

MINUTES

City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board
BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE
August 1, 2019

Meeting Location:

Balboa Park Club
2150 Pan American Road
San Diego, CA 92101

Mailing Address:

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

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present

William Aaron
Sarah Dawe
Kenneth Davenport – Vice
Chair
Vicki Granowitz
Katherine Johnston – Chair
Luanne Kanzawa
Don Liddell
Dang Nguyen
Micah Parzen
Johanna S. Schiavoni

Members Absent

Victoria Curran
James Lawson

Staff Present

Charles Daniels
Susan Lowery-Mendoza
Mario Llanos
Jeff Van Deerlin

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Johnston called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 11, 2019

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED MS. SCHIAVONI/MS. GRANOWITZ

A motion was made by Ms. Schiavoni and seconded by Ms. Granowitz to approve the July 11, 2019 meeting minutes. The motion carried (8-0-2) with Mr. Parzen, Mr. Davenport abstaining.

REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES – None

NON -AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Jean Samuels (ceded time to Daniele Laman)

Daniele Laman of the House of Pacific Relations noted the House of Puerto Rico event, noise and traffic issues generated at Comic Con and the need for dumpster access.

Susan Baldwin (ceded time to Mike Stepner)

Mike Stepner noted the lack of public input on projects and design review. The City used to have park planners and builders. Need to re-establish the public design review process.

Wilbur Smith – Re-institution of the design review committee is needed to catch design flaws, saving the City funds and time.

Jesus Benayas commented on past genocide in California that the Governor addressed. Vasco Nuñez de Balboa was not a bad person, he was a human rights activist that lost his life because he wanted to help the Indians.

Howard Blackson spoke to the value of design and design review over the long term, not short-term expediency.

Rene Smith – The Committee's efforts have led to comfort station ad hoc group being formed to find common ground to be effective.

Kevin Swanson – A transportation system and mobility hub is needed in Balboa Park.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairperson Johnston noted the extensive workshop held by the committee on July 11 regarding the Request for Proposal for Inspiration Point and updates will be provided at upcoming committee meetings. Additionally, all of materials from the meeting will be uploaded to the City's website.

STAFF REPORT

None

BALBOA PARK NON-PROFIT PARTNER UPDATES

Balboa Park Conservancy

Tomas Herrera-Mishler shared the following:

- Full support of Palisades improvement project
- In final stages of signage and wayfinding plan which will be coming to the Committee next month
- Phase I of restoration of the historic Cactus Garden is complete and funding found for Phase II.

Balboa Park Cultural Partnership

Michael Warburton shared the following:

- Japanese Friendship Garden received a sustainability award
- Pride Parade participation
- Started data collection

Committee of 100

No report presented

Balboa Park Online Collaborative

No report presented

Friends of Balboa Park

John Bolthouse shared the following:

- National Carousel Day was held July 25
- David Marshall giving a lecture on the history of the Carousel on August 17
- New signs were installed at the Carousel
- Sponsoring an ice cream social at the Twilight Concert on August 13
- Light fixture renovation at the Museum of Man continuing

Save Starlight

Mr. Steve Stopper shared the following:

- City to start damage repair to façade
- Introduced the new chair of their board, Chris Parks
- Fundraiser being held on August 18 from 12 – 5 p.m. at Belching Beaver Pub

ACTION ITEMS

Consent

101. None

Adoption

201. None

Special Events

301. None

WORKSHOP ITEMS

401. None

INFORMATION ITEMS

501. West Mesa Comfort Stations Replacement Update: Presenter Christopher Naval, PE Senior Civil Engineer, City of San Diego Public Works Department.

Mr. Naval provided an update that the project is in the submittal stage and once the drawings are approved, it is anticipated that the prefabricated units will be delivered in six months with construction onsite beginning in March, 2020.

Speakers:

Don Goertz (ceded time to Mary Coakley Munk)

Mary Coakley Munk – thanked Parks and Recreation Department and described Kellogg Park’s restroom design process and experience over the years. A design review committee is needed for park projects. Plans should be standardized for San Diego.

Bruce Damman – Most important project built on the West Mesa in 50 years, yet Public Works never had a public meeting for input and are building comfort stations that can accommodate 500 people per hour and will be an eyesore. Asked that the Conservancy’s Design Review Committee to review the project and advise the Balboa Park Committee of needed design changes before proceeding.

