

MINUTES

City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board
BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE
October 1, 2020

Meeting Location:
Online Meeting

Mailing Address:
Balboa Park Administration
Building
2125 Park Boulevard
San Diego, CA 92101-4792

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present

William Aaron (arr. 7:10pm)
Victoria Curran
Kenneth Davenport – Vice
Chair (arr. 6:08)
Sarah Dawe
Vicki Granowitz
Katherine Johnston – Chair
Luanne Kanzawa
Don Liddell
Dang Nguyen
Micah Parzen
Johanna S. Schiavoni

Members Absent

Staff Present

Christina Chadwick
Mario Llanos
Susan Lowery-Mendoza

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Johnston called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and read the statement listed on the agenda that this Committee meeting will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of the California Executive Order 29-20 which suspends certain requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 3, 2020

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED MS. DAWE/ MS. KANZAWA

A motion was made by Ms. Dawe and seconded by Ms. Kanzawa to approve the September 3, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried (10-0-0).

REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES – Item 301 was pulled from the agenda.

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT – None

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Ms. Johnston noted the desire to maximize time on the agenda items and the staff or partner updates will be heard next month. Parks and Recreation staff are working with the Planning Department to develop a communications strategy following the committee's request to increase outreach to all types of groups/park users, asking for input by completing the survey. Ms. Chadwick

added that there will also be outreach to park stakeholders to solicit their help as well to get the survey out. The Cultural Partnership is providing opportunities for candidates to express their views on arts funding and the interviews are recorded so that all can view them.

STAFF REPORT - None

BALBOA PARK NON-PROFIT PARTNER UPDATES - None

ACTION ITEMS

Consent

101. None

Adoption

201. None

Special Events

301. None

WORKSHOP ITEMS

401. Comic-Con Museum Renovation and Activation. Presenters: Melissa Peterman, Vice President, Comic-Con Museum and Chris Boattini, Senior Project Manager, KCM Group

Ms. Peterson shared some of the long-range plans for the museum and renovation plans. She noted the history of the museum, a nonprofit focused on education. The museum will capture the magic of the Comic Con event on a year-round basis focusing on the educational, social, and engaging elements of pop culture. Exhibits will be refreshed with a hands-on focus and be available virtually as well. They hope to add a new cultural experience to San Diego and to open in the summer of 2021. The project will be phased with Phase 1 being the educational center. Phase 2 will include the main level and exterior and Phase 3 will focus on the theater. Mr. Boattini gave an update on permitting and contracting of the project. Ms. Peterson stated that they would like to improve the exterior to be more inviting to the Palisades area and the museum, to participate in the placemaking efforts by providing outdoor activations with focusing on health and wellness, public art and community and connectivity.

Committee Comments:

- Excited about museum being in the park, bringing the next generation into the park and being on forefront as to how museums can interface with the future. Happy about the evening presence. Would like to see a restaurant in the Palisades area.
- Excited about the nighttime engagement
- Encourage Parks and Recreation to be creative in activating the area, try to do something new.
- Congratulations to the Comic-Con team.
- Feedback for outdoor activation would be free and open to the public, expand food and beverage options outside, programming could be fun, engaging with children.
- Consider adding listing of board members on website
- Outdoor movie nights would be fun and collaboration with Civic Organist is possible

Balboa Park Committee

August 6, 2020

Page 3 of 5

- Collaborative programs with other museums
- Intergenerational competitions that feature ethnically diverse activities to bring everyone to park
- Leading the way as a museum of the future, like the evening activations
- Would like to address the parking situation and need for additional parking.
- Opportunity for children of all ages, appeals to all generations, provide something for everybody

Public Comment:

- Kevin Swanson states, "I look forward to learning how The City will address the proposed concepts, especially about how leases of the external ground space in front of this and other facilities within Balboa Park will be handled. One way to activate and connect the space between the Central Mesa and the Palisades would be to rebuild the Energy & Water building where the Organ Pavilion Parking Space is presently located while putting into place a comprehensive automated electric vehicle transportation system to serve the Public throughout The Park that connects to external parking facilities and transportation hubs."

Announcement: Mario Llanos stated that anyone wanting to make public comments email him directly and they will be read into the record as the links are not working as listed on the agenda. The Webform link is working however on the City's webpage.

