

OLBRICH BOTANICAL SOCIETY
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
August 19, 2014

Members Present: Tim Sherry, Kevin Hess, Dick Wagner, Jenifer Curliss, Janet Loewi, Erin Ogden, William White, David Ahrens, Roberta Sladky, Sue Thering

Members Absent: Fred Anderson, Carolyn Gilb, Julie Herfel, Dan Lauffer, Susan Derse Philips, Michelle Taschek, Laurel Neverdahl, Marsha Rummel

Advisors Present: Dennis Birke, Jt Covelli, Sandy Dolister, Elizabeth Ogren Erickson, Dale Mathwich, Barb Tensfeldt

Staff Present: Christine Blau, Patti Jorenby, Nancy Vidlak

Guests Present: Jason Edwards (Erin Ogdens co-worker)

I. **President Sherry called the meeting to order at 4:15pm.**

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Ms. Curliss and seconded by Mr. Hess to approve the meeting minutes of July 15, 2014. 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. Presentation given to Garver Feed Mill Committee on July 21, 2014 – Roberta Sladky
 Ms Sladky's presentation (which was originally prepared for the Garver Feed Mill Committee on July 21) highlighted Olbrich's commitment to sustainability in all areas from management of the landscape to the volunteer corps and the many partnerships that have sustained Olbrich Gardens over time.

Olbrich Gardens has grown considerably since 1952, when the Olin Trust Fund gave the Parks Commission funds to begin garden development. The first building for public use came in 1977. Olbrich Botanical Society was formed in 1979 and focused on the Garden Center addition and Bolz Conservatory. In 1990 the Gardens had 60,000 visitors and in 2013, 245,183 people visited – an increase of 308%. Membership has increased by 255% in the same period. Education had 13 classes in 1992 and 185 in 2013 – an increase of 1284%.

Ms Sladky reviewed the history of the acquisition of the Garver Feed Mill. In 1997, OBS conducted a capital campaign to acquire the Garver Feed Mill property as a landbank for the future of Olbrich Gardens. There was an agreement with the city that the 22 acres behind the feedmill would be dedicated to parkland, primarily public gardens along with the 5 acre Garver parcel. 412 individual, corporate and foundation gifts raised \$916,992 for the purchase. After going through the surplus property process, the City selected Commonwealth Development's proposal to re use the building for an arts incubator. In March 2009, Madison Parks

Commission developed a new Land Use Plan which substituted property adjacent to the Thai Garden for the Gardens future, and reserving both garden and park storage facilities and materials processing/plant nursery across the tracks. In good faith the OBS Board removed the deed restriction placed on the Garver parcel, noting that the 2009 Olbrich Park Land Use Plan substantially satisfied donor intent, despite the smaller acreage. January 2010, the Common Council approved a 9.5 acre land bank by the Thai Pavilion. June 2011, Commonwealth Development backed out of the Garver project. In 2012 Olbrich Gardens and the City of Madison hired HGA to conduct a 'facilities masterplan' so that Olbrich Gardens could begin to address visitor and staff needs. A systematic evaluation of the Garver Feed Mill was also conducted by Facility Engineering 2012 & 2013 in advance of the surplus property process which is now underway. Ms Sladky explained that, in fundraising, the recipient of donations for specific purposes must be used for that specific purpose, unless the donor specifies otherwise. If the 2 parcels set aside for the future of Olbrich Gardens – adjacent to the Thai Garden for public gardens and across the tracks for back-of-the-gardens needs, the question of satisfying the intent of the donors to the Garver Landbank Campaign must be discussed.

V. **REPORTS**

A. President's Report

- a. Nominations: Mr. Sherry indicated that it is time to prepare to fill vacant board positions for 2015. Please send suggestions to Ms Loewi, Ms Sladky or Mr Sherry.
- b. Social Media Policy: Katy Morgan-Davies prepared a social media think piece in the board packet. Please review and get any comments back to Ms Morgan-Davies.
- c. Common Council Resolution Supporting Phase 1 – adopted July 15, 2014

B. Financial Report

- a. July 2014 Financials – Ms. Curliss reports that Revenue was \$17,000 over budget and Expenses were lower than budget, so a good month.
- b. Approval to file tax return, Form 990

A motion was made by Ms. Ogden and seconded by Mr. White to approve filing the Form 990. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Director's Report

Ms. Sladky reviewed staff reports. Attendance continues to be ahead of last year. The Gift Shop revenue is also ahead of budget. The Greater Madison Writing Project youth camps took place for the 2nd year at Olbrich Gardens and the final evening with the family event held on the Great Lawn.

D. Development Report

Ms. Covelli noted that there was a smaller Spring Appeal mailing due to the change of leadership. Summer events have gone very well. The POS system was used for admissions and instant reports are available to staff. The City IT Dept has supported this use of technology by providing 'lines' anywhere needed – in the parking lot, out the front doors, etc...

- a. Rhapsody in Bloom: should be ahead of budget
- b. Blooming Butterflies: went well

E. Marketing & Public Relations Report

Ms. Covelli reported they are working on improving the use of social media contacts.

VI. **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

VII. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

VIII. **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned at 5:10pm.