

OLBRICH BOTANICAL SOCIETY
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
March 15, 2016

Members Present: Kevin Hess, Dick Wagner, Mary Phillips, Tim Sherry, Dan Lauffer, Erin Ogden, Julie Rupert, Eric Knepp, Jeffrey Lewis, Laurel Neverdahl, Roberta Sladky, Betty Chewning

Members Absent: Bill White, Renee Boyce, Julie Herfel, Susan Derse Phillips, Michelle Taschek, David Ahrens, Marsha Rummel

Advisors Present: Fred Anderson, Jt Covelli, Janet Loewi, Emanuel Scarbrough, Paul Williams

Staff Present: Christian Harper, Jake Immel, Patti Jorenby, Ashlyn Mehlhaff, Joe Vande Slunt

I. FACILITY TOUR

A facility tour was available prior to the meeting for Directors and Advisors that wished to attend.

II. President Hess called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Ms. Ogden and seconded by Ms. Neverdahl to approve the meeting minutes of December 15, 2015. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

V. OLBRICH STAFF PRESENTATION

a. Spring Preview & Jumping Worms Update – Christian Harper, Horticulturist
 Christian Harper reported that Spring Flower Show attendance has picked up in the past week, likely due to Jeff Epping talking about it on the Larry Meillor show and it was featured in the State Journal. The show features artisan furniture and a lot of spring containers.

Bernie Williams of the Wisconsin DNR gave a presentation to Olbrich staff about the invasive Jumping Worm (*Amyntas sp*) at the February staff meeting. Jumping worms eat everything and they leave soil very sterile. They have been found throughout Dane County. As a result, the DNR has requested that Olbrich Gardens not sell leaf mulch as the jumping worm is transported via leaf mulch, leaves, garden soil and other forms of mulch. Ms. Williams will visit when the weather is better to determine if Jumping Worms are actually in the Gardens.

New Projects – there is an open space behind the rain garden path – near the Rose Garden – that is being designed as the “Autumn Meadow” as it already has many plants in the area that peak in the autumn.

VI. REPORTS

A. President’s Report

b. Mr. Wagner outlined the outcome of the meeting that Board leadership had with Mayor Soglin. The Capital Campaign is doing well and the City of Madison has funding in CIP budget for 2017 and 2018. Olbrich Botanical Society leadership told the mayor that OBS would like to begin the “design development” phase in 2016 - so that when the funding becomes available in 2017, construction will be able to begin. Mr. Wagner proposed the following resolution:

On March 18, 2014, the Olbrich Botanical Society Board committed up to \$1,000,000 from Society reserves, as part of a \$5 million financing plan for the Phase 1 Project, a \$10 million botanical garden facilities expansion. The 50% (\$5 million) share matches a like amount in the City Capital Improvement Budget for 2017 and 2018. Due to timing concerns, it would be advantageous to begin design work in 2016. Therefore I move that the OBS Board authorizes \$500,000 in 2016 from the Society reserves for design development to enable the project to advance.

A motion was made by Mr. Wagner and seconded by Ms. Ogden to approve this resolution. Motion carried unanimously.

a. Capital Campaign Update

Ashlyn Mehlhaff reported that \$1,531,790 had been raised to date. There are multiple requests still on the table, especially as “snow birds” start returning to Madison. She notes that there is 100% participation by elected Board members.

B. Financial Report

b. Audit Update – Ms. Phillips reports that the 2015 audit took place a few weeks ago. There were a few changes to the process due to audit requirements for the Capital Campaign. The auditors will report at the April Board of Directors meeting.

a. February 2016 Financials – OBS is \$40,000 over projected income YTD.

C. Director’s Report

Ms. Sladky reviewed staff reports. Attendance is ahead of last year and if that continues, totals will again approach 300,000 for the year. Summer interns for Horticulture and Conservatory have been hired and will start end of May.

D. Development and Marketing Staff Update

Ashlyn Mehlhaff reviewed staff reports. The new database that was purchased in 2015, ALTRU, is being implemented. Training is extensive for staff who will use the program. One big change is that the program is “cloud” based, so all staff will have access to it, rather than a limited number as determined by licenses. Rhapsody is nearly at goal for

sponsor tables. Joe Vande Slunt reported 169 new memberships gained at Garden Expo and there will be a large prospect mailing coming up – approximately 1,000 pieces.

E. Development Committee Report

Ms. Covelli noted that the committee continues to work on all upcoming events. Home Garden Tour has exceeded sponsorship goal. Blooming Butterflies is reaching out to some potential new sponsors. CRACKLE continues as usual. GLEAM sponsors from last year wanted to stay involved and there is interest from potential new sponsors as well. The loss of the Leaf Mulch sale is a bit scary (\$30,000 net revenue) and staff and committee are working on ways to improve revenue in other events to make it up.

F. Marketing & Public Relations Report

Ms. Covelli directed the Board to the staff reports.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

There is no new business.

VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There are no announcements.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15pm.