

OLBRICH BOTANICAL SOCIETY
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2019
Draft 2

Members Present: Julie Rupert, Philip Bradbury, Renee Boyce, Bill White, Alnisa Allgood, Susan Goodwin, Erik Lincoln, Laura Peterson, Tim Sherry, Dick Wagner, Betty Chewing, Eric Knepp, Laurel Neverdahl, Nancy Ragland, Roberta Sladky

Members Absent: Mary Phillips, Kevin Hess, Susan Derse Phillips, Brad Hinkfuss, Angela Jenkins

Advisors Present: Jack Bolz, Jt Covelli, Dale Mathwich, Michelle Taschek, Paul Williams

Staff Present: Tom Fullmer, Mike Gibson, Jake Immel, Lisa Laschinger (City Parks), Katy Plantenberg, Rylee Schuchardt, Kai Skadah, Elizabeth Spry, Hannah Tubbs, Joe Vande Slunt

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

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Wagner to approve the meeting minutes of February 19, 2019. 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**

PR & Marketing Update – Katy Plantenberg, Tom Fullmer and Mike Gibson

a. Garden to Glass Experience Update

Katy recapped that in January 2018, Olbrich was selected to participate in Madison’s first “Experience Project” with the GMCVB (Destination Madison) and a consultant. Creation of the Garden to Glass (G2G) experience was a seven-month process, from February-September. G2G: Totally Tropical was launched in October 2018. As of now, there have been 11 tours, 13 guests per tour (average), and \$3,175 in revenue. Two of the tours were complimentary (for the OBS Board of Directors and the East Madison Kiwanis Club) and several tours have completely sold out! The Totally Tropical tours will run through May 2019.

A lot of great feedback has been received from the survey that is emailed to all of the participants after each tour. The surveys have shown us that the participants are connecting with the environmental messages in the tour. We also received some great suggestions that we immediately implemented such as switching to biodegradable glasses for water and improving the landscape lighting at night.

Staff is currently developing an “open house” format of the G2G: Totally Tropical experience for large groups. This could accommodate up to 100-150 guests. There would be five sensory stations throughout the Conservatory (see, touch, taste, smell, hear) which would allow guests to engage with the experience at their own leisure and comfort level. This could provide a unique networking event, company party, family reunion, etc.

b. Iconic Olbrich Experience

Katy described the new G2G: Iconic Olbrich experience that will run from June – September 2019. This will be a 90 minute guided sensory tour through the outdoor gardens highlighting history, garden design features, sustainability, Thai Pavilion, and of course, plants! The tour will end in the Rose Garden Courtyard for a tasty signature drink.

So far, \$100 has been spent to advertise G2G. We have been relying on Facebook, emails, word of mouth, etc., but will soon be purchasing ads. Staff have been reaching out to hotels, bus tour companies, wedding planners, senior living communities, large companies' HR departments, and more to pitch a private G2G experience.

c. Olbrich's Programming Committee

Katy explained the purpose of the new programming committee, which first met in January 2018 and meets monthly. The purpose of this committee is to foster cross-departmental collaboration, cooperation, and communication to develop programming based on the vision and mission of OBG. The committee consists of staff responsible for implementing and promoting programming, as well as staff who supervise garden areas where programming takes place. They discuss upcoming programming that needs cross-departmental discussion, long range programming ideas and goals, construction impacts on programming, employee appreciation, and future programmatic themes.

In February of this year, all OBG staff brainstormed ideas for our 2020 theme, which is Elements (Earth, Wind, Water, Fire).

V. REPORTS

A. President's Report

a. Capital Campaign Update – Joe Vande Slunt reported that there hasn't been a lot of activity since the last Board meeting, but Jake Immel has been busy submitting grant applications. Planning to schedule hard hat tours of the construction progress this summer and starting to plan for the Grand Opening Celebration (date TBD).

b. Project Update Written Report – The written report is in the packet, but Ms. Sladky noted that they are getting ready to pour the "link" between the learning center and the lobby. After that, they will be coming through the walls in the lobby. Although they are a couple of weeks behind (due to weather), a lot of progress has been made in the existing building -- adding the fire protection and utilities connections for the new building from the boiler room.

B. Financial Report

a. January 2019 Financials – Ms. Sladky reported that the lower expense in most departments compared to budget has to do with the January 4 payroll. Unlike prior years, the portion of that payroll that is 2018 was accrued to 2018 immediately instead of at year end (of 2019). This will even out at year end. Future budgeting will account for this change.

C. Director's Report

Ms. Sladky reviewed staff reports. She passed round a sign-up sheet for the first ever Vol-A-Pa-Loo-Za. This is a free, volunteer-only educational opportunity with our outdoor gardens horticulturists where each will present on their plans for their gardens this coming season: what's new, what's different, and what to look for. Ms. Sladky also noted that Olbrich's storage facility at the Garver Feed Mill is finished, but it hasn't been outfitted yet. We will have

occupancy in the fall. The question was asked about construction impacting attendance – Ms. Sladky responded that we aren't able to evaluate yet.

D. Development Report

Joe Vande Slunt reported that the spring membership appeal will drop at the end of March. Jake Immel has been working with departments and identifying funding needs and opportunities. Jake just secured a grant from the Dane County Environmental Council for \$1,000 in support of Olbrich's Pollinator Residency Program, a program that Horticulturist Katey Pratt has been working on.

E. Marketing & Public Relations Report

Katy Plantenberg reported that we are applying for a JEM grant through the Wisconsin Department of Tourism that would provide advertising dollars to promote GLEAM in a new geographic area, using a new medium, or to a new target demographic. We are asking for the full \$39,950 allowed and have created a marketing plan that will spend every penny! The grant is due April 1, and notification will be in May/June if we received it.

Ms. Plantenberg also noted that Tom Fullmer, PR & Marketing Coordinator, sent out some very targeted emails including one to Olbrich volunteers announcing "Vol-a-pa-loo-za," and a series of emails have been sent to past class participants. These all had very high open and click through rates.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

There is no new business.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Knepp brought up the partnership between Dane County and the Henry Vilas Zoological Society that has been in the recent news. He wanted to reassure newer OBS Board members that the City of Madison and the Olbrich Botanical Society's relationship is very different than that between the County and the Zoo. Ms. Sladky offered to re-send the Cooperation and Coordination Agreement between OBS and the City of Madison (which was signed in November 2016.) if Board members let her know they would like another copy.

VIII. ADJOURNED

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.