

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE – Donna Sheridan, Chair**

### **GROUND RULES\***

*At our meetings, Board members will:*

- *Be respectful of each other and each other's ideas*
- *Be enthusiastic, participative and a good listener*
- *Stay on topic and work toward building consensus*
- *Be prepared, reading packet and preparing motions prior to the meeting*
- *Be organized, on point and follow Roberts Rules of Order*
- *Have a tolerance for conflict so that all points of view may be heard*
- *Be "devil's advocate" as needed to avoid "group-think"*
- *Support Board decisions in a positive way*
- *Recognize "linking pin" role to bring input to the Board and share outcomes with the organization*

### **MISSION STATEMENT\***

*The Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden's Mission is to maintain and enhance our historic house and garden as a community resource for horticultural education, inspiration, and enjoyment.*

### **VALUES STATEMENT\***

*The Gamble Garden Values include providing for: sustainability of the house and garden as a community resource; a safe, secure, and inclusive environment; respect for all staff and volunteers; an oasis of beauty and tranquility. Our values are contained in other documents of the organization including:*

- *IDEA*
- *Several Administrative and Human Resource policies*

### **VISION STATEMENT\*\***

*The Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden is an historic house and exemplary urban garden that engages, educates, and inspires our community to celebrate and cherish the natural world.*

\*Approved by the Board on November 18, 2022

\*\*Approved by the Board on January 24, 2023

## **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Statement**

*The Elizabeth F. Gamble Garden is an open-gate garden. We are committed to making the garden and our programs available and accessible to all. We are committed to treating all people with dignity and respect. Within our organization, we are committed to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) at every level - Board, staff, volunteers, and members. Approved by the Board on October 26, 2021.*

## **Update on Edutainment for Equity (E4E) Reference Check - Donna Sheridan**

As Chair of Strategic Planning, Donna Sheridan has checked references for E4E based on questions suggested by the Board and from references selected by the Board from Edutainment client list. Three positive references were received. One was detailed and very positive, a second one not detailed but very positive, a third, actually relevant to strategic planning, not equity, but very positive.

The process is similar to that used by the American Public Gardens Association in which we have been participating. Of note, other similar programs investigated were quite costly by comparison including that used by the City of Palo Alto.

Based on the positive references that were received, the contingency for the motion approved at the June 2023 meeting has been satisfied.

(Approved motion for reference: Colette moved that the Board approve entering into a contract with E4E for Cultural Mindfulness training services as described above in the report at a cost of \$4000 to be completed by December 1, 2023 and contingent upon receiving positive references from local organizations who have engaged E4E.)

Per discussion at the June 2023 Board meeting, the rollout of the E4E will be facilitated for three groups via zoom--Board members, Committee Chairs and Staff. Contacting Committee Chairs will be through Colette as Program Chair and contacting Staff will be through Marco. Dates will be offered after approval to proceed by the Board. A series of three meetings will be via zoom with both general session and breakout groups.

## **Executive Director Report to the Board of Directors - *Marco Maina***

Greetings Board Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to present input during my recent performance appraisal. It was a dynamic, challenging, and yet rewarding fiscal year for me and for Gamble Garden.

My primary goal for my first year at Gamble Garden was to balance the budget. As per June's financial statements, this is how we ended the year:

**“The net result was a YTD operating gain of \$137.8K, compared to a budgeted loss of \$49.7K.”**

My secondary goals were:

- Build the staff team to deliver increased efficiency and quality at Gamble Garden. I filled four openings and successfully replaced the Garden Director and the Finance Manager. Some positions presented us with an expected challenge to fill. A revised pay scale should make Gamble Garden more attractive to potential hires.
  
- Implement facility improvement projects as per Board approval. I completed the following projects and repairs: main house renovations, cutting garden, tea house painting, tea house water fountain repair, gazebo repair and painting, Churchill parking lot fence repair, oak tree ring expansion, and installed new bulletin boards.
  
