



2016 ANNUAL REPORT

DELAWARE BOTANIC GARDENS AT PEPPER CREEK





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AT PEPPER CREEK

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DBG began 2016 in the afterglow of an extremely successful series of foundation grants. With approvals from the Welfare Foundation, the Crestlea Foundation, the Marmot Foundation, and the Longwood Foundation, DBG could confidently project nearly \$1 million of available funds in 2016.

Nonetheless, the first priority for 2016 was to complete the challenge portion of the Longwood Foundation grant. DBG had requested \$1 million from the Longwood Foundation and their creative philanthropy gave us a path to raising \$1.25 million. The Longwood Foundation grant was structured as \$500,000 immediately granted to DBG and \$250,000 held in reserve conditioned upon DBG raising an additional \$500,000 in 16 months. At that point in DBG's fundraising history, we had never raised more than \$100,000 in any 12-month period. With the guidance of our fundraising consultant, Cam Yorkston, we organized a challenge pledge drive and DBG's supporters responded with overwhelming generosity. In just 10 months we were able to announce at our September Farm Dinner that we had exceeded the match requirement by raising \$560,000. Within days, the Longwood Foundation completed their grant with the remaining \$250,000 component.

On December 31, 2016, balance sheet net assets were \$1,399,476 which compares positively to the 2014 year-end assets of \$103,222 and the 2015 year-end assets of \$955,578.

For the first time in the project's 4-year history, the Board had sufficient budget to seriously consider the multi-phased construction at the Piney Neck site. Before we turned one shovel to build the garden, the Board agreed that it was essential to ensure that our plans would result in a rewarding visitor experience at a beautiful and creative public garden. The message that we were receiving from our Advisory Council and supporters was "we only had one chance to make a first impression." As noted in the 2015 Annual Report, in late 2015, Piet Oudolf, the renowned Dutch garden designer, agreed to create one of his iconic meadows at the DBG site. This 2-acre Meadow will feature over 65,000 plants and will be the first example of Piet Oudolf's work in the Mid-Atlantic Region. In early 2016 we contracted with Lake/Flato, an award winning, nationally recognized architecture firm to bring their organic, naturalistic style to the DBG project. The third member of our Dream

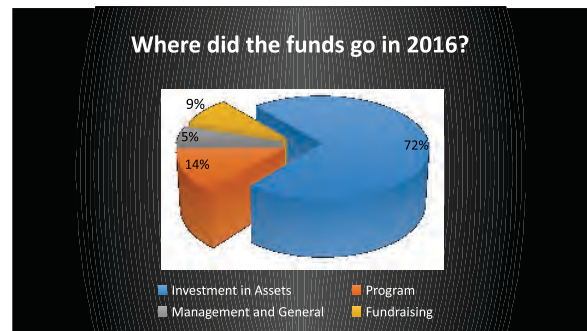
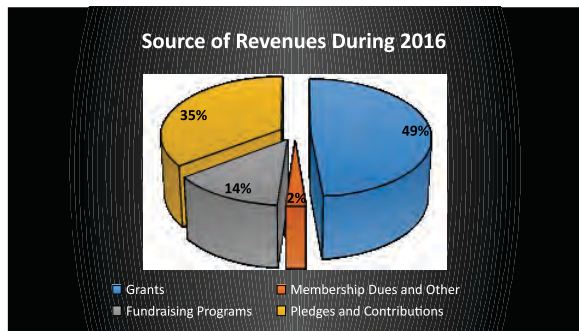
Team is Rodney Robinson, one of the most respected Landscape architects in our region. In February 2016, we brought together for the first time all of these creative minds who were contributing to our project. This "Design Charrette" was an amazing 3-day re-envisioning of the project, including an analysis of the entire 37 acres' natural attributes, and a re-thinking of how to orient the gardens' immediate and future features. The energy and creativity of having Ted Flato, Rodney Robinson and Piet Oudolf working side by side, sketching and re-sketching potential concepts was truly a vivid demonstration of the DBG Dream Team in action.

