

Sehome Hill Arboretum Board of Governors Meeting Minutes
March 16, 2023

1. **Meeting called to order at 4:02 PM.** Board members John Tuxill, Kendra Bradford, James Detke, Steve Janiszewski, Grace Wang, Janet Ott, and James Detke were present. Joined by Sam Pearce, Bree Park, Sam Dickman, David Engebretsen Jr., Laura Pen, Emma Toscani, Emilia Aboudara, Jack Sparling and Nicole Brown.
2. **Land Acknowledgment: John T. read the Board's adopted land acknowledgment.**
3. **February meeting minutes approved with a motion from Kendra B., seconded by Grace W. The motion passed unanimously.**
4. **Existing Business: Accessible Website for the Arboretum**
 - a. David Engebretsen, Jr reported that students are working towards making the website accessible to all visitors, improving the wording to fit current contexts and using more accessible language.
 - b. All meeting attendees introduced themselves.
 - c. David E. explained that his goal is to make every digital technology available to all people no matter their technical, perceptual, or physical ability. Since the Arboretum is governed by an interlocal agreement between WWU and City of Bellingham Parks and Recreation, University relations and marketing can provide website hosting and maintenance services at no charge to the City or the Board. The site will need to be moved from where it is currently hosted to somewhere new that will allow for more complete development of website features. The Board will need to consider a new domain name for the website unless the Board wants to keep the current domain. David has been working with GIS professionals, professors, and students at Western. They have run into issues with the data currently available for the Arboretum. David E. reported that safety is his priority and that maps can be developed to communicate safety concerns about the Arboretum.
 - d. David E. reported that WWU students Emilia Aboudara, Jack Sperling, and Emma Toscani worked to simplify the base code of the website to make it more easily understandable. They moved styling for the website onto its own CSS file. Navigating the pages on the site with the navigation and the footer is now easier and more consistent. The site's content has been improved as well. David E. asks that board members look over the site and provide any relevant feedback.
 - e. John T. reported that the Board will discuss formally approving the revamped Arboretum website and identify any additional questions to send to David E.
 - f. David E. reported that public website must be WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) compliant. The team changed the structure of the file system and website to be compliant. David E. displayed what the website looks like and how it is structured.

- g. Avinash R. suggested consulting Laural Ballew and the Native American Student Union on campus in creating content for the site that relates to Native American presence and historical management of the Arboretum.
- h. Emma T. stressed that the website revision is a work in progress. David E. brought up the Get Involved page. Emma T. went over the aspects of the site that need to be further built out. Many projects will take significant time and can be taken up by classes so that students can learn about the local environment while building their web design skills.
- i. John T. brought up that people can be involved on-the-ground by volunteering their time. Get Involved has multiple meetings, as this includes the website and on-the-ground trail work.
- j. Nicole Brown reported that including ways to get involved virtually as well as in person will expand the number of people able to participate. Nicole B. suggested that the space itself could be accessed virtually by creating virtual tours or use of other technology.
- k. Steve J. brought up that Bellingham TV worked on creating a virtual tour of the City's Woodstock Farm property, and that this same technology could be applied to the Arboretum.
- l. Nicole B. reported that she or the Board could pursue grants to continue working on multimodal work. Nicole B. would like guidance on what protocols could be elaborated in order to pursue such projects and grants.
- m. Laura P. shared the Geology page of the redesigned site, which relates a story about the geological history of the Arboretum. This is accessible to all types of people no matter their familiarity with the field of geology. Her goal was to encourage learning more about the history and geology of the Arboretum. It includes definitions of the terms used on the page.
- n. John T. asked if David E. knew who at WWU would be responsible for managing a newly revised Arboretum website. David E. reported that he would likely be the one responsible, and would include contact information for Web Tech overall, who would be the institutional entity at WWU responsible for actually making the changes.
- o. Avinash R. asked about how to get experts at Western involved in reviewing and developing the website. Each page, such as geology or botany, should be subject to specific review by locally-based experts.
- p. Nicole B. brought up that Zoe Harris, a potential intern, could work on the site 15 hours per week in Spring quarter to further collaboration and ensure that all aspects of the site are accessible to all types of people.
- q. David E. instructed board members to email him if we have any content change suggestions. David E. will make any changes directly or, if need be, dialogue with the others who are working on the website.
- r. John T. reported that between April and May, the Board will aim to provide feedback on the revised website.