- Advance the work of the Horticultural Complex Task Force. We have gained momentum with the many facets of this project. As a result, we now have an architect working for the project and have a clear path forward to secure a 30-year lease with the City of Palo Alto.
  
- Collaborate with board and operations committees. I worked in close collaboration with the Buildings and Grounds Committee, Fund Development, Programs, Garden Advisory, IDEA Task Force, Strategic Planning, Floral Arrangers, and Membership. A new operations committee was formed to support institutional and program marketing. As time permitted, I supported other committees and events.

My communication and PR efforts provided opportunities to represent Gamble Garden in meetings with staff of the City of Palo Alto. I attended multiple Palo Alto Rotary Club meetings, the May Fete parade, the Palo Alto Tall Tree Award sponsored by the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce, and a meeting with Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors Member Joe Simitian at the Palo Alto Food Market. In addition to these efforts, I collaborated with Mary Powell and Colette Rudd and visited one public school in Palo Alto and three public schools in East Palo Alto. I attended the Youth United for Community Action day at Gamble and visited their offices in East Palo Alto, as well as a conference call with the EPA Primary School (Priscilla Chan and Mark Zuckerberg Initiative).

On the National level, I successfully joined the second IDEA cohort of the American Public Gardens Association.

**My FY 2024 goals are:**

1. Grow the donor base and the average giving by implementing a cultivation program for new donors and a stewardship program for current donors.
2. Raise \$177,000 through the annual campaign by June 30, 2024.

3. Implement a professional development program to impact staff retention and employee satisfaction.
4. Review employee salaries, benefits, and policies by December 2023.
5. Provide leadership to the Horticultural Complex Task Force for the successful completion of phase one of the project.
6. Negotiate a new lease agreement with the City of Palo Alto to include all areas under Gamble Garden's management.

A quarterly report will be prepared on each one of the performance goals.

## **JULY UPDATES**

**Historic House:** New shades have been installed in the living and dining rooms. A new order has been placed to replace the blinds in Mica's office and the landing on the second floor. The project for hot water heater replacement is being delayed because we need clarification from the contractor regarding the heat pump for the public restrooms. We will need to replace the sump pump in the basement of the main house. The rose bush on the Churchill side of the house died, and the Garden Director will be replacing it.

I'm looking for an architect to work with me on the side staircase, Churchill Ave. The project needs a blueprint and verification with the State of California Building Code. I approached CAW and they may send me a referral for this small job. I also contacted a firm referred by Karen Douglas.

**Carriage House:** Stanford Painting completed the project but will return to finalize the public restroom floors. Someone caused damages to the floors of both restrooms and the paint was supposed to withstand the friction that caused the damages.

**Carriage House Patio/ Oak Tree Ring:** After the oak tree ring expansion the soil settled and created a new tripping hazard. The Garden Director will work to present a solution and improvements should occur soon.

**Garden:** Volunteers are supporting the staff to promote plan sales. There has been increased interest in plant sales and Corey is leading this effort. Corey is working on a beautification project at California Ave in collaboration with the Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce. Corey has interviewed multiple candidates and filled two positions: Edible Garden Coordinator and Youth Education Coordinator, and managed to stay on budget while increasing one of the positions from 30 to 40 hours per week. I trust his judgment on this hiring with the caveat that Corey needs to allow each position to have a focus and unique deliverables.

**Horticultural Complex Task Force:** Delivered a Zoom orientation to committee chairs in preparation for the CAW Workshops. Surveys were distributed and workshop dates have been set. Invited Steve Emslie (Junior Museum and Zoo) to share his experience on lease renewals. He will join the next task force meeting on Tuesday, September 5<sup>th</sup> at 4 PM by Zoom.

**Marketing Committee:** Had our first meeting of the new fiscal year; the committee now has three additional members (Kathy Schniedwind, Kristin Forbes, and Cynthia Wei). Other marketing related updates include our attendance to the Chamber of Commerce Network Event and the production of marketing collaterals (Annual Report and Program Brochures). Ana is working on a booklet to share sponsorship opportunities at Gamble.

