



SEHOME HILL ARBORETUM BOARD OF GOVERNORS

September 19, 2024 Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: John Tuxill, Kendra Bradford, Jenna Kelling, Nick Leader, Wayne Galloway III, Travis Tennessen, Steve Janiszewski, Kate Bemis

ABSENT: Joan Drinkwin

VISITORS: Freya Fradenburgh, Bellingham Parks Department

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by chair, John Tuxill.

I. **AGENDA REVIEW:** John T. presented the agenda. An item was added on priorities for trail improvement work in the Arboretum.

II. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** No announcements were made.

III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** No public comments were offered.

IV. **MEETING MINUTES:** John T. presented the minutes from the May 2024 Board meeting. Approved without objection on a motion by Steve J., seconded by Kendra B.

V. **OLD BUSINESS:**

1. **Kiosks:** Wayne G. shared information about the new kiosks that have now been installed at the Old Main/Edens Hall entrance, the 32nd St. entrance, and the Jersey St. entrance. Birnham Wood is the remaining location for kiosk installation. Wayne G. and Steve J. confirmed that existing kiosks at the South Ridge Trail main entrance and along the Huntoon Trail just needed minor restoration and will be maintained. Steve J. commented that all the kiosks still need clear, obvious "No Bikes" signage. John T. expressed the Board's appreciation for the work crews who have been installing the kiosks and upgrading entrance sites.
2. **House of Healing update:** Kendra B. confirmed that the building permit for the Campus Longhouse was approved in July and construction has commenced, primarily focused for now on the associated infrastructure improvements to utility lines and stormwater runoff infrastructure. The parking area is closed and fenced off, and there is a large hole in the ground next to the entrance. John T. confirmed the Garry oak saplings that had been planted nearby were moved prior to construction. The grassy clearing also is part of the active construction site. Kendra indicated the targeted completion date is July 27th, 2025 with the Longhouse opening for Fall quarter. Even with the construction, Kendra B. and Steve J. confirmed that Arboretum Drive is still open most of the time for access

to the summit. John T. said workers on site confirmed to him that there were no plans to remove trees as part of the ongoing construction.

3. **Land acknowledgement revision:** Travis T. opened discussion for the Board about revising the land acknowledgement by pointing out the importance of first framing and defining the purpose of the Arboretum. Wayne G. and Travis T. agreed to work on additional ideas related to a truly inclusive and collaborative land acknowledgement and bring them to the Board for discussion at October's meeting.
4. **Invasive plant management:** John T. provided a report on the invasive plant removal work party organized last May by WWU student McKenna Varela as part of her senior project. McKenna coordinated a small group of volunteers who worked on containing a patch of Yellow archangel along the main road just below the summit area. The work party pulled and removed as much Yellow archangel as possible, and then sheet mulched the site to prevent regrowth.
5. **WWU Arboretum website:** John T. updated the Board on his communications with David Engebretson, jr. at the end of Spring about the website status. Student writers worked with David on incremental changes during Spring, and David has requested additional feedback from the Board. John T. will continue to dialog with David on identifying a process for moving forward with website development (and ideally publication) given the Board's limited time available for website review and editing.
6. **Arboretum Policy document:** John T. led Board members in an initial review of the Arboretum Policy document to identify sections that may need review, including potential new policy areas to clarify. Nick L. identified the use of drones in the Arboretum as an area where policies are needed. Kendra B. pointed out the need to update policies related to standards for maps, signage, and trails accessibility. Steve J. confirmed that the Policy document's terminology around trails needs updating, and the trails priority list referred to is out of date. He also concurred about the need for trail accessibility improvements in the Arboretum, for instance the Huntoon Trail. Wayne G. commented that the large group events policies will need to be changed to accommodate the House of Healing. Other policy review areas identified by Board members were around memorial donations (benches and trees), maintenance of the viewshed from the Tower, fire risk reduction, and rock climbing. John T. agreed to keep Policy document review on the agenda for future discussion.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Parks Stewardship Program:** Freya Fradenburgh provided an update on the Bellingham Parks Stewardships Program, including current staffing levels, volunteer opportunities, the parks stewards program. Presently there are 17 volunteer park stewards working with Parks, and another 45+ in the approval process. Freya also confirmed there will be a Conservation Corps team in place for next year working to support a variety of Parks stewardship efforts. John T. commented it would be great to have the Conservation Corps team spend at least a few days in the Arboretum to focus on invasive plant control and/or trail maintenance. Freya and Steve J. agree to see what might be possible. Freya also confirmed that the Arboretum would be on the Parks work party schedule for either Winter or Spring. In the past the Arboretum has had volunteer park

stewards, but currently there is not anyone registered as a steward with the Arboretum as their primary assignment. Board members expressed interest in recruiting stewards for the Arboretum moving forward.

2. **Priorities for trail improvements:** John T. and Steve J. solicited Board members' suggestions for sections of trails or other sites that are in need of maintenance or upgrading. Steve J. identified the South Ridge Trail as needing continued work, and the Birnham Wood entrance to the Arboretum as a spot needing improved signage and work to define a clear access trail and decommission the network of social trails present. Wayne G. asked whether it was easier to decommission trails during the winter season, and Freya confirmed that is indeed the case when replanting can proceed immediately. John T. suggested it would also be good to have Arlen Bogaards (Washington Trails Association representative) examine the state of the Jersey St. connector trail to ensure it is good condition for the steep slope that it cuts across.

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

There was no executive session.

- VIII. ADJOURNMENT:** The September 19th, 2024, Sehome Hill Arboretum Board of Governors adjourned by consent at 5:26 p.m.