We added to this, the collaboration of the DBG Reality Team. Pennoni has been DBG's Project engineer since the earliest days of the project. Their pro bono work valued at more than \$140,000 enabled DBG to secure Planning & Zoning and Sussex County Council approvals for the project. We supplemented our construction capabilities by adding Bancroft Construction as the project's construction manager. Bancroft had just completed their work on the Longwood Garden's Fountains. The Design Charrette thus included Pennoni Associates' Nelson Schaefer and Bancroft Construction's Gregg Sawka. The outcome of this process was a Design Concept which captured the innate beauty of the site and enhanced it with an appropriately scaled and creatively imagined visitor experience which was designed and priced within the \$4 million cost the Board had approved for Phase One, "Open the Garden Gates". The entire Design Concept is available on the DBG website delawaregardens.org.



As a follow-up to this three month process, the Board also Commissioned Rodney Robinson of RAS, Inc. and his team of landscape architects to complete the re-visioning of the project by creating a Master Plan for the entire 37 acres. This iterative process was scheduled to be completed in early 2017. The final Master Plan is now available on the DBG website: delawaregardens.org. While these planning steps have slowed the actual start of the visible construction, these essential actions were vital pre-conditions to ultimately creating a successful public garden on Delmarva.

Throughout 2016, the Reality Team, led by Pennoni, continued the detailed design planning and engineering which was funded with \$168,000 set aside with the bipartisan support of Sussex County legislators, led by former State Senator Robert Venables and State Senator Gerald Hocker and Representatives Pete



Schwartzkopf, Danny Short, Tim Dukes and Ron Gray. These funds were managed by the Sussex Conservation District who worked collaboratively with DBG's engineers. These detailed plans for storm water management, the entrance road and parking area will be the basis for the final approvals which must be secured from the relevant State and County agencies before the actual construction can begin. In addition, DBG sought and was granted a six-month extension on the original Conditional Use zoning approval which would have required the project to be "substantially underway" in October 2016. The new target date is April 8, 2017 (which was successfully achieved).

The plant selection for the Meadow was a collaborative effort including DBG, Piet Oudolf and leading nurseries which could grow the selected plants. Given the lead time needed to begin the plants selected for the Meadow, the Board agreed rather than rush to open before the Meadow plants were established, we would use this planning time to select, order and plant the Meadow in the 2017-2018 timeframe with the opening scheduled for 2019.

The Board has continued to supplement our talent by seeking the participation of new members of the Board and Advisory Council. In 2016, we added two new Advisory Council members and two new Board members. Our lecture program and our volunteer program have continued with great success. By alternating the site of the lectures around Sussex County, we have been able to reach more perspective supporters. Our dedicated volunteers under the guidance of Gregg Tepper, the Director of Horticulture, have created new paths and planting areas in the Woodland Gardens enabling a fuller access and appreciation of these very special 12 acres.



The successful Good Earth Farm Dinner raised \$56,000 through the generous support of Good Earth Market, SoDel Concepts and Bank's Wine & Spirits. This total includes donations from the Dinner Sponsors and Chuck Coltman's dinner match challenge which raised over \$22,000. The project continues to receive thousands of hours of time and talent from our Board and volunteers. These efforts are supplemented by the pro bono support

from several leading local companies including Pennoni Associates, Bancroft Construction, RAS Landscape Architects, and Baird Mandalas Brockstedt LLC.

We ended the successful year with our ceremonial ground breaking on December 1, 2016. Before a crowd of over 175 enthusiastic supporters and local leaders, Governor Jack Markell and First Lady Carla Markell led a delegation of notable Delawareans to launch the first phase construction of the Delaware Botanic Gardens. The Governor said, "I'm so impressed with what you've done here." The Governor called the garden's initial development over the past four years "an awesome job." As he told the garden leaders—including President Susan Ryan, Executive Director Sheryl Swed, and Vice President Ray Sander—"You had a very compelling vision." In the coming months, this DBG vision will begin to become a reality with the completion of our re-imagined Master Plan, the final approvals for Phase One of the project, the start of the actual construction at the site, and the planting of the first phase of the Piet Oudolf Meadow. All this will necessitate the accelerated expenditure of DBG's financial resources and continuation of our major fund raising efforts.



The Board remains strongly committed and sincerely thanks all of our supporters. We are all anxious to "Open the Garden Gates" but we also recognize we cannot rush our donors nor Mother Nature and the lead time necessary to have sufficiently mature gardens. We want our visitors' first impressions to be inspired by the beauty of the Meadow and Woodland Gardens.

Together we can make 2017 a banner year for planting and fundraising.





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