

TUCSON GARDEN RAILWAY SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
June 28, 2022 at the Tucson Botanical Gardens (TBG)

Board members present (current and newly elected): Jim Miller, Claudia Nelson, Margaret Torres Nelson, Jerry Tulino, John Fennema, Charles Weesner, Dennis Mahar, and Gina Blackwell. Glenn Mitchell also attended. Michelle Conklin, Executive Director of TBG attended for the first half hour to discuss the upcoming changes and long term plans for the Gardens.

There was no formal agenda, the main item to discuss being the future of the layout at the TBG. Margaret supplied a current Treasurer's Report:

As of 06/28/2022,
Checking Acct. Balance \$ 3,736.77
Savings Acct. Balance 15,859.93
Balance Total \$19,596.70
Fiscal Year (2021-22) to Date Recap,
Receipts/deposits \$4,479.35
Expenses 2,783.53
Net revenue \$1,695.82

Including Honorary Members, our membership total is 54 at the end of the current Fiscal Year. To date, 20 families have paid 2022-23 dues.

Michelle explained that the TBG has a 25-year master plan that includes a near total redesign with the exception of the Historical Garden. This plan includes a 2-acre children's garden. She has been buying as much property as she can on the next street to the south and has acquired 3 homes so far. The City has been pressing for a plan to increase parking which is fairly impossible at this juncture. The TBG Board is currently corresponding with Paul Busse of Applied Imagination, Ltd about constructing a layout for the proposed Children's Garden. Apparently his company will, on a contract, set up a layout on an annual basis to remain in place for several months then be removed. It is expected that 1 or 2 TBG employees would be hired to be the layout caretakers, but they are hoping for volunteers to help manage the trains. She stated that the plans are still in design and the construction could not begin before at least 2024 and, more likely, closer to 2026.

Michelle also explained that they truly appreciate the TGRS layout and our involvement at the Gardens. The young families visiting the RR love it (when the trains are running) and encourages them to visit the gardens. The problem with the current location is that it is actually located in the contemplative garden area and there have been some complaints about the noise.

After Michelle left the meeting, there was a lengthy and detailed discussion about the pros and cons of continuing at TBG. It was brought to our attention that the layout was looking pretty tired and worn after about 4-5 years and needed refurbishing. This would fit within the interim timeframe of at least 2-4 years before construction on the Children's garden. Charlie Weesner has drawn up and submitted a draft plan for the area that has been suggested for the layout relocation. The TBG staff will provide labor, gravel, fencing, Etc. if we provide the track, a bridge for over a small culvert, and a few buildings. They will also provide storage for the track after we tear down the current layout beginning 07/05 at 8am. Charlie agreed to supply a final plan to Michelle as soon as the TGRS Board approves.

Several members could see the merit of the proposed area for the relocation, especially if the TBG staff will help with the heavy work (e.g., digging and bringing in gravel). The Board members approved proceeding with plans to relocate the layout but to seek the approval of the general membership at or before the September meeting before instituting the plan. Dennis suggested a committee, to be chaired by Charlie, to explore costs and feasibility. As a 501c3 we are mandated to provide education and promote the hobby of garden railroading and to expand our community outreach whenever possible. It is hoped that we can continue to work with TBG in this endeavor, but many questions remain.

The new president, Dennis Mahar, asked that agenda items be sent to him. Pending the availability of the club secretary, the next scheduled Board meeting will be September 7 at 1pm – location to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,
Gina Blackwell
Secretary