

Sehome Hill Arboretum Meeting Minutes
February 16, 2023

1. **Meeting called to order at 4:03 PM:** Joan Drinkwin, Kendra Bradford, Steven Janiszewski, Wayne Galloway III, Janet Ott, John Tuxill, James Detke, and Avinash Rahrurkar present. Joined by Emma Toscani, Sam Dickman, David Engebretson Jr., and Laura Pen of WWU; and Caryn Regimbal of Bellingham Parks.
2. **Additions to agenda:**
 - a. Inauguration for the new Parks and Recreation and Public Works building on March 1 at 4:00 p.m. This building is located off Iowa Street on Pacific Street. The next SHABOG meeting will take place at this location.
 - b. There will be a new Parks intern who is a student interested in social media and marketing.
3. **Existing Business - Developing an accessible website for the Arboretum**
 - a. David E. reported that he has been making the archived Arboretum website WCAG - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines - compliant, defined by W3.org. He added titles to each page and skip to main content links. David E. also added alt text to the logo, and added a main site navigation region with the following tabs: Home, About Us, Natural History, and Map. He added descriptions for each menu item with sub-menus. David E. will add a contact at the end of the main menu navigation. The website footer contains a WWU logo.
 - b. David E. requested a logo graphic and a website link for the City of Bellingham, Parks and Recreation Department, and the SHABOG for the website's footer. The footer also contains WWU's accessibility statement and a link to accessibility information. David requested the City's and/or Parks and Recreation's accessibility statement.
 - c. John T. shared that the Board will have to discuss further how we would like to populate the site with content and what structure we would like to add. Determining who hosts the website is perhaps the most challenging aspect, and there also would need to be a link to the Arboretum website from the City's Arboretum webpage. Maintenance of the site is the primary issue moving forward; there would need to be a position or person at the host who is responsible for keeping the website up to date.
 - d. David E. reported that WWU could most likely host the site, and that this option would be relatively inexpensive. He will ask his boss for specific details on costs associated with hosting.
 - e. David E. asked for the Board to supply a document with our requirements for the website so that he and his team can determine the best way to support.
 - f. John T. asked David E. if the new website replicates the archived website. David E. reported that the new website is based on the archived website.
 - g. Joan D. asked to see the Geology page under the Natural History tab on the updated website. David E. navigated to the Geology page and demonstrated what had been changed, which was mostly alterations to the structure and some changes to the wording to make it more accessible to people who are less familiar with technical aspects of geology.

- h. Joan D. reported that the WWU Arboretum website provides a lot more information than the City's, but that these websites serve two different purposes. Joan D. suggested that the Events page might only be listed on the City's Arboretum page, since it gets updated regularly there, and linked to from the WWU website. Joan D. asked if the Board could have access to the new WWU website in order to provide feedback.
 - i. Kendra B. reported that the text and colors on the website currently are inaccessible to low-vision people. David E. reported that this can be changed in the future.
 - j. David E brought up that some of the Arboretum pdf files on the website are currently inaccessible and need to be made accessible.
 - k. David E. demonstrated the Birds page. To share the embedded birdsong recordings, proper permissions will need to be secured from the birdsong database developer, the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.
 - l. Emma T. is a student in the WWU technical writing class (taught by Nicole Brown) that is focused this quarter on creating content for the Home page and the About page.
 - m. John T reported that information on the Board's composition might be better to list on the City website, as Board members change fairly frequently.
 - n. Emma T. asked for the Board's mission statement. Steve J. reported that there is a mission statement and purpose in the Arboretum master plan, which is available on the CEDAR website.
 - o. Joan D. reiterated that the CEDAR website contains the current mission statement, which the Board might consider updating in the future. The mission statement should also be included on the WWU Arboretum website .
 - p. John T. suggested that Emma T. and her student team could gather quotations from Board members to document and convey individual personal perspectives about the Arboretum. The Board members can email Emma T. their quotation in the form of text or an MP3.
 - q. The Board will provide additional feedback after the March 16 Board meeting on their vision and aspirations for the website.
- 4. New Business - January Minutes**
- a. Avinash R. made a motion to approve the January meeting minutes, with Steve J. seconding. The minutes were approved unanimously as submitted.
- 5. Existing Business - Land Acknowledgement**
- a. John T. sent the Board's draft Land Acknowledgement to WWU Native Liaison Laural Ballew as a draft. She provided feedback that the Lummi name indicated in the draft (Hatemi's) was not a name she was familiar with. John indicated that this name (which he also was not familiar with) was mentioned in the Parks land acknowledgement and suggested it might be a Word auto-correct error. Caryn concurred that is likely the case, as it has appeared in other copies of the Parks acknowledgement.
 - b. Joan D. reported that she would prefer to replace "Indigenous neighbors" and replace this with "Indigenous wisdom". Other Board members agreed with this suggestion.
 - c. Steve J. would like to know the accurate pronunciation of the Lummi and Nooksack respective traditional names.
 - d. John T. would like clarification on whether or not to use traditional names when speaking in meetings.

