FRIENDS OF BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS

A Selection of 2015 Accomplishments

I. FINANCE
   A. Completed financial reporting for monthly committee meetings and audit process on time.
   B. Received a clean audit (with minor policy exception for check-signing).
   C. Completed quarterly review of budget vs. actuals with budget staff (4 x 6 staff).
   D. Completed budget process on time; received board approval 1 December.

II. OPERATIONS
   A. Cahaba Road Area
      1. New Pedestrian Entrance at Cahaba Road: Barrier-free pedestrian plaza and entrance walk with
         visitor amenities (seat wall, bike rack, map), WPA-style entry column, renovated Lawler Gates,
         black vinyl-coated chain link fence (along perimeter), branding and way-finding signage, drainage.
      2. Renovated Service Gate Area at Cahaba Road: Enlarged asphalt apron, concrete curb and gutter,
         new automated aluminum service gate, black vinyl-coated chain link fence (along perimeter),
         signage.
      3. Southern Living Garden (associated work): Barrier-free asphalt walk installation, ADA-compliant
         sculptural railings, relocated crushed stone path, new stone walls and wall repairs, drainage.
      4. Northwest Corner of Cahaba Road: Signage, black vinyl-coated chain link fence
   B. Japanese Gardens
      1. New black vinyl-coated chain link perimeter fence and new service gate.
   C. Lane Park Road: Barrier-free asphalt paths and crosswalk, curb and gutter, drainage.
   D. Dunn Formal Rose Garden: Repaired columns at east and north entrances
   E. Hess Camellia Garden:
      1. Restored wrought iron benches in Davidson Camellia Circle
      2. Replaced crushed stone in the Turlington Circle with brick, fixed drainage and extended brick
         path at northern entrance.
   F. Ireland Iris Garden: Rebuilt the Twin Gazebos with improved details for longevity, additional rustication.
   G. Little Ones’ Memory Garden: Reset sandstone splashblocks on concrete footings.
   H. Bruno Vegetable Garden: Repaired wooden fence along southern border.
   I. Kaul Wildflower Garden: Installed ~175lf of locust railing along paths; reconstructed upper section of
      walls near wooden bridge.
   J. Sonat Lake: Replace leaky valve at overflow.
   K. All Gardens:
      1. Installed Garden ID and way-finding signage.
      2. Changed out seasonal color 3x (including largest public display of marigolds in the southeast).
   L. Miscellaneous Gardens: Replaced trash receptacles, added recycling receptacles, installed new swings and
      benches.

III. EDUCATION (including Library and Volunteer Programs)
   A. Participation: 30,000+ adults and 16,000+ children participated in our public programs, for a total of
      ~47,000 participants, a 2% overall increase from last year.
   B. Contact/Hours: For the first time, contact hours for all programs (except library patronage) were
      captured, total over 88,000: adult programs ~19,000, children’s programs ~39,000 and volunteers added
      over 30,000 (a new high). 1,000+ volunteers gave their time and talents on behalf of The Gardens
      1. Average adult participated in about 37 minutes of programming
      2. For the average child, it was much more immersive at nearly 2½ hours each.
      3. The average volunteer gave almost 29 hours.
   C. Library metrics: up across the board
1. Total of 33,000 participants was up 9% over last year.
2. Circulation topped 10,000 for the first time.
3. Patronage was just short of 19,000, also a new high.

D. Plant Adventures Programs open up the resources of The Gardens to participants of all abilities. We recorded 1,843 participants (up 82% over last year) and over 2,100 contact hours.

E. Conservation activities including our Centennial Tree program and efforts to propagate rare and native plants were newly codified with nearly 600 participants working over 2.5 hours each for a total of over 1,500 contact/hours. Roughly 900 native trees were planted in public and natural areas including Avondale Park, Homewood Park, Samford University (Shades Creek), Red Mountain Park, Vulcan Park and the Cahaba National Wildlife Refuge. These were seedlings of Centennial Trees, local native trees in excess of 100 years old, raised at The Gardens.

F. Certificate in Native Plant Studies graduated 17 full and 3 provisional participants.

G. Central South Native Plant Conference: three-day conference attracted 188 registrants from fourteen states (including 10 student scholarship recipients) 15+ presenters brought in the highest attendance in fifteen years.

H. Program evaluations were overwhelmingly positive and new programs are developed using participant feedback. Nearly 100% of Discovery program participants would recommend the programs to a colleague, and intend to continue participating.

I. Directly invested ~$675,000 in public programs (education, library, volunteers). Through volunteers alone, received over $700,000 in contributed value.


IV. DEVELOPMENT (projected to YE)

A. Fund Development: Raised $1.194 million across all categories (budget $1.235) in large part due to very successful special events.

B. Planned Giving
   1. Added new Perennial Society members: The Dunn-French Family, Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey Drewry (Elizabeth), Mr. Jason C. Kirby and Benjamin J. Faucher, Dr. James Newsome, Mr. and Mrs. Rick Stukes (Beth).
   2. Sent planned giving newsletter to +6,000 households.

C. Database: Completed 90% of database review/clean-up and cumulative giving process.

D. Special Events: Major events exceeded budget expectations:
   1. Spring Plant Sale: gross revenue $266,000 (vs $235,000); net revenue $87,700 (33%, budget 23%)
   2. Antiques at The Gardens: gross revenue $424,000 (vs. $260,000); net revenue $269,000 (63%, budget 40%)
   3. Fall Plant Sale: gross revenue $44,300 (vs. $42,000); net revenue ~$10,500 (24%, slightly more than budget)
   4. Total gross revenue $786,000 actual (vs. $606,000 budgeted)
   5. Held three successful “Flicks Amongst the Flowers” to over 3,000 attendees

E. Public Relations & Marketing
   1. Launched new mobile-focused website 1 December (bbgardens.org)
   2. Launched new mobile-focused class and event registration system 1 November
   3. Awards:
a. Received Platinum Hermes Creative Award for 2014 Antiques at The Gardens marketing campaign
b. Received Gold Hermes Creative Awards for 2014 Antiques at The Gardens Catalog, Dirt Dash Fun Run collateral and Board of Directors Handbook

4. Social Media (statistics as of 23 Nov 15)
   a. Facebook: 38,879 Fans/Likes (up 14% over last year)
   b. Twitter: 9,792 Followers (up 15% over last year)
   c. Instagram: 1,976 (launched in October 2014, up 99% since then)

V. ADMINISTRATION
   A. Structure
      1. Rewrote job descriptions for new vice-president positions (Development, Education, Operations) and Chief Financial Officer
      2. Wrote Job Scorecards for same
      3. Adopted new Organizational Chart (to implement 1 January 2016)
   B. Professional Development
      1. American Public Gardens Association (APGA) Annual Conference: Minneapolis, MN
         a. Spicer, Krebbs and Manion attended; Krebbs and Manion led conference sessions; Krebbs served on program committee (3rd year); Spicer investigated membership and development programs/structure
         b. Spicer submitted program proposal for 2016 (Public/Private Governance)
      2. Other
         a. Steele/Hardy/McMinn led/attended 6 meetings of the Central Alabama Science Educators Exchange
         b. Hughes and Coleman attended seminars on conflict resolution sponsored by the Collaborative Environmental Network of Alabama
         c. Spicer, Banks, Krebbs, Hughes, Long, Steele and Walters attended active shooter training conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms