

Minutes of Saint John's Arboretum Advisory Council Meeting
May 9, 2005
Natural History Museum, Saint John's University

Council Members:

Present: Terri Barreiro, Alison Binsfeld, , Bob Ellenbecker, Sarah Gainey, Tom Haeg, Brad Jennings, OSB, Tom Kroll, John Kulas, OSB, Scott May, Janette Monear, Steve Saupe, Larry Schwietz, Chuck Wocken, Bruce Wollmering, OSB, Chris Brenny, Grace Brogan

Absent: David Hartwell, Kari Dombrovski, Tom Wicks, Ron Wienhold,

The meeting was called to order at 2:50 p.m.

John Kulas, OSB began the meeting with a prayer.

Tom started with a discussion on budgeting. The University usually took care of certain parts that are currently overlooked, most notably, the salary of the environmental education (EE) coordinator, Sarah Gainey. The majority of others employed by the arboretum are already included in the budget. Brother Brad was consulted on the matter as he is the Arboretum's budget officer.

Committee Report

Larry thanked everyone for the help on fundraising for the Environmental Education Endowment, which passed our goal of \$25,000 to reach \$26,800 today. Tom mentioned that the thank you letters to donors will ask whether or not the donor would like to be an honorary member for a year. It was agreed that honorary membership should be the donor's choice and be included in the thank you letter. Br. Brad mentioned that any money that exceeds the approved endowment amount must be used for the endowment as it was the intention of the donor. Larry reiterated the main connection between most donors is their personal relationship with Fr. Paul.

Plant Sale

Scott May announced the Saturday, May 14th plants sale and encouraged council members to take a flier. Numerous local media sources were contacted to advertise and include the sale on community event calendars. The donors include: Thomsen's Greenhouse, Bailey's Nursery, North American Prairie, and Flexrake. Set-up time will begin at 1 pm on Friday and volunteers are welcome to help the day of the event.

Budget

The council discussed the money amounts and place of origin laid out on the budget sheets. There is a shortage that needs to be addressed. Br. Brad mentioned that a gift from a few years ago (Gordon Bailey) was depleted last year and new ways must be found to cover the gap. Janette advised that the grant writer her company hired was a great asset and brought in one million dollars. It would be important to investigate if it would be possible and useful to hire a trained grant writer. Tom reiterated that there is not room in the budget for such a position, but Scott mentioned that the new full time office position that will be dealing with grant writing responsibilities could get training from someone on the council, such as Terri or Janette, or one of their connections.

Steve Saupe asked the opinion of the council on tapping into student funds for a small arboretum charge. The idea wasn't strongly supported and the discussion of funding continued, leading into student support through membership and interest. A committee to continue with the discussion was created. Alison, Steve, Terri, Tom K, Br. Brad and the representatives from SJU/CSB Senates are members of said committee.

Budget discussion continued, noting that the arboretum is still \$4550 short, although \$1200 from the endowment would be added for the fiscal year.

Community Education

The Avon Hills Conference went very well and hopefully will become annual. It was done very professionally, according to Fr. Bruce. All people that had participated in the conference were in agreement that the sessions need to be slightly longer. The hope is to combine both technical sections and natural history sessions that will appeal to interested parties and community members. Costs must be kept down because it is a community project, although it could help to look for co-sponsors and partners for future conference plans and needs. In the end there were 112 participants and 20 volunteers at the event. Maple Syruping was a little slow this year due to weather conditions, according to Sarah, although the second festival date did draw in some money.

Lands

An anonymous donor to the Prep School has given money for Chapel Trail repairs. The goal is for the project to be complete in approximately one year. All changes will go through the design community.

Wind towers have been spoken about as an energy source. It seems most of the community is in favor vocally, although the true ratio is nearer to 50/50 for approval. The abbey is interested, but there is a problem that would put plans on hold. The only crane large enough to construct the towers is in Vietnam. Blatner is nearby, who are experts, and there is only one helicopter large enough. All sources seem to be booked. Most people are in approval except for the aesthetics of the 400 foot towers.

There is growing interest in constructing an Environmental Education and ski building near campus trails. One possible site includes an area behind the soccer fields. The primary reason for the building would to explore and expand gather place options for welcomes and final talks for arboretum tours to make the visit a more full experience. Two other important reasons for the building include a bad weather alternative and to hold different types of equipment for older groups. The plans would include a building structure, benches, as well as storage and restroom areas for the students.

Education

District 742 – science curriculum and standardization. Maple Syruping brought in many children as part of the environmental education program, between 1200-1500. The tours in the next 4 weeks will bring the total to about 4000. New schools have begun to come out. We would like to strengthen that relationship and grow with outside schools. Tom mentioned that the individuals who replaced Al Barth's position with the schools were quite enamored with the Arboretum and Sarah and Alison's presentation of our situation. We are worried about some schools that need to pay out of pocket. The deal with District 742 pays \$8000 to bring 4000 students out. We're increasing fees for other schools from

\$2 to \$3. The district is considering cut backs due to the cutting of funds. They still intend to partner with us. We could hit schools closer to the cities, target areas from admissions such as the western suburbs, such as Apple Valley students. Yet, as Tom mentioned, we are booked with our current load so we would either need to move into winter programming or increase our environmental education programming, funds, and staff. The goal is to stay invaluable with admissions to foster a partnership.

PR/Membership

Emily Franklin is joining the Arboretum staff. Sarah may contact council members to have her visit as it is a fellowship position one focus is learning and staying open to such opportunities.

Scott May mentioned the renewing member program. WE have been catching up with letters, but haven't moved to phone calls as a follow up yet. WE are working on a monthly renewal reminder program and have yet to decide to what length of time, perhaps three months, before phone calls are made.

Janette was wondering if we had any summer outreach programs. We have watercolor classes, beekeeping events, and may add more later. We have been contacted by conferences on campus and are interested in getting involved. Guestmasters have our information and our brochure is distributed throughout campus.

Retreats could come out as another group that we would not host, but could give tours tailored to their needs. We do not have the resources to cover everything but would like to host particular activities outlined by the groups and set out particular registration fees..

Homecoming/Collegeville Colors

Collegeville Colors will take place Sunday, October 2nd, the day after homecoming. Although it is not a moneymaker for the arboretum we also do not invest a lot of money into it. We work with the prep school to ready and host the trails. Attendance could be improved this year with the updates on the chapel trail. On a related topic, half of the profits from the Sesquicentennial book will go to Saint John's Arboretum.

Volunteer Coordinator and Grantwriting

As Linda Mock will no longer be the Arboretum's volunteer coordinator, the position will be covered by Sarah, the environmental education coordinator, until a better alternative arises.

To finish up work on the Strategic Plan, the question was raised if we should wait to develop a volunteer tracking system until the EE fellowship position is filled.

Janette mentioned the importance of establish positions to fund and sustain the Arboretum. It is part of the job of a committee member to fundraise for the organization. Make a list under Community Education about specifications for what grants we are looking for, including the possibility of outside programs and adult conferences and have the list complete by June.

Please see attached goals for FY 2005. –Submitted by Sarah Gainey

The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by,

Grace Brogan

The next Advisory Council meeting is ***Monday, September 12, 2005 at 2:30-5:30 p.m.*** in the New Science Center, Natural History Museum. **Mark your calendars.**