



# SEHOME HILL ARBORETUM BOARD OF GOVERNORS

## November 2024 Meeting Minutes

**PRESENT:** John Tuxill, Kendra Bradford, Nick Leader, Traci Brewer-Rogstad, Wayne Galloway III, Travis Tennesen, Nicole Oliver, Kate Bemis

**ABSENT:** Joan Drinkwin

**VISITORS:** Caleb Barville and Bruce Cudkowicz, WWU students with the Ecological Restoration Club; David Engebretson, jr. (WWU Digital Accessibility Coordinator)

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

I. **AGENDA REVIEW:** John T. presented the agenda. He also added two new agenda items: a student Ecological Restoration club recently started at WWU (members attending today's meeting); and discussion about an invasive population of Siberian elm at 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 October 2024 Board meeting. Approved without objection on a motion by Travis T., seconded by Steve J.

V. **OLD BUSINESS:**

1. **House of Healing update:** John T. mentioned he had heard from Chris Mead about the landscaping of the stormwater detention vault, and Chris confirmed it would have a mulch layer rather than hydroseeding. Kendra B. and Steve J. expressed concern about what plantings would follow, given the limited options that would be available for a stormwater facility and the likely lack of follow-up from the contractor.

Kendra B. reported that the upper parking lot at the entrance is now paved and finished but will be used in the short term as a construction staging area and probably won't be available to the public until spring. The parking area to the left of the entrance has been regraded but not paved, and will remain unmonitored. The longhouse construction is currently on track for an opening to the public next November.

2. **WWU Arboretum website update:** David Engebretson, jr. from WWU brought a formal request that the Board consider allowing him to publish the website in its

current form to make it available to the public and recognize the work that WWU students have put into developing website content. At the same time, David would continue to work on editing and revising the site based on ongoing feedback from the Board. John T. shared with the Board that he requested to David that the website prominently indicate the material is designed and written by students. The current website version shared by David has that change. Board members expressed concern that that website and URL as currently titled would be confusing for visitors, since the City Parks-maintained Arboretum website is the official one that is regularly updated. Board members also wanted to more fully review the website content before signing off on publication. After additional discussion, Board members adopted a motion to publish the website pending review of additional changes made by David and final e-mail vote of Board approval by December 6<sup>th</sup>.

3. Tabled items: revision of the SHABOG land acknowledgement, and review of the Arboretum's policy documents.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **WWU student Ecological Restoration Club.** Caleb Barville, executive director of the new WWU student Ecological Restoration Club, gave the Board a brief introduction the Club, which was started this Fall. The Club is interested in working in Sehome Arboretum on invasive species removal and replanting with native species, and will be applying for internal grant funding at WWU. Travis T. asked for confirmation about where the Club is planning to work. Caleb replied that current plans are for weekly work parties in the Arboretum focused on English ivy removal along trails. The initial focal point proposed by the Club for invasive removal is around the Jersey Street Trail entrance. Steve J. recommended that the Club contact Ryan Robie and Freyah Fradenburgh to collaborate on City Parks invasive removal work parties, and Caleb confirmed he has already made those contacts. Wayne G. confirmed that Facilities maintains an inventory of tools available to support restoration work parties that could be utilized by the Club.

Caleb also mentioned that the Jersey Street Trail is very muddy during winter and could use upgrading, including a section that appears to be slumping. Steve J. commented that upgrading the Trail by applying gravel is an option and might make sense, but stormwater permitting requirements make it a complicated process. Wayne G. concurred that the Board would need to think carefully about the long-term maintenance requirements and priorities of upgrading Arboretum trails. Travis T. confirmed that the Jersey Street Trail is a major route for commuters to the University and a gravel surface might contribute to trail stability along what is a steep slope. Steve J. offered to look into installing a trail counter there to get an estimate of the usage the Trail receives. Travis T. and Nick L. pointed out that recent trail access improvements (at the staircase behind Old Main) and planned housing projects in the Sehome neighborhood have the potential to increase usage of the Trail even further.

2. **New invasive species priority: Siberian elm.** John T. informed the Board there is a grove of Siberian elm trees that appears to be expanding in the forest adjacent to Arboretum Drive approximately 200 yards uphill from the Longhouse site. Discussion of management options for this grove will be planned for the next Board meeting in January.

**VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

There was no executive session.

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