INFORMATION ITEMS

501. The New Starlight Vision. Presenters: Steve Stopper, Save Starlight CEO and Founder and Vicki Estrada, Estrada Land Planning

Mr. Stopper requested the date for the opening of the Palisades to the public and stated that they have a vision for what the place can be while preserving the historic aspects. The goal is to provide an adaptable space for many uses. He introduced Vicki Estrada who presented a new vision for Save Starlight which also has a goal to energize the Palisades day and night. Their vision includes events on small stages; food sales; making full use of all outdoor spaces; improving and adding parking on the south end; terracing the bowl into four levels and walkways that are accessible; a small rear stage; and a green wall with monitors.

Committee Comments:

- Inquired about a timeline – Mr. Stopper stated that they are concentrating on the buildings fronting the Palisades
- Discussion regarding the opening of the Palisades to the public
- Exciting, congratulations and thanks to Steve for not giving up on a vision; everyone is rooting for you
- Hope the project is successful and thanks for your efforts

Public Comment:

- Kevin Swanson states, "There are lots of potential entertainment activities that do not have to depend upon SOUND, although noise canceling headphones for the audience could be integrated into laser mapped performances."

502. Timken Construction and Dumpster Storage. David Kinney, Timken Museum

Mr. Kinney stated that he serves on the Timken Board and is chair of their facility committee. The museum has been open for 55 years and they have decided to close to do a number of needed

Balboa Park Committee

August 6, 2020

Page 4 of 5

projects in the interior of the museum. The fabric will be removed from the walls; the ceiling tiles replaced, the lighting enhanced, and repairs made to the floor. They are also hoping to replace their HVAC system with anti-virus capabilities. They are planning to fence in their front plaza to act as a staging area with dumpster to facilitate the interior projects.

Committee Comments:

- Asked about a timeline – hoping to start in next couple of weeks with a goal of reopening in the spring
- Asked about how long the fence will be up? Suggested beautifying the fencing which can be an eyesore.
- Suggested a kid's art project – renditions of replicated works and the HVAC filter would be great for the park
- Possible collaboration with San Diego High School to display art

Public Comment:

- Kevin Swanson states that perhaps banners from other institutions could be posted on the fences.

503. Balboa Park Star Sky Wheel. Presenters: David Cohn, Cohn Restaurant Group, Ben Pickett, Sky Views of America

Mr. Cohn stated the they have an idea which is bold, addresses reactivation and things to do in the park. It would be a temporary COVID installation for six months. The Prado re-opened in July and has been very quiet. This wheel was brought forward in 2014 in advance of the centennial and it could be fun for six months. The Balboa Park Star in the heart of the park would be a first-class attraction with an incredible view while being COVID safe. A dining experience is an option. Mr. Pickett noted that they have been doing business with the San Diego County Fair. The wheel would be delivered with 22 (53' semi-trailers); it is 148 feet in height and the footprint is 56' x 75'. There would be no cost to the park and would bring visitors.

Committee Comments:

- Love the idea and mixing the modern with historic, families can see the breadth of the park
- Innovative and outside of the box thinking
- Can this item be moved to an action item?
- Terrific idea– what are the next steps? FAA clearance?
- Need more information – a site plan showing how much of the Plaza de Panama is taken up with the wheel, queuing lines, ticket sales and traffic mitigation plan
- Thanked the Cohn's for all that they do for the community
- The Balboa Park Cultural Partnership Executive Committee is requesting additional information and discussion as there are concerns. There are construction projects in area and that the State has not authorized rides to be opened. Invited to come to a meeting to discuss how it can work for everyone.
- Asked about sanitation measures
- Would like the committee to be more innovative; recommend returning to the committee as an action item with a site plan and coming to a mutual understanding with the Cultural Partnership
- This attraction could bring joy and fun at a time when it is needed

Public Comments:

Balboa Park Committee

August 6, 2020

Page 5 of 5

- Jackie Higgins with the Balboa Park Conservancy states that the Cohn's are trusted partners of the Conservancy and longstanding advocates for Balboa Park. We recognize the incredible impact that COVID has had on park visitorship, and in turn, on park organizations and businesses. We look forward to reviewing the detailed proposal, and working collaboratively with David and Lesley, the City, and other park stakeholders to create safe and inspired experiences for all of our visitors.
- Thank you for your efforts to bring people to the park again

SUB-COMMMITTEE REPORTS

601. Land-Use and Policy – No report

602. West Mesa Subcommittee – No report

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' REPORTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: Thursday, November 5, 2020
6:00 P.M.
Online Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowery-Mendoza
District Manager