- s. David E. asked the Board to let him know as soon as possible if the Board is interested in having WWU host the revised website.
- t. The Board decided they would like David E. to continue work on the website project and will keep this on the agenda for the next meeting, where they will consider a follow-up motion on moving forward with hosting. In the meantime, the team working on the website should continue to design the site in whatever manner makes sense for them.

5. Existing Business - Kiosks and Rules and Regulations Signage

- a. Steve J. displayed the proposed rules signage and reported that Parks added the "No bikes" indicator to the sign, and removed the yield symbol that includes bikes. These signs would go both on existing kiosks and the three new ones.
- b. Kendra B. brought up that there is a fourth turnstile.
- c. Steve J. would like to wait for the House of Healing to be more finalized before the map is printed and installed. New kiosks would be built during the summer.
- d. Steve J. reported that the northern trail on the House of Healing site would likely be rerouted. This is still under discussion.
- e. Janet O. reported that she has had negative experiences with dogs on the narrow trails and wanted to discuss if dogs could be allowed only on the wider trails. This could make sense to Steve J. Kendra B. reported that she liked the option of having her dog off-leash on the narrow trails. Parks does have a Dog Task Force that can discuss dogs at Sehome Arboretum when they next meet. This will continue to be an agenda item for the SHABOG.
- f. Steve J. relayed a report from Sehome Neighborhood Association president Robin Thomas that there was a work party of stewards at the Mason St. entrance. She requested that the new kiosks include a sign board as a place to post announcements and information. She would like the illegal mountain bike trail area to be replanted in the fall, and suggested adding split-rail fences to discourage access.
- g. Janet O. reported that there were large piles of ivy on the trails. Avinash R. will ask Wayne Galloway to remove the ivy or scatter it if it is dead.
- h. Kendra B. asked about the Arboretum's hours of access, which she believed was until dusk. Steve J. confirmed this and reported that Western police will lock the gate before 10:00. PM. Steve J. would like a security company to take over the gate locking/unlocking and open it at 6:00 AM and close it at 10:00 PM. These times are consistent with other parks facilities all across the city.

6. Existing Business - House of Healing Updates

- a. Kendra B. reported that the last House of Healing Steering Committee meeting was cancelled. There will be more information soon. Avinash R. reported that the City and WWU will need to negotiate directly an agreement for the House of Healing before the project can move forward. They are working on meeting

again to get the trail, siting, sidewalk improvements, and other details finalized. City Public Works and Western are negotiating how to move forward with right-of-way improvements.

- b. Kendra B. reported that groundbreaking is expected to take place in October 2023 with construction beginning in spring or summer 2024.
- c. Steve J. reported that the City and Western are working on a lease that will provide all arrangements without any changes to the Interlocal Agreement. John T. pointed out that the Interlocal Agreement does not mention allowing buildings, and that this might need to be factored into the process as a point of revision.

7. Existing Business - 2022 Annual Report

- a. Kendra B. suggested removing from the draft Annual Report the description of the House of Healing as L-shaped.
- b. John T. reported that he will give the Board two weeks to look over the draft Annual Report with Kendra and Steve's suggestions. The Board will consider the Report at the next meeting.

8. New Business - Sam Pearce Welcoming & Introduction

- a. John T. welcomed Sam Pearce, a Parks and Recreation intern. Sam P. shared that he is a public relations major and would like to focus his internship on communications and outreach surrounding the Arboretum. There are increased instances of damage to the Arboretum's environment and facilities, and he would like to do specific student outreach, especially because he is a Residential Advisor at WWU.
- b. John T. reported that he has been thinking about how to reach out to students living in the dorms and Birnham Woods apartments, and mentioned that there were sustainability reps in dorms in the past. Grace W. reported that this project is coming back in the Fall from the Sustainability Engagement Institute. John T. asked Sam P. to be involved in creating a communications outreach plan to connect with students living on campus. Sam P. confirmed that he is interested in taking on this responsibility and will bring an outline to the April meeting, and then provide a more finalized plan in May.
- c. Avinash R. related his interest in hearing information from students to guide the Board.

9. Existing Business - Meeting Locations

- a. Future Board meetings are planned to be held at the Pacific Street Public Works and Parks location. Steve J. will notify the board with further details and any changes.

10. Meeting adjourned at 5:46 PM with a motion from Avinash R. seconded by James D.