- e. Kendra B. reported that the grammar in the last sentence could be improved. James D. and Joan D. reported that they were happy with the current wording
- f. Kendra B. suggested that the last sentence could include the wording “sustaining the Arboretum.”
- g. Avinash R. made a motion to adopt the land acknowledgment wording for the Board of Governors. Steve J seconded. There was no additional discussion and the motion passed unanimously.
- h. The acknowledgment as adopted is:
 - i. The Sehome Hill Arboretum Board of Governors acknowledges that Sehome Hill is traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Lhaq'temish – Lummi people – and the Nuxwsá7aq – Nooksack people – who have lived along the Salish Sea and throughout the San Juan Islands and the North Cascades watershed from time immemorial. We honor our shared responsibilities to care for the Arboretum and are grateful for the opportunity to learn from Indigenous wisdom as we work to create relationships sustaining the Arboretum’s forest for past, present and future generations.

6. Existing Business - House of Healing updates

- a. Avinash R. reported that the design schematic is being developed and he expects there to be more information on that by March 10. There is a plan for potential groundbreaking in October. WWU President Randhawa and Mayor Fleetwood met to discuss the lease agreement, but there is no resolution yet.
- b. Avinash R. reported that Laural Ballew indicated she would like the paved trail going through the lower meadow site to be removed because there is already a trail south of that location that connects between Bill McDonald Parkway and 25th Street. Steve J. reported that the Parks department has a different view of this trail and would like to keep it.

7. Existing Business - Signs and Kiosk Updates

- a. Steve J. reported that Parks and Facilities Management completed an inventory of the current Arboretum signage. They took photos and noticed that the kiosks are in great shape overall and only need refinishing work. They also found three turnstiles that are no longer being used because trails have been established around each turnstile. Steve J. recommended that fencing be put up to funnel parkgoers into the existing turnstiles, which would help prevent bicycling in the Arboretum. They identified proposed actions for each kiosk. These include removing graffiti, adding gravel at main entrances, installing fencing, adding rules signs, repairing erosion, and more.
- b. John T. suggested planting thorny plants to block the trail sections that go around the turnstiles.
- c. Joan D. reported that the trail going through the turnstiles at the Jersey St. entrance should be improved to be less steep and less muddy. Steve J. reported that he would work on having the trail improved at these locations.
- d. Steve J. noted that the plan includes three new kiosks. Parks can build the kiosks and Facilities Management will install them. Steve J also noted that they will add additional wayfinding and rules signage at trail crossings.
- e. Steve J will bring a draft rules sign to the next SHABOG meeting.

- f. Joan D. believes that the more people using the Arboretum is better and would like to have communications as a future meeting topic.
- 8. Existing Business - Designating Western as a Tree Campus**
- a. John T. tabled the discussion until Grace Wang is present.
- 9. Existing Business - Grace Wang's Term**
- a. John T. received confirmation from the WWU President's office that Grace Wang's term has been extended until June 2023.
- 10. New Business - 2022 Annual Report**
- a. John T. tabled the discussion for February's meeting. He is waiting on the total count of volunteer hours spent in the Arboretum from Ryan Robie before finalizing the draft Annual Report. He will circulate the Report in advance of the next meeting.
- 11. New Business - Bushtit Research from Seattle University**
- a. Rebecca Hartley inquired about Herbert Brown's talk in 1999 on the nesting habits of the Common bushtit in the Arboretum. She was hoping to receive more information about this research to add to her own research on bushtits at the Seattle University campus. John T. will follow up with WWU faculty who might have knowledge about Dr. Brown's work.
- 12. Existing Business - Remote meeting quality**
- a. Kendra B. reported that the Parks meeting room did not appear to have a significant improvement in remote audio quality over the Facilities Management meeting room. Steve J. indicated the meeting room at the new Parks and Recreation building on Pacific St. should have much better capability for hosting a Zoom feed for remote participants.
13. The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 PM with Avinash R. making the motion and Joan D. seconding.