

OLBRICH BOTANICAL SOCIETY
Board of Directors Virtual Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2023

Members Present: Alnisa Allgood, Susan Goodwin, , Maurice Sheppard, Laura Peterson, Philip Bradbury, Julie Bernauer, Renee Boyce, Bethany Ordaz, Bill Patek, Sandi Statz, Betty Chewing, Liz Dannenbaum, Moira Harrington, Laurel Neverdahl, Tanya Zastrow

Members Absent: Matt Cornwell, Juscha Robinson, Julie Rupert, Eric Knepp

Advisors Present: Jt Covelli, Kevin Hess, Mary Phillips, Barb Tensfeldt

Staff Present: Jake Immel, Lisa Laschinger (Assistant Parks Superintendent), Liz Parker, Marty Petillo, Kai Skadahl, Joe Vande Slunt

I. **The meeting called to order at 4:01 pm.**

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Vice President Goodwin and seconded by Ms. Dannenbaum to approve the meeting minutes of December 20, 2022. Motion carried unanimously.

III. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

IV. **REPORTS**

A. President's Report

- a. **Conflict of Interest Policy** – Ms. Zastrow explained that the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form needed to be completed by all Board Members by January 31. She added that all Board Members would receive access to the online Google Drive where the Conflict of Interest Policy and Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form would be located.
- b. **American Public Garden Association (APGA) Board Experience** – Vice President Susan Goodwin gave an update on the *Garden Board Member Experience 2023: Cultivating Abundance* series that she is virtually attending, along with Ms. Zastrow, President Alnisa Allgood and Treasurer Laura Peterson. She summarized the first session, which focused on enabling positive cultures, creating great relationships, and leading with excellence. She added that when they complete the 4-part series, they would like to talk with the Board about the positive leadership concepts that were learned, and how to proceed in the future. Ms. Zastrow noted that OBS Board members could be members of APGA through Olbrich's membership, and to let her know if anyone was interested.
- c. **Retirements** – Ms. Zastrow shared interesting facts about what Volunteer Services Manager, Marty Petillo, accomplished in her 22 years of service to the City of Madison Parks Division and Olbrich. Including that Ms. Petillo maintained a volunteer retention rate of over 80% for 22 years, totaling 529,141 volunteer hours given to the Gardens by more than 12,345 volunteers. Ms. Zastrow, and the OBS Board, genuinely thanked Ms. Petillo for her service to Olbrich Gardens, and for managing one of the most successful volunteer programs in Madison with kindness and compassion.

Ms. Zastrow shared that Director of Horticulture, Jeff Epping, had announced his retirement and that his last day would be February 24, 2023. She noted that he was working on a presentation for the Volunteer Appreciation event on February 14, documenting the gardens over his 28 years as Director of Horticulture.

- d. **Review of community sessions and interview feedback conducted for the strategic plan** – Ms. Zastrow referred to the two reports she sent to the Board members prior to the meeting, from Tim Prince and Deborah Biddle, which were written after the community engagement meetings and interviews. There

was discussion about Olbrich’s role in interacting with the community, talking with other public sector organizations to share ideas and strategies, and to start thinking about how current Olbrich staffing levels could accomplish the goals and objectives. Ms. Zastrow reminded the Board that if they had any additional feedback related to the strategic plan reports created by the consultants, to please share them with her.

- e. **Discussion of Open Hours** – Ms. Zastrow lead a conversation about Olbrich’s open hours. She asked two questions: Should Olbrich Gardens change its general open hours? Should we have Member Only hours? There was discussion about whether it would make sense to have everything open at the same time, if the Conservatory should continue closing at 4 pm during the warmer months, or if the Conservatory should be open later only on specific days. There were also conversations about if open hours should be for everyone, if there should be member evening summer hours on specific dates, and if there should be more member exclusive events (since OBS surpassed 8,000 member households in 2022.) Ms. Zastrow asked the Board to email her with any additional feedback.

B. Financial Report

- a. **November 2022 Financials** – Treasurer Laura Peterson reviewed the Financial Reports. She highlighted that revenue was strong in November and exceeded the budget by nearly \$41K. She noted that YTD tracked positively and that year-end was also looking strong, as staff were working on getting final numbers entered. Mr. Vande Slunt added that pre-audit would be taking place at the end of January, and the official audit would kick off on February 14.

b. **Bequests Motion to move funds to OBSF**

MOTION, to move three bequests recently received from the OBS Legacy Gifts account at Monona Bank to the OBS Foundation, the first bequest from the John H. Lussier Charitable Lead Annuity Trust in the amount of \$95,612.94, to be used for general purposes, the second bequest from the Estate of Marianne D. Hose, in the amount of \$100,000, to be used for general purposes, and the third bequest from the Estate of Rosemary Heitkemper, in the amount of \$689.96, to be used for general purposes.

A motion was made by Treasurer Peterson and seconded by Ms. Boyce to approve the transfer of the three bequests from the OBS Legacy Gifts account at Monona Bank to the OBS Foundation. Motion carried unanimously.

C. Director’s Report

Ms. Zastrow shared some of the highlights from 2022, including: Having record attendance numbers, 340,442 guests; For the first time in Olbrich’s history, we have more than 8,000 member households; We had 17,207 guests visit the Holiday Train Show; and that accessibility improvements were made. She noted that construction on Atwood Avenue would begin in March 2023.

- D. **Development Report** – Mr. Vande Slunt reported that the year-end appeal performed very well, and that the results were not final, as staff were still entering some remaining gifts and they needed to reconcile December. He noted that the database upgrade was happening just in time, which will help eliminate or reduce many of the manual processes that are time consuming.

V. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no new announcements.

VII. ADJOURNED

The meeting adjourned at 5:01 pm.