

OLBRICH BOTANICAL SOCIETY
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes DRAFT
May 21, 2019

Members Present: Julie Rupert, Renee Boyce, William White, Alnisa Allgood, Susan Goodwin, Kevin Hess, Erik Lincoln, Laura Peterson, Dick Wagner, Betty Chewning, Brad Hinkfuss, Eric Knepp, Nancy Ragland, Roberta Sladky

Members Absent: Philip Bradbury, Mary Phillips, Susan Derse Phillips, Tim Sherry, Angela Jenkins, Laurel Neverdahl

Advisors Present: Jack Bolz, Jt Covelli, Dale Mathwich, Barb Tensfeldt

Staff Present: Mike Gibson, Patti Jorenby, Marty Petillo, Katy Plantenberg, Kai Skadahl, Elizabeth Spry, Hannah Tubbs, Joe Vande Slunt

I. **The meeting was called to order at 4:00pm.**

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Ms. Ragland and seconded by Mr. Hess to approve the meeting minutes of April 16, 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**

a. Introduction to Olbrich's Community Engagement & Inclusion Working Group – Mike Gibson, Marty Petillo and Elizabeth Spry

Mike described that OBG was invited by American Printing to attend the YWCA's Racial Justice Summit last fall. While Olbrich already is committed to be inclusive (outdoor gardens are free, free scooters and wheelchairs, dementia training for staff and volunteers, working with other organizations, Explorer scholarships for qualified schools, etc...), Mike described that the program opened his eyes to inequities in our community. He and Kim were also motivated to doing more here at Olbrich Gardens. The Olbrich Gardens Leadership Team developed this as a 2019 Goal.

The OBS May Board Packet included the Purpose and belief statements.

Purpose of the Community Engagement and Inclusion Working Group

Make Olbrich Botanical Gardens a destination where all visitors, volunteers, and staff are valued and feel they belong. With conscious intent and continuous learning, OBG staff, volunteers, and board will address barriers to inclusion through education, operational changes, and partnerships with the community.

We Believe...

- Olbrich visitors should reflect the diversity found in the greater Madison area.

- Just as a diverse plant community makes a sustainable garden, an inclusive, diverse Olbrich workplace results in a sustainable public garden.
- It is a priority to identify and remove barriers that inhibit visitors, volunteers, and staff from feeling that they belong at Olbrich.
- Progress requires personal growth by internal stakeholders (staff, volunteers, and board); meaningful changes will not be successful without their commitment.
- The outcomes of the Community Engagement and Inclusion Working Group will exemplify Olbrich's mission.

Marty described the progress of the group which has a goal of continuous learning that will extend far beyond 2019. Research has shown that progress is made by each individual learning, growing and passing that on to each other. The Working Group will identify areas Olbrich as a whole are doing well and where we need to improve. A secondary goal is to creating – by words and deeds - a ‘safe’ space for staff to discuss inclusion and equity issues. Examples of some activities already underway:

Bolz Conservatory: Staff have begun to change the labeling to discount political boundaries and to enhance regional geographic origins. They have also begun to eliminate English common names – some of which are made-up- and will utilize the actual common names from the individual plants native region. Roberta show-cased Ululu, or *Brighamia insignis* from Hawaii that is often ‘named’ cabbage on a stick. Hawaiians call the plant Ululu, which is how it’s labeled in the Bolz Conservatory.

MSCR Summer School: Discounted Blooming Butterflies tickets will be made available to summer school students. Mike noted that he used to run a summer school program and kids spoke over 10 native languages, so that is an effort to increase access to a diverse audience.

Ms. Chewing suggested that staff put themselves in other’s situations – such as pushing someone in a wheelchair, to learn about the difficulties faced, barriers, etc within the Gardens.

V. **REPORTS**

A. **President’s Report**

a. Capital Campaign Update – Joe Vande Slunt reviewed the Development report on pg 15, which included a Capital Campaign update. He pointed out that there is a list of job tasks for the next six months to complete fundraising and close the campaign at year end.

Mr. Vande Slunt also reviewed page 18 in the Board Packet – Campaign Funding to Date. He requested that the Board authorize a ‘matching gift opportunity’ to generate momentum for the final push out of the \$500,000 identified as an ‘option’ in the right-hand column.

A motion was made by Mr. Wagner and seconded by Mr. Hess to authorize \$250,000 to use as matching funds. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Project Update – Mr. Wiesner provide a written report in the Board Packet. The Greenhouse floor is complete and the kneewalls are completed. The Learning Center elevator shaft and stairwell is also complete. Mr. Knepp noted that the Garver storage facility should be released to the City on May 31st. It will need pallet racking and interior finishing completed.

The garage, which replaces the garage that burned up in the Christmas 2016 fire, should be completed by August 9th.

B. Financial Report

a. March 2019 Financials will be available when our Financial Coordinator returns from leave in June.

C. Director's Report

Ms. Sladky reviewed reports and noted that attendance is up for the month, but still down for the year-to-date. A JEM (Joint Effort Marketing) grant for \$39,000 was awarded by the Wisconsin Department of Tourism to be used to market GLEAM in the Milwaukee area. We have three Horticulture interns starting this week and a few more in the upcoming weeks. Garden to Glass 'Iconic Olbrich' (outdoor version of Garden to Glass) will be launched in June and will have testing and tours that Board members can attend – stay tuned. On June 13th from 5 – 7pm, staff will experiment to serve 100+ visitors for the Garden to Glass 'Totally Tropical' that could then be marketed to conventions, corporate groups, and rental clients. Staff hosted 40 Michael B. Olbrich Legacy Society members for brunch last Friday.

D. Development Report

Mr. Vande Slunt reported the Spring Appeal is out and that a membership piece is included with all appeals. The first Planned Giving seminar in several years is scheduled for Friday, June 7. Maureen Lokrantz, Vice President and Private Wealth Advisor at US Bank is the presenter. Staff hope to schedule two Planned Giving seminars per year.

E. Marketing & Public Relations Report

Katy Plantenberg reminded the Board that Summer Breeze is coming up on June 22 & 28 from 4 – 10pm. Marketing is trying out using Instagram 'influencers' to help promote the event. The JEM Grant (\$39,000 from the WI Department of Tourism) will require that we track the economic impact. As part of GLEAM, the votes for the people's favorite will include questions about zip code and whether attendees are spending the night at a hotel. Staff are working with the City's IT Webteam to update the Olbrich website. This will also address accessibility, mobile friendly, and other issues that make our existing website feel a little clunky.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

There is no new business.

VII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There are no announcements.

VIII. ADJOURNED

The meeting was adjourned at 5:09pm.