

Gresham Butte Neighborhood Association

October 11, 2023

Officers present: Jim Buck, president; Lynn Saint, secretary; Theresa Tschirky, treasurer; Stephen Estes, land use chair

7:05 p.m. Meeting Called to Order by President Jim Buck.

Sixteen attendees participated including officers and Michael Gonzales, ONCE chairperson.

7:10 p.m. Minutes

Minutes from April 10, 2023 stand as submitted.

7:11 p.m. Sue Protz Presents History of Tsuru Island and the Gresham Japanese Garden

We have gained two grants for the Japanese garden.

Local farmers chose to renovate Tsuru Island, many of them from Japanese ancestry. In 1975, first generation Japanese citizens wished to honor their parents and to show gratitude to the city of Gresham.

With passing years, the garden developed a ragged appearance. From 2011 to 2016, a five-year project was implemented to renovate Tsuru Island. The creek is on a floodplain.

Red pines have become a garden canopy. A dry bed stream was constructed to catch pine needles. The garden has undergone other changes. Jim Card wanted to continue enhancing the garden area.

Spaces maintained: Tsuru Island, Ebetsu Plaza, Ambleside Annex (rescue of eight mature trees from Ambleside – Jim Buck and Jim Card), Hiroshima Peace Garden (a small peace tree, nurtured by Jim Buck, is a centerpiece for the garden maintained by the Japanese Garden), Greenhouse – two grants received for community enhancement and a cultural grant) (students from adult living program – working at propagating), Shade House (inventory which will include items for a plant sale), Pollinator Garden, Mural Garden (the façade has been redone with three layers of mural), the Kyoudou (meaning community) Center. The memorial pavers include the cost of materials. The total in the treasury amounts to \$38,000 in an endowment fund with a goal of \$100,000. The garden has no paid staff but does pay for outside services.

Programs supported:

Exploratory Program (special needs students from the Gresham Barlow School District). Azaleas have been transplanted three times. They progressed from a four-inch pot to one gallon to a three-gallon size. This is the only job site that operates three times a week.

Aesthetic Pruning Program. Hopefully, students will learn and return to help. One instructor, Francheska Snyder, has trained in Japan. Fundamentals of pruning are taught and reviewed.

Touchstone Paver Program. Early pavers had faded resulting in a less than satisfactory appearance. The garden renovated 300 pavers with money from the endowment fund.

Workshops

Bonsai, Ikebana, Manga, Haiku – One project occurs monthly on either a Saturday or a Thursday. The workshop generates funds for the garden. Costs run \$20 - \$45 per class.

Projected Events for 2024

Yazakura – flower viewing at nighttime

Plant Sale – May 10-11, 2024

Winter illumination

Communication

Five hundred people receive monthly emails. Sign up by going online and registering.

Community (Kyoudou)

This is a teaching garden and a gathering place.

Volunteers' Responsibilities

Coordinators

Weeding Group

Ownership

Appreciation – A grand opening will serve to thank donors on November 5th.

Community Library

Gift Workshops

The volunteers are as strong today as they were in the early 1990s. They numbered twenty-five then and still number twenty-five. Many have a passion to do service work. Mike, confined to his scooter, takes care of debris. Bill, at 93 years of age, photographs scenes for the group. He also waters the dry bed for photos. John, since the beginning, takes care of the water feature and security. These stalwarts and others work in rain or shine every Saturday from 9:00 to noon, averaging six hundred hours per month.

The city owns the Gresham Japanese Garden. The city could remove the accoutrements if it so chose. However, the garden and the city have maintained a solid relationship.

In September, the North American Japanese Garden Association welcomed thirty-five people from all over North America to meet at the Gresham Japanese Garden to participate in their regional workshop. They felt the community was so encouraging and they felt this place was the most amenable. This event underscores the importance of the power of volunteers. Twenty-one volunteers participated in the workshop.

Our soil here is phenomenal for displaying nurseries in the area. Nurseries lent their expertise by offering tours. On the fourth day, they helped build the entry garden.

The peace tree had started from a selection of seedlings. The transplanted ginkgo seedling is from one of six trees that survived the bombing in Hiroshima Japan. The surviving trees are either ginkgo or persimmons. The seedlings have been shared throughout the world. Many of the Japanese immigrants who live in this area came from the Hiroshima Japan area.

7:53 p.m. Peace Plaza Sculpture by Rip Caswell

GBNA wanted a decorative pole for the garden and decided to apply for an enhancement grant through the city. GBNA's application gained first place among all applicants. Rip Caswell designed a sculpture. A 1200 pounds bronze-colored basalt pillar will serve as the mounting base for the sculpture. There will be a history of the Hiroshima Peace Tree. Another volunteer will construct a bench for the plaza. Caswell has contributed other sculptures within the city of Gresham. Jim Buck watched them putting on the accents of the koi casting sculpture for two hours as the colors were blow torched onto the piece.

7:59 p.m. Reforestation Grant Project

GBNA has applied for a reforestation grant. Just off the entrance to the Saddle Trail on 15th, sloping hillsides will be cared for regarding the elimination of blackberries in the winter. In the spring, volunteers will plant five hundred native species.

Blackberries do present a fire hazard. So, hopefully, this will present an extra incentive. The tree canopy needs to increase. Valley ponderosas are a species under consideration. GBNA is looking at oaks, also. Stay with indigenous species, including maples.

The city is focusing its resources on Johnson Creek with stormwater and riparian reporting. The state DEQ does not address woodlands, leaving riparian areas the focus.

8:10 p.m. Election of Officers

GBNA will elect four officers: president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary. Both the vice president and the secretary are stepping down. Three of the current officers attend the coalition meetings each month. The Neighborhood Coalition is a collected body of all sixteen of the Gresham neighborhoods. The official membership includes the officers of each neighborhood association. They meet the second Tuesday of each night. Last night there was a Columbia River Flood Project. If the levee changes, there could be a severe problem. There was also a discussion about recycling. Homelessness was an issue.

After discussion, the group decided to elect a slate of officers foregoing the process of deciding separately on individual positions. The resulting slate, with a unanimous vote, includes Stephen Estes, president; Sue Protz, vice-president; Theresa Tschirky, treasurer; Dale Ricklefs, secretary. Jim Buck has offered to take the land chair position.

Monthly meetings, on each second Wednesday, will be held in the Kyoudou Center due to availability.

8:27 p.m. Land Use and Treasurer Reports

Theresa Tschirky reported a **balance of \$3,752.32** in the treasury. Some matching grant and community enhancement grant monies have not yet been spent. The neighborhood association comes under the umbrella of the city of Gresham. It is not a separate non-profit.

8:30 p.m. Thank You for Service

Outgoing officers: Jim Buck, president; Sandy Davidson, vice-president; Lynn Saint, secretary; Stephen Estes, land use chair. Jim Buck and Stephen Estes traded positions.

Thank you to Mary Ann Buck and Mary Jeanne Oliva for providing the night's refreshments.

8:33 p.m. Meeting adjourned