

MINUTES

JENSEN-OLSON ARBORETUM ADVISORY BOARD

Zoom Webinar | Wednesday, August 12, 2020 5:15 P.M.

I. Call to Order at 5:19 pm by Chair, Nell McConahey

Present: Kristin Bartlett, Ed Buyarski, Rose Evans, Peter Froehlich, Nell McConahey, Deborah Rudis, Paulette Schirmer

Absent: Patricia Harris

Staff Present: Merrill Jensen, Arboretum Manager; Michele Elfers, Deputy Director; Lauren Verrelli, Staff Liaison

II. Agenda Changes – None.

III. Public Participation on Non-Agenda Items –

- A. **Pat White (Thane):** I am President of the Friends of the JOA. I wanted to introduce myself since I was elected to this position in April.

IV. Approval of Minutes –

- A. **Wednesday, November 6, 2019:** P. Froehlich moves to approve minutes, no objection.
Minutes adopted.
- B. **Wednesday, January 8, 2020:** P. Froehlich moves to approve minutes, no objection.
Minutes adopted.

V. New Business –

A. Welcome New Board Members:

N. McConahey: Welcome to one of our new board members, Paulette Schirmer.

P. Schirmer: I have a doctorate degree in Business Administration and I am an assistant professor at UAS teaching accounting.

B. 2019 Annual Report:

D. Rudis: It is very comprehensive and I do not see any changes necessary.

N. McConahey: Looks like the board has no changes, we can submit it to the HRC.

VI. Unfinished Business –

A. Arboretum Commercial Use Comments

M. Elfers: So far, the board has seen the proposed regulation and policy. Parks & Rec is updating our existing regulation that blankets all parks & facilities. Last year we did a big public process and was ready to go to the assembly this past spring but was delayed due to the pandemic.

D. Rudis: I have a question about the photography fees; will they be the same on all parkland as it is for the Arboretum? Can we look at what Anchorage is doing for example and make a comparable recommendation for the Arboretum?

M. Elfers: Yes, the board could make a recommendation to the City Manager.

N. McConahey: Looking at the policy, does anyone have questions with capping it to nine people per tour?

M. Elfers: I put in nine as a starting point for discussion. I wanted to keep the number small so there would be less of an impact.

E. Buyarski: If there is a group that comes out and doesn't have a permit, who enforces it?

M. Elfers: Merrill would approve the permits and would be aware of who and who does not have a permit. However, in the end, the front line enforcers would be the staff.

M. Jensen: I okay with upping the number to 12 or 15 people for unguided tours groups.

D. Rudis: Do we have anywhere that states how many groups can be there at one time?

M. Jensen: Thankfully, things have been staggered in the past but that could change in the future as we have more tourists. They generally stay 10-15 minutes.

M. Elfers: We have the same issue with trail permitting and we do have a process.

L. Verrelli: For trails, we reference the Trails Working Group document that states the number of people per group, spacing between groups and when they are allowed on and off the trail. Not sure how it would work with taxi's since folks can just hop in whenever and they don't have a schedule like most tour operators.

N. McConahey: Is there a capacity limit for the Arboretum?

M. Jensen: We do not have a capacity limit, just an event limit (50 people). The size of our parking lot helps limit the amount of people in the arboretum. At this time, I do not think we need to have an occupancy limit.

N. McConahey: Are we in agreement that 15 is a good number for vehicle-based tours?

The board is in agreeance, no objection.

N. McConahey: Under the application fee's section, a statement states the Department Director can waive fees associated with nonprofit requests. Do we want to change the nonprofit terminology to something more generic?

M. Elfers: We changed the word nonprofit because in our new regulation, non-profit does still mean commercial use. The board needs to consider their intent to waive fees.

N. McConahey: It could say any organization could be waived upon determination.

D. Rudis: Almost every nonprofit that comes is for educational purposes. What if we changed it to "education"?

N. McConahey: We could just remove "nonprofit" and just include organization and then leave it up to the Arboretum Manager. Is there any objection?

The board is in agreeance, no objection.

M. Elfers: If the Board is ready, we can send it over to Seal Trust for them to review.

E. Buyarski: I move that we send this to Seal Trust for review.

Board passes unanimously.

B. Next Endowment Subcommittee Meeting Date

N. McConahey: It is supposed to meet twice a year. It is currently myself, Ed and Rose. If anyone is interested in joining the subcommittee that has a financial background?

P. Schirmer: I can join.

N. McConahey: The next subcommittee meeting will be September 23 at 5:15.

VII. Committee Liaison and Staff Reports

A. Chair Report: None.

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

C. Friends of JOA –

Pat White: The contractor has delayed The Lovely Loo project but I'm following up with them weekly. Word is that he plans to get it in before winter. They are planning to have a dedication ceremony for the loo. We are also brainstorming how they can fundraise during a pandemic.

D. Other business— None.

Adjournment – 6:26p.m. *Having no further business before the Board.*

Respectfully submitted by Lauren Verrelli, Recreation & Public Services Manager, 11/17/2020.