

OLBRICH BOTANICAL SOCIETY
Board of Directors Virtual Meeting Minutes
June 16 2020

Members Present: Philip Bradbury, Renee Boyce, Bill White, Alnisa Allgood, Susan Goodwin, Kevin Hess, Laura Peterson, Tim Sherry, Brad Hinkfuss, Eric Knepp, Laurel Neverdahl, Nancy Ragland, Roberta Sladky

Members Absent: Julie Rupert, Mary Phillips, Erik Lincoln, Dick Wagner, Betty Chewning, Liz Dannenbaum

Advisors Present: Jack Bolz, Julie Herfel, Barb Tensfeldt

Staff Present: Jake Immel, Lisa Laschinger (Assistant Parks Superintendent), Katy Nodolf, Marty Petillo, Kai Skadah, Elizabeth Spry, Joe Vande Slunt

I. **The meeting called to order at 4:02 pm.**

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Ms. Goodwin and seconded by Mr. Hess to approve the meeting minutes of May 19, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no members of the public who wished to comment on items not on the agenda.

IV. **OLBRICH STAFF PRESENTATION**

- a. **Re-Opening Plan** – Marty Petillo reviewed the *Re-Opening Task Force for the Outdoor Gardens Report* that was included in the Board packet. Ms. Petillo explained that this report was created by the Re-Opening Task Force, with Task Force Chair Alnisa Allgood, using public health templates, input from staff, and help and guidance from Lisa Laschinger, who brought this through the public health process very quickly. She noted that Dane County Public Health approved the reopening plan and the outdoor gardens would be opening to the public again on June 17. The opening plan is posted on the Olbrich website; an email went out to our email list; and phone recordings have been changed. Recognizing how important our members have been, Joe Vande Slunt explained Member Monday, which is similar to other relationship building member events offered. Ms. Petillo emphasized that the big unknown is how visitors will behave when they enter. She noted that Olbrich will work with Parks on a second gradual re-opening of revenue generating operations, such as programs, room rentals, and the gift shop.
- b. **Racial Justice Statement** – Katy Nodolf walked through the process of writing Olbrich's Racial Justice Statement. After reviewing what other organizations were posting, Ms. Nodolf and Mr. Vande Slunt wrote the statement, sent it through Olbrich's Community Engagement and Inclusion Working Group, then on to the OBS Board Executive Committee. Ms. Nodolf described that after some revisions and compromise, it was posted and we have been receiving positive feedback. She thanked Vice President Bradbury for his input on the statement.

V. **REPORTS**

A. President's Report

- a. **OBS's Response to COVID-19** – Roberta Sladky shared a photo that she took of Olbrich's Lobby and explained the safety measures that have been put in place and the visitor traffic flow. She talked about how staff in shared office spaces are staying safe by figuring out alternate work locations on-site, working from home, or staggering schedules. She noted that staff will get through this safely by getting creative and working together.
- b. **Resolution honoring OBS Board Advisor Jerry Minnich**

WHEREAS, Jerry Minnich served on the Olbrich Botanical Society Board and Advisory Board for eighteen years, and,

WHEREAS, Jerry Minnich was a writer and publisher of garden books and restaurant reviews, amongst many, and,

WHEREAS, Jerry Minnich co-authored the Olbrich Botanical Gardens book Olbrich Botanical Gardens: Growing More Beautiful, with Sharon Cybart,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors of Olbrich Botanical Society wishes to honor Jerry Minnich's memory for his dedication and effectiveness to support the work of Olbrich Botanical Gardens and this Board of Directors.

A motion was made by Ms. Allgood and seconded Ms. Neverdahl to approve the resolution. The Motion carried unanimously.

B. Financial Report

- a. **April 2020 Financials** – Ms. Sladky referred to the April Financial Summary Report in the packet and offered to take questions. A question was asked what OBS's net revenue loss was so far this year. Ms. Sladky answered that the loss was \$300K, so far. She described how, with staff input, she's putting together a new COVID budget that will show what our losses are. Staff are seeking to cut expenses as well as estimate revenue. She noted that the budget does not look bad YTD since the PPP loan is in as a revenue line. Ms. Sladky described how the gift shop just completed an inventory that was in line with what it should be based on the financials. A question was asked if there was still flexibility in the money that OBS receives from OBSF. Ms. Sladky explained how she is working with Ms. Schuchardt and Mr. Vande Slunt on a couple of plans, to figure out what OBS's shortfall may be, where could that come from, and what OBS's obligation is to the City for the project. She confirmed that the plan will include a reconciliation of the fundraising program and how much will come from OBSF and how much will come from OBS.

C. Director's Report

Staff Written Reports – Ms. Sladky reviewed the staff reports. She shared that Olbrich staff had their first All Staff Meeting since March, physically distanced on the Great Lawn. The focus of that meeting was on re-opening to the public, safe hygiene practices, and an introduction to interns and to staff relocated from other City facilities. She noted that staff are required to wear masks when in public areas, but not in their offices, and not outdoors if they can maintain at least 6 feet of distance from other staff.

Ms. Sladky shared a photo of the planting by the new tram waiting area and talked about the plantings around the Frautschi Family Learning Center. She mentioned the online bouquet sales that Olbrich staff have been putting together, to raise revenue and to share flowers from the garden with the public. She gave kudos to Marty Petillo for scheduling Olbrich staff to help in the outdoor gardens and greenhouses while volunteers could not, and to Olbrich staff for signing up and helping.

- D. Development Report** – Mr. Vande Slunt reviewed the Development report. He shared that the Campaign Task Force, with Task Force Chair Susan Goodwin, held its first meeting on Friday, June 5, where they continued the work and discussion on how staff are collaborating to raise revenue, adapt programs, and get Olbrich's message out to supporters, while preparing to re-open. Task Force Chair Susan Goodwin noted that this talented group is tackling a wide array of issues that will take time to develop and plans are underway. Mr. Vande Slunt highlighted a meeting he had with OBS President Julie Rupert where they discussed the next steps on Board Engagement, which include: Creating a Board Directory to get to

know each other better (find your best headshot!); individual meetings between Mr. Vande Slunt and OBS and OBSF Board members; and identifying Board members who would like to serve on a variety of Committees. He talked about the strong response to the Spring Appeal and that the current amount raised is even with where it was in 2019. He feels like we may see a dip in membership revenue without Blooming Butterflies.

E. Marketing & Public Relations Report – Ms. Nodolf reviewed the Marketing and PR Report. She highlighted the work that is being done on the re-opening communication plan. She noted that even though a press release hadn’t been sent out yet, Channel 15 picked up on the re-opening from social media feeds. She concluded that Olbrich’s social media followers continues to grow.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Parks Superintendent Eric Knepp restated that Parks continues to collaborate with Olbrich on the re-opening plan and staying consistent with Dane County Public Health’s recommendations on moving forward. He noted that Parks is working on getting plans in place for re-introducing events in phases 3 and 4, and acknowledged that things can change with the unpredictability of the pandemic. A question was asked about the City Room Tax and if there was any updated City action on how that was getting divided or cut. Mr. Knepp said that for 2020, they don’t anticipate that OBS’s operational budget would be impacted or cut, besides the hiring freeze that is currently in place (no layoffs or furloughs, at this point.) Vice President Bradbury noted that, with everything that is going on, it is important to continue paying attention to news coming out of the City.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There are no announcements.

VII. ADJOURNED

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 pm.

