

**Plant Science Research Greenhouse Facility
Faculty Oversight Committee Meeting
November 11, 2020, 10:00 am**

Present: Chrislyn Particka, Director; Erik Runkle, (HORT), Co-Chair; Thomas Sharkey (PRL and BMB), Co-Chair; *Bjoern Hamberger* (BMB); *Mary Hausbeck* (PSM); *Roberto Lopez* (HORT), David Lowry (PLB); *Carolyn Malmstrom* (PLB); Eric Olson (PSM); David Smitley (ENT); Michael Walters (FOR)
Absent: None

Chrislyn opened the meeting by welcoming the new members of the committee (noted in italics above) and providing background information on the \$20M capital improvement project* and how the pandemic has delayed this project. There was also discussion related to completed and planned improvements and information was relayed related to the condition the greenhouses were in when management changed during 2019.

**A recent memo from the university indicates that greenhouse renovation project will remain the top priority for the 2022 Five-Year Capital Outlay Plan.*

Courtyards

The committee discussed the courtyards (areas between greenhouses) and the reasons to begin charging for that space. Several programs use the courtyards to grow plants, but its use has not been regulated in the past, resulting in plants and materials being abandoned. Greenhouse staff maintain the area and courtyard users have access to PSRG-purchased supplies. The committee approved charging 25% of the greenhouse rate for courtyard space, beginning in March 2021. Details will be circulated via the greenhouse listserv.

Power issue

Chrislyn informed the committee about an insufficient power issue in ranges 45 and 46. When the air conditioning units for 46A are running and HPS supplemental lighting is on, the electrical panel feeding these greenhouses is overloaded. IPF provided a quote to refeed the panel, but it is costly. The committee discussed options and decided to evaluate replacing HPS lights with LEDs, thereby reducing load. The greenhouse engineer will run calculations and Chrislyn will report back to the committee.

Sublet system

The committee also discussed potential changes to the sublet system* and determined the best step to take, considering the effects of the pandemic on research, would be to circulate information via the listserv that highlights the intent of the sublet system.

**The sublet system was developed for programs that conduct research in the greenhouse in winter months and move out in the summer to conduct research in the field. These programs must have the same greenhouses each winter. When a house is in the sublet system, the primary user of that house continues to pay the \$75 monthly section charge. If the house is used by another lab, that group will pay the square footage portion of the monthly charge. Before the subletter moves in, the primary user sets the date by which the subletter must move out; this date (and the condition of the house upon return) will be enforced by PSRG staff.*

A number of informational items were included on the agenda for the meeting, and committee members were given the opportunity to ask questions. These items are included below.

Greenhouse environmental control systems

The COVID-19 pandemic put a hold on the possible \$20M capital improvement project. This project would have included installation of environmental control systems in all greenhouse sections. The lack of environmental control systems is highly problematic for users and staff. We have purchased Bartlett ClimateBoss environmental control systems for four greenhouses, along with a WeatherBoss that integrates with them. We will evaluate them through late spring/early summer and if user feedback and greenhouse staff feedback is positive, more will be purchased and installed in additional greenhouses. The cost per greenhouse is affordable on the greenhouse budget if spread out over 2-3 years.

Pesticide applications

Historically, the pesticide coordinator (Lance Forsberg) has not begun pesticide applications until after 4pm. This is sometimes problematic due to extreme heat in the summer (leading to employee safety issues and pesticide efficacy/damage issues) and poor work-life balance for the pesticide coordinator. We are implementing a system where Lance communicates with groups and sometimes performs applications much earlier in the day. Earlier applications necessitate that users be flexible with timing of greenhouse visits, and careful planning and communication, especially in walk-through ranges, is important. A more formal announcement will be circulated soon.

IPF agreement

Chrislyn and the greenhouse staff have been working with the three IPF Maintenance Services Managers (Electrical, Mechanical, and Structural) to develop a document that outlines what is IPF's responsibility and what is the greenhouse's responsibility. IPF has been very cooperative and a lot of what used to be covered under the greenhouse budget will be covered by them.

NSF Mid-Scale Research Infrastructure program

The committee, led by Tom Sharkey, is investigating this program and considering submitting a planning proposal for high-end research greenhouses and/or a phytotron.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 am.

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