

ELIZABETH F.
GAMBLE GARDEN
HISTORIC HOME & GARDEN

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

Carriage House, Gamble Garden

Members Present: Joan Zwiep (President), Robin Allen, Lena Dawson, Karen Douglas, Susann Mirabella, Carmen Pekelsma, Colette Rudd, Donna Sheridan, Julie Shinn, Susan Sweeney, Susan Woodman

Members Absent: Pat Gregory, Judy Paris, Nancy Wong (note: Sherri Moody has resigned)

Members Attending via Zoom: None

Staff: Mica Pirie, Office Manager (presenter; part-time), Corey Andrikopoulos, Garden Director

Other Guests: Donna Bohling, Pat Davis, Margie Harrington, Brent McClure (presenter; part-time), Linda Norton, Jane Stocklin

Quorum Established: Yes

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 PM by President Joan Zwiep

Hort Complex Project Presentation – Brent McClure, CAW Architects

CAW has been working with Gamble Garden since last summer to develop a list of needs, based on surveys and a series of workshops with the board, committee members, staff and volunteers. They followed up with additional meetings with the Hort Complex Task Force (HCTF). They have developed the site plan for the project, as shown in the presentation, based on the original specifications in the Request for Proposal, input from the Gamble Garden community, and subsequent meetings with the HCTF.

Gamble Gardens Operations Presentation – Mica Pirie, Office Manager

Mica presented an overview of Gamble Garden Operations, including Executive support, Finance, Volunteers, and community members. Functions include administrative, secretarial, development, communications, and public interactions – in person, email and phone. Since she started working at Gamble Garden, online activity and other activities have grown substantially, resulting in an increased number of constituents, such as 1,000 Second Saturday registrants for some of the events. The eTapestry software and database is not designed to manage these larger numbers of potential donors and event attendees. Mica is exploring options to upgrade the donor database, with a 9-month timeline. Working on the donor database will take Mica approximately 10-20 hours/week. (Note: Mica will have her 2-year work anniversary at Gamble Garden on February 9.)

Consent Agenda – *Joan Zwiep*

- Approval of Minutes of November 28, 2023 Board Meeting

Consent Agenda was APPROVED

Hort Complex Update from the HCTF – *Karen Douglas, Donna Bohling, and Jane Stocklin*

Slides with an overview of the proposed project were presented. Improvement and enlargement of the horticulture space is clearly needed. The proposed community room was discussed. A plan to raise funds to pay for this project has been developed. Board members asked a variety of questions about the project. The slide presentation will be shared with board members. The Task Force will respond to the questions at the next board meeting.

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Finance Report – Karen Douglas

Karen reviewed the December 2023 Treasurer's Report and Commentary. The operating deficit is much lower than projected. Programs are doing well – net revenue YTD is above both budget and last year. Rental and Annual Appeal income is less than budget, partially offset by favorable net revenue for Winter Festival and Membership. Endowment has increased largely because of investment gains. A large bequest of \$1.2 million was received from the estate of Wendyce (Wendy) Brody, a past resident of Palo Alto and supporter of Gamble Garden.

The facility rental income from social and business rentals is a significant fraction of Gamble Garden's operating revenue, and consumes significant staff time, but the factors that affect our ability to generate income are not well understood. The Finance Committee has recommended that Board to create a Rental Task Force to review the Facilities Rentals program (revenue and expenses) and provide analysis and robust marketing and operational plans for the program going forward, including both business and social rentals.

- **MOTION:** On behalf of the Finance Committee, Karen Douglas moved that the board appoint a task force to develop a business plan for social and business facility rentals.

MOTION APPROVED

Strategic Planning/ E4E update– Donna Sheridan

Donna asked for feedback about the initial E4E Zoom session. Based on the feedback, she has asked for larger breakout sessions during the next Zoom sessions. She recommended also sharing feedback with the facilitator during the sessions. The next two Zoom sessions will be held at 4 PM on **January 25** and **February 8**. Donna is waiting to organize the board retreat until an Executive Director is hired. In the meantime, the board should participate in goal-setting activities and review the strategic plan.

Fund Development – Susann Mirabella

Susann reported from the Membership Committee, which is working with the Palo Alto Community Foundation to host an event on February 22 (5 PM to 6:30 PM) for local nonprofit organizations to learn about Gamble Garden.

Search Committee for Executive Director – Joan Zwiép

At the next board meeting the Search Committee (Joan Zwiép, Norm Robinson, Corey A, Susan Sweeney, Karen Douglas, Dawn Hood) will ask the board for their top priorities related to characteristics/skill sets of the next Executive Director.

Board Member Resignations and Appointment of Spring Tour Committee Co-Chairs – Joan Zwiép

Sheri Moody, one of the Garden Club of Palo Alto liaisons, has resigned from the Gamble board, and Laurie Callaway has resigned as the chair of Spring Tour. The Garden Club will identify and recommend a new liaison for the Board. Susann Mirabella and Deanna Wong have been appointed as the new co-chairs of Spring Tour.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Colette Rudd, Interim Board Secretary

APPROVED February 27, 2024