We had the following media exposure:

[Garden Fresh Luncheons & Tours 2023: Gamble Garden, Palo Alto](#)

[A soap that floats helped create historical house and garden | Community | losaltosonline.com](#)

**IDEA Task Force:** Donna Sheridan joined the IDEA Cohort - American Association of Public Gardens. Corey also participates in this effort.

**Board Development:** Attended the new board member orientation. Will reach out to all three new board members to offer additional support.

**Volunteer Committee:** Developed four new job descriptions and will work with Julie Shinn for internal and external advertisement.

Baseline: last advertisement at volunteermatch.com produced: 204 views between February and April of 2023. In 2022 the advertisement produced 82 views

**Insurance Policy Renewal:** Worked with Cedric Hughes, a volunteer introduced to Gamble by Karen Douglas for the renewal of our liability policies. This process was time consuming and difficult because the broker didn't follow directions previously given by Kevin Colemann. I will work with Karen for possible replacement of the insurance broker.

## **Fund Development**

**1) Annual Appeal Campaign:** Our target date to send out the annual report and letter is October 1<sup>st</sup>. We have started the process and will need Board members' help for the writing of personal notes. Dates to be determined.

**2) Directors' Circle Event:** I've been working with Susann Mirabella for the planning and execution of this event currently scheduled for Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 PM.

**3) Donor Engagement:** Drafted a plan for major donor engagement; scheduled meetings for August and September. The number of meetings will increase as we approach the sending of the annual appeal letters.

**4) Winter Festival:** The Winter Festival Committee Chairs have met several times and jump started the planning for this important event. This year I'm coordinating the light crew and will have new lighting installations around the property. The Holiday Lights Testing Event will be on November 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM.

**5) Wendyce Brody Estate:** Worked with our pro bono attorney Robert Roskoph for his review of the documentation. Board members can visit the office to examine two sets of documents and digital files associated with Wendy's gift to Gamble Garden. The acceptance of the distribution release will be completed after the Board vote. The payment should occur within 60 to 90 days. Once we receive the payment, the ED will forward a policy recommendation to the Board. If the Board accepts the recommendation, then the ED will formalize a process to hear interested parties before making a recommendation to restrict funds at the Finance Committee.

**Buildings and Grounds Staffing:** Mica is the hiring manager for the Maintenance Technician position. We have received four resumes in the last month and I have referred one additional

candidate. Mica wants to refresh the job title and job description.

In June and July we completed staff performance evaluations and staff members appreciated their salary increases.

I get a lot of help at Gamble Garden and our success in FY 2023 is a result of our collective efforts. Thank you all, staff members, volunteers, and donors for a marvelous year!!!

Respectfully submitted,

Marco Maina, Executive Director

### **Marketing Committee Report - *Marco Maina***

The Marketing Committee held their second meeting on August 3, 2023. We welcomed new members Kathy Schniedwind and Kris Forbes. The meeting consisted of updates on the Horticultural Complex Project, IDEA initiatives, and current PR/Marketing initiatives.

Current PR/Marketing Initiatives include:

- Continued representation of Gamble Garden at Palo Alto Chamber of Commerce and other events
- Revised brochures for Volunteers, Membership, and Rentals
- Recruiting volunteers. Job descriptions have been created to recruit volunteer Marketing Committee members and a volunteer Drone Videographer.

Future PR/Marketing Initiatives being discussed include:

- Creating a section of the website for the Horticultural Complex Project
- A Fine Arts Series of art shows to increase awareness of Gamble
- Displays to indicate the languages spoken by volunteers & staff at Gamble events
- A study to determine Gamble's visitor headcount

The next Marketing Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 7. Agenda items for this meeting include electing a Committee Chair, determining committee goals (including an IDEA goal), and discussing the Fine Arts Series concept.