

## Sehome Hill Arboretum Meeting Minutes

June 15, 2023

1. **Meeting called to order at 4:01 p.m.** John Tuxill, Kendra Bradford, Grace Wang, Steve Hollenhorst and Steve Janiszewski present. Caryn Regimbal (City staff) attending for meeting tech support. Robin Thomas attending as a member of the public.
2. **Land Acknowledgment**
  - a. John T. read the Board's land acknowledgment.
3. **Agenda Updates**
  - a. No updates.
4. **Minutes from May Board meeting approved with a motion from Kendra B. seconded by Grace W. The motion passed unanimously.**

### Existing Business

- **a. Draft Poster.** The Board discussed the draft poster that student intern Sam Pearce prepared as a way to promote and inform the WWU campus community about the Arboretum. Steve J. and Kendra B. raised several specific edits for the poster, all of which met with approval by the Board. Steve J. made a motion, with Kendra B. seconding, to approve the poster as material that could be included in the information packets that WWU students receive at the start of the academic year. The motion passed unanimously. John T. indicated he would follow up.
- **b. Student Board Member Application.** John T. shared a cover letter and resume from WWU student Jenna Kelling, who submitted her materials to apply for the open student position. Grace W. indicated that with the historical challenges of filling the student position, she supported approving Jenna's application. Kendra B. indicated she supported Jenna's application as well. John T. added that most student board members have been Environmental Studies, Environmental Science, Recreation or similar majors that provide them background useful for service on SHABOG. Grace W. made a motion, with Steve H. seconding, to approve John T. forwarding Jenna's application to the WWU President's Office with the Board's recommendation for appointment. The motion passed unanimously.
- **Repaving Arboretum Drive.** Steve J. reported on the recently completed project to repave the upper part of Arboretum Drive. The total cost was \$75,858 and was carried out by WRS contractors as part of a larger Public Works Dept. project. Steve J. indicated the Drive was in rough shape with many potholes and deteriorating sections of asphalt. The work involved 11,860 sq. ft. of asphalt patching and 937 linear feet of saw cutting, and required 140 tons of gravel base plus 180 tons of asphalt. The work took 3 days to complete. In the future the City will consider chip sealing the Drive to make the new surface last longer, up to 10-15 years. Additional work will be required on the drainage ditch along the road to make sure the water runoff drains properly. There was also some removal of trees overhanging Arboretum Dr. (mostly alders). This work was accomplished by the WWU arborist crew. Steve J. emphasized, in response to a question from John T., that these repairs should be thought of as deferred roadway replacement, which is a much larger eventual project. In response to a question from Steve H., Steve J. further confirmed the repairs took place on the section of Arboretum Dr.

above the main entrance gate. The House of Healing Project is expected to involve repaving of the lower stretch of the Drive below the gate.

- **House of Healing Steering Committee.** Kendra B. reported that the Steering Committee did not meet since the previous SHABOG meeting. This made it three months since the last meeting of the Steering Committee. Steve J. reported that WWU staff flagged a proposed re-route for the trail that currently passes through the proposed Longhouse site, and he was planning to inspect the re-route soon.
- **WWU's Accessible Website for the Arboretum.** John T. initiated a discussion about review of the draft website materials that David Engebretsen jr. and a student team have been working on revising. John T. proposed that Board members share their feedback on webpages that they were able to review, and he would then collate and deliver that feedback to David. John T. added that most of the webpages that he had reviewed were in need of editing, and it might not be feasible to meet the original target the Board had previously discussed of having the website be made available to the public in early Fall.
- Steve J. started by pointing out that the map on the website was not the most up-to-date version, and recommended it be replaced by the newer version being used by the City. Similarly, the 'Rules' link on the site leads to a photo of an older rules & regulations sign, rather than the newer signs that are being implemented. Caryn R. indicated she would be able to locate the newer files to be able to swap them into the newer website. Steve H. pointed out that a geolocated map that was compatible with an app like Avenza would be helpful because it could show a user in the Arboretum where they were directly once they open the app. Steve J. said he could ask the City Parks IT staff if a map like that could work on the website.
- John T. presented his edits of the 'Human History of Sehome Hill' webpage. His suggested changes involve wording and grammatical consistency as well as sections where more information could be added for a more complete account. Kendra B. also reviewed this section and said she was uncomfortable with the primary focus being settler history and activities like mining, with only one sentence on Coast Salish history at Sehome Hill. Steve H. agreed an optimal approach would have more information about Coast Salish history and ownership of Sehome Hill. John T. suggested having this section fact-checked by a local historical expert if it hadn't been already. Steve J. and Robin T. pointed to additional historical references by authors Aaron Joy and Candace Wellman. Robin T. also shared she has been working on a history of the Sehome neighborhood, and there is a need to correct general misconceptions about the early history of Sehome Hill and Fairhaven/Bellingham. She reinforced the importance of getting this information correct and following the right process including, for instance, consulting with Lummi elders to incorporate oral history. Other Board members agreed. Steve H. related his interest in understanding the history of logging at Sehome Hill as an important factor shaping the ecology of the forest that has regrown there. John T. concurred and briefly shared his own insights into that history gained during his sabbatical work, which included examining historical photos of the Sehome Hill forest. Both agreed on adding forest history information in more detail to the redesigned website. Grace W. wondered whether the WWU Anthropology Dept. has done any documentation (Master's theses or otherwise) of the archeology or other Coast

Salish presence and history at Sehome Hill. John T. agreed that could be another useful potential focal point for information-gathering.

- John T. next presented the Geology section of the website where his main concern in editing was the clarity with which geological processes were being described and the overall style and phrasing of the writing. Kendra B. and Grace W. shared similar concerns, including the quality of images. John T. added that his understanding was WWU had permission to use the images, but that needed confirmation. While revisions and rewriting are necessary, John T. expressed his hope it will be possible to revise and publish this and other natural history-focused webpages on a more rapid timeline than the Human History page.
- The final webpage that John T. presented was the Botany section, for which he had both content and style-related suggested revisions. In particular, the botanical information mostly focuses on trees and shrubs, and it would be good to balance that out with more descriptions of the herb flora. John T. brought up an underlying question for the Board: proceed with going public with more limited or partial information on a faster timeline by the Fall, or wait until the content has been reviewed, revised and expanded more thoroughly? Kendra B. and Grace W. expressed a preference for more thorough review and content building to get the information right. Steve J. and Steve H. agreed. John T. confirmed he would share the Board's feedback with David E. and plan on additional discussions during Fall Board meetings as follow-up. John T. thanked all the Board members and Robin for their input into the process.
- Kendra B. had a final question about the overall design scheme for the revised website and if it would conform with WWU's overall current website design. John T. replied that would be a good question for David E. at our next opportunity to meet with him. John T. reminded the Board that any work on the website that we advanced on our own during the Summer we could then review at our next meeting in September, but that we would need to do that work individually to comply with open records requirements.
- **Logistics for upcoming meetings.** Steve J. requested identifying for Fall a meeting space that has improved technology for hosting the virtual meeting link. Steve H. agreed to work on securing a meeting space on campus that is fully technologically compatible for Fall, with campus being preferred as a centrally accessible location. Kendra B. expressed thanks to Caryn R. and the City staff who have provided tech support for the Board meetings over the past year, and that it would be important to have a similar level of support for future meetings on campus. Other Board members agreed.

Steve J. made a motion to adjourn with Kendra B. seconding. Meeting was adjourned at 5:39 p.m.