21.

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

February 5, 2021

- The new manager arrived in Auke Bay the evening of January 8, after several weather delays, from Anchorage via AMH Whittier Port. The manager's residence was open and mostly empty for move-in.
- Renovation of the aged full bathroom had been delayed due to asbestos abatement. Asbestos was found in the original sheetrock mud. The new bath was declared usable on January 21, with final inspection on 29th, and still a few punch-list items to complete.
- Unseasonably warm weather persisted through most of January requiring some plants to be "mulched" with burlap bags by previous manager. Snow returned Jan 23, thankfully before a hard freeze thus the snow provided important blanketing to garden beds, and forests. Two trees sustained damage from heavy snow in December: a coastal pine at the north forest edge, and a birch near the garage.
- Turnover maintenance continues in the manager's residence, it is a lot of space to prepare after the previous resident was onsite for thirteen years! I have purchased a new front-load washing machine to replace one ready to retire. Well water is being tested. Cleaning and painting of the manager's office will allow for re-organization of historic and useful horticulture books and ephemera.
- I have met and attended meetings (zoom) of the Southeast Alaska Master Gardeners, the Friends of the Jensen-Olson Arboretum, talked with Matt on KINY Capital Chat, and met many neighbors. I will be joining the Juneau Garden Club meeting in February, and look forward to attending other local garden related meetings. Planning for events with FJOA at JOA, and other garden clubs, remains a challenge to work around COVID precautions.
- The proximity to EVC has been helpful in two important ways: before the bath was complete the manager of EVC offered a shower room to us; due to the front loader requiring major repairs and unavailable for snow removal at JOA, the EVC manager allows me to use their plow truck to move larger loads than the snow blower can handle. (and quicker!)
- I am working to familiarize myself with the systems at JOA- contacts, ordering, filing; and the systems with CBJ. All CBJ staff, especially P&R and Facilities Maintenance have been available with guidance or hands-on-deck (repairing doors frozen shut, snow blowing, cleaning, and more). A warm welcome all the way around.

Thank you for your support of the arboretum.

Submitted by Ginger Hudson