

USC Belser Arboretum - Report of Meeting with USC

Members of the neighborhood association met with USC faculty Sep 6th to express our desire for USC to continue to maintain the arboretum on an ongoing basis. Minutes of that meeting and a post-meeting update from Dr. DeCoursey are now available.

Meeting between the Sherwood Forest Neighborhood Association and USC Faculty Sep 6, 2007

Participants

USC:

- Dr. Charles Lovell, Chair of the Department of Biological Sciences
- Dr. Sarah Woodin, Carolina Distinguished Professor of Biological Sciences
- Dr. David Lincoln, Professor of Biological Sciences
- Dr. Bert Ely, Professor of Biological Sciences
- Dr. Pat DeCoursey, Distinguished Professor

Sherwood Forest Neighborhood Association:

- Mr. Bud Tibshirany
- Mr. Ed Tilden
- Mr. Lewis Kirk

Purpose of the Meeting:

The Sherwood Forest Neighborhood Association called the meeting to:

- Express our gratitude to the USC Department of Biological Sciences for Dr. Patricia J. DeCoursey's wonderful work in restoring the W. Gordon Belser Arboretum, and
- Express our desire for USC to continue to maintain the arboretum on an ongoing basis.

Discussion Points:

- Dr. DeCoursey gave participants a tour of the Arboretum.
- The arboretum's continued support by USC is dependent on four key items:
- Use for Teaching: ecology classes, geology classes, philosophy classes, Rudy Mancke's students, etc.
- Use for Research for USC undergraduate students
- Donors/Community/PR including tours for garden clubs and other groups
- Use for the Community Service Hours Requirement of University of South Carolina students in the University101Classes and the Saturday Service Program activities. All freshmen are required to work a minimum of 10 hours on some form of community service; they have enjoyed the restoration projects greatly. A total of about 250 have participated. The Graduate Association of Biology Students has also sent a group of 15 students to help with the CANDO planting. This service-oriented work has been a vital part of their education.
- Current and future use for teaching and research was discussed, and USC participants agreed that there was sufficient current and future use to justify maintaining the arboretum.
- Community support was indicated by the neighborhood associations' interest as demonstrated by their calling this meeting. The association also indicated a desire to continue support by
 - Providing community volunteers to help with arboretum maintenance and events,
 - Maintaining the CANDO gardens on the outside of the fences along Bloomwood Road and Wilmot Avenue, and

- Supporting USC's arboretum endowment fund by assisting with fundraising efforts.
- A USC arboretum Caretaker staff member is needed to help Dr. DeCoursey in the immediate future with the very strenuous tree-cutting and brush removal that are absolutely essential for the restoration of the Arboretum. Dr. DeCoursey has been paying two individuals to assist her with chain sawing, etc. during the past year, but one has just moved to New Jersey. It appears that the USC Landscaping and Environmental Services department is willing to provide at least a half-time temporary "slot" for a dedicated Arboretum worker if the Arts and Sciences Dean will positively support the value of the Arboretum for the University of South Carolina and the neighborhood community. Dr. Roger Sawyer, Assistant Dean and Professor of Biological Sciences, will act as the conduit between Biology and Dean Fitzpatrick.
- Two Arboretum funds will soon be available under the aegis of the University of South Carolina's Education Foundation, for the exclusive use of the W. Gordon Belser Arboretum. An initial "spendable account" was opened in July 2007 with a gift of \$500 by Bud Tibshrary. This is the usual procedure in the progression to an Endowment since the money can be freely spent for Arboretum needs. In contrast, an Endowed account cannot be used until it reaches \$25,000 and then only 5% of the annual interest can be spent. The spendable account has not yet been used and can be added to the Endowed account at any time. The paper work for setting up the Endowment is expected to be completed within two weeks to receive the pledges and gifts. This account will be given a unique name and ID number, exclusively for Arboretum use. Dr. DeCoursey will inform all of you as soon as the ID name and number is issued. It will take about \$400,000 to fund the manager position since legally only 5% of interest earned by the endowment fund can be used each year (\$20,000). As of September 11, 2007, an initial endowment start-up of \$30,000 has been pledged by anonymous Biology faculty. The Endowment Fund would provide the salary for an Arboretum Manager; until that goal is reached Dr. DeCoursey is happy to serve as Director of the Arboretum Restoration and Manager as an unpaid volunteer.

Next Steps/Actions:

- Dr. DeCoursey spoke to Dr. Roger Sawyer, Senior Associate Dean of Natural Sciences, on September 11, 2007. She described the events of the September 6 meeting and asked him to promote the Arboretum cause to Dean Fitzpatrick. He was very enthusiastic and will start the support materials immediately. USC Action.
- Communicate/meet again after Dr. Sawyer has agreed with the plan - to arrange further steps. Dr. Lovell & Ed Tilden action.

Note of Thanks:

Special note of thanks to Dr. DeCoursey for the arboretum tour and the locally grown fruits, vegetables and other snacks provided for the meeting which was held in one of the arboretum's outdoor classrooms.

Post-Meeting Follow-up Report:

From: P. DeCoursey

Date: September 21, 2007

The Meeting of September 6 in the Arboretum Outdoor Classroom was very enjoyable and has proven very productive. Ed Tilden sent a good summary of the event on September 13 in the form of Minutes for all attendees of the meeting (above).

This memo will outline the considerable progress that has been made in the past week.

Dr. Rick Lovell, Chair of Biological Sciences, has sent the request for a grounds-worker staff person for the Arboretum to the Dean's Office with the request for approval and support. As soon as it is signed, it will be forwarded to Mr. Tom Knowles, Director of Landscaping, who originally suggested this action. Tom will shepherd the request up the chain of command where we are optimistic of support for the new position.

At the Educational Foundation at USC, we now have two accounts, a "spendable" account for immediate expenses and a long-term endowment account. This account contains \$500. The paperwork for the Endowment Account has just been completed and a pledge has been given to actually endow the account (above the \$25,000 level). We prefer that gifts be directed to the Endowment Account, which will be ready September 24 for further pledges and deposits. Names and numbers of these two accounts and the contact information for our Development Officer are given below.

Spendable Account: #1A3769: "W. Gordon Belser Arboretum"

Endowed Account: #811336: "The W. Gordon Belser Arboretum Endowment Fund"

Contact: Mr. Christopher R. DeWolf, Sr. Director of Development, College of Arts and Sciences, Gambrell Hall, Suite 257B, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208. Phone (803) 576-5819, Fax (803) 777-4532, cdewolf@sc.edu

For further information about the Arboretum you may also contact Dr. Patricia DeCoursey, Coordinator for the Arboretum Restoration, Department of Biological Sciences, USC, Columbia, SC 29208, Phone (803) 777-3934 (o); Fax (803) 777-4002; dcoursey@bio.sc.edu