

Minutes of Saint John's Arboretum Advisory Council Meeting
February 10, 2003

Council Members

Present: Al Barth, Christian Breczinski, OSB, John Geissler, David Hartwell, Tom Kroll, Fr. John Kulas, OSB, Scott May, Linda Mock, Janette Monear, Steve Saupe, Elizabeth Sim, Larry Schwietz

Absent: Bob Ellenbecker, Bob Thomsen, and Ron Wienhold

Scott May called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

Fr. John Kulas, OSB, opened with a prayer.

Scott reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting. Larry Schwietz made a motion to accept the minutes, Steve Saupe seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted.

Committee Reports

K-12 Education

Al Barth reported that there is great enthusiasm for the Arboretum's program. The tours given through the fall were well-received although poor weather shortened the season a bit and some tours had to be cancelled. A survey about the current program was distributed to the District 742 teachers who have used the program. The feedback from the survey was generally positive with a few suggestions for areas that could be improved: the teachers felt more advanced preparation would be beneficial; they would also like more guides. This was the first teacher's survey distributed. The feedback has been helpful. There was discussion about developing a survey for the students who participate in the program. One goal of the student survey would be measuring what the students learn during their Arboretum experience.

David suggested that as the demand for student use increases, perhaps the Arboretum should consider expanding into a winter program also.

Janette expressed some concern that we keep track of the numbers of students served in relation to the resources we expend.

A committee, which includes teachers from District 742, has been formed to work on the 2nd and 3rd grade teaching trunks. They will begin work as soon as school is out. There was discussion about funding for the teaching trunks and busing. The staff will start working on grant applications for funding. There is still federal work-study money available for guides/tour leaders because the work is classified as community service.

Mary Kroll is helping develop a master plan format for the K-12 education program. They plan to pilot it in fall of 2003.

The Minnesota Science Teacher's Association Conference will be held in St. Cloud on April 11th and 12th. John and Al will be giving a presentation about the Arboretum and offer tours to the teachers.

CSB/SJU Education

Christian has been working with the Outdoor Leadership Center (OLC) on various activities for students, such as a winter tree identification walk and the Winter Eco Challenge, scheduled for February 22, 2003. It will include a range of events – eco-questions, skiing, snow sculpting, orienteering, etc. The idea is to get students interested in outdoor, environmentally-related activities. They hope to have about 30 people participate and Christian would like to see this become an annual event.

He is also working with Barry Korn on a slide presentation about trees and various plants. The presentation will be available to show students.

On March 28th the Environmental Studies Program is having a Service Learning conference and they have asked that an Arboretum staff person sit on a panel for this event.

Matt Johnson, a St. John's student, will be working with Tom for the spring semester as the Laird-Norton forest stewardship intern.

Christian is working with the Student Activities office to integrate the Arboretum into fall orientation activities.

Community Education

Due to lack of snow, the Moonlight Snowshoe Trek was a walk. Ron Wienhold led the walk and Christian built a bonfire in the Oak Savanna for the end of the walk. Tom led a Winter Tree Walk at noon on January 27th for staff and students. Kim Chapman gave a presentation about birds that evening. The Owl Hoot is February 18, 2003. It has been advertised in the St. Cloud Times newspaper.

There was discussion about advertising Arboretum events in local newspapers and possibly offering events through the St. Cloud Community Education Bulletin. Fee based activities would generate income.

The Arboretum has contacted the Abbey Oblate Program Director and the Spiritual Life Office to offer tours, programs, or services.

There was discussion about placing benches or places to sit along the walking trails and putting up signage with scripture. No decisions were made.

Volunteer Management/ Administration

There was discussion about what level of volunteerism the Arboretum wants. Volunteers could do many things - make presentations, help with fundraising, and make connections outside the St. John's community. It was suggested that volunteers would need some more extensive training about the Arboretum. Janette does volunteer training. It was noted that some grants offer matching funds for volunteers.

PR/Membership

The Saint John's Alumni Magazine has been sent out. The Arboretum did a follow up mailing on January 21st and 22nd. To date, we have received twenty-six responses, which generated about \$2,000. It will be monitored to see if the income will cover the expenses. The Institutional Advancement staff suggested waiting five weeks and doing a follow-up to the responses. Janette noted that giving is down all over and David pointed out that exposure is important as well. He also said that it often takes multiple contacts to get people hooked.

The Arboretum website is up and running. It has a form for people to complete to become members. It was suggested that we find out how to add credit card payment capability to the website.

Fundraising

John reported that the staff is working on a DNR Grant and will apply to the Gannett Foundation. Xcel Energy asked that the Arboretum reapply for bus funding this year. A Relief Grant might be available through the DNR and Tree Trust. The Collegeville Development Group made a \$5000 donation earmarked for education programs.

Lands

Tom reported that several fire breaks have been dug in the woods. The GIS mapping project is underway. The Water Quality Study is complete and shows that the water quality in the area is generally good with the exception of East Gemini. However, East Gemini is the holding area for the water treatment plant, so it was expected that it would not be equal to Sag.

New Business

Tom reported there is a business that will do a deer study of the St. John's area. They do a physical count from the air but need eight inches of snow to do accurate counts.

David Hartwell talked about controlling buckthorn. He said there is a product called Garlon/Pathfinder. When it is sprayed on the lower six inches of the buckthorn, it will kill it.

Tom presented the budget and discussion followed. Several suggestions were made in terms of funding: the Bailey foundation, local businesses, the Bremer foundation, the Norcross foundation. It was also suggested that some more personal contact with over-\$100 donors would be good. There was discussion about the possibility of increasing the volunteer program and adding a 1/2-time volunteer coordinator. It was concluded, however, that until there are more opportunities for volunteers this would be a bit premature.

There are still positions on the Advisory Council that need to be filled.

In honor of John Geissler's third anniversary of employment at the Arboretum, he was presented with a jacket that has the new Arboretum logo on it.

Linda Mock made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Larry Schwietz seconded. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Mock
Revised, E. Sim, 4/22/03

The next Advisory Council meeting is Monday, May 12, 2003 at 2:30-5:00 p.m. in the New Science Center, Natural History Museum. Mark your calendars.