Committee Comments:

- The process has changed, and it is time to ask for more oversight, but not by another group that is not open to the public. The Land Use Sub Committee of the Balboa Park Committee can review projects and provide recommendations.
- Need clarification regarding community input on this project.
Ms. Elizabeth Nichols, Acting Senior Engineer stated that public input was received at Balboa Park Committee meetings on January 2018 and taken into consideration in design. The project has not been redesigned from what was presented and followed Council Policy 600.33.
- Notation of the former Design Review Committee and the need for design professionals to review plans.
- Lessons learned and how to improve this process to be placed on a future agenda.

502. South Palisades Project, Presenter: Charles Daniels, City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Staff

Mr. Van Deerlin, Program Manager stated that we are grateful to Mayor Kevin Faulconer for working to keep the funding from the Plaza de Panama project's \$9.3 million in Balboa Park. The City Council followed suit on June 10th and approved Councilmember Chris Ward's allocation plan for the funding that included \$4.3 million for restroom construction, \$3.5 million to replace the Federal Building roof and \$1.2 million to begin the Palisades Plaza project. Consistent with both the 1989 Balboa Park Master Plan and 1992 Central Mesa Precise Plan, the project had extensive community input, has cleared all CEQA hurdles, and is fully entitled. The project will begin to improve the Palisades in its entirety, by creating a beautiful pedestrian plaza for the South Palisades. Furthermore, it will allow upgrades to the existing tram stop, reduce pedestrian and vehicle conflicts, address drainage issues to prevent flooding hazards currently being experienced by the resident institutions, and activate this underutilized part of the Park for dynamic outdoor public programming.

In tonight's presentation, you will see that the projected net loss of 144 parking spaces will be reduced to 30 by reconfiguring parking in the South Carousel and Inspiration Point parking lots. These parking improvements will occur prior to the commencement of the project. And let me be clear. There is no truth to the contention that the parking reconfiguration will be achieved by creating smaller parking spaces. This has never been a practice in Balboa Park and never will. As to timing, we anticipate completing the Palisades project within the next six months. We are excited about this high-profile park improvement project and look forward to working with you on its successful implementation.

Park Designer, Charles Daniels presented information regarding six goals of the Master Plan that guide decision making in the park. He stated the project goals which are to reduce/eliminate vehicular and pedestrian conflicts, improve tram service and accessibility; minimize parking loss; reclaim parking lot for park uses per the Precise Plan; provide public space during park construction projects. A project overview was provided which will reflect the historic fabric of what was there in 1935.

Speakers:

Councilmember Bry stated that Balboa Park is special to her and her family and she came to hear the presentation and comments.

Speakers (49)- In favor

Richard Brebante (ceded time to Mike Kelly/Robert Thiele)

Robert Wohl (ceded time to Mike Kelly/Robert Thiele)

Ron Buckley (ceded time to Mike Kelly/Robert Thiele)

Thomas Jackson (ceded time to Mike Kelly/Robert Thiele)

Kevin Bentz (ceded time to Mike Kelly/Robert Thiele)

Roger Showley (ceded time to Mike Kelly/Robert Thiele)

Barbara Brown (ceded time to Mike Kelly/Robert Thiele)

Danny Codd (ceded time to Mike Kelly/Robert Thiele)

Jean Samuels (ceded time to Mike Kelly/Robert Thiele)

Chester Yamaga (ceded time to Mike Kelly/Robert Thiele)

Ross Porter (ceded time to Mike Kelly/Robert Thiele)

Mike Kelly – Committee of 100 –Pan American Plaza shouldn't be known as Palisades Parking Lot, should be a public space, vision of the Masterplan needs to be implemented, and input from all stakeholders and a public process will make this work with improved transportation within the park.

Vicki Estrada- 1980 started working on the Master Plan which took 9 years countless meetings held, several more years for the Precise Plan, both of which have been through the EIR process parking,

space was never intended to be a parking lot nor is it important to people to park in front with a shuttle system.

Robert Thiele- Agrees that a design review committee is needed, showed some plans of how the space could look, working on the exteriors of several of the buildings, and this is a beginning of a phased project of the way it was in 1935.

John Bolthouse – Friends of Balboa Park are willing to help to ensure the project benefits all stakeholders

Carl Strona-project will attract people, concerned about retaining the use the area behind the Automotive Museum and the comfort station being open all night leads to camping in the area.

David Swarrens – restoration of the plaza per the Master plan

Charles Kaminski – car free spaces in other countries, Americans need to walk for health

Kathy Hunyor – need a parking garages outside of main core of the park with tram service

Kevin Swanson – automated electric shuttles needed throughout the park, divert SANDAG funds

Willian Van Dusen – Should have moved forward with project thirty years ago

Stephen Hill –expressed support of project by Assemblymember Todd Gloria

Susan Baldwin (ceded time to David Lundin)

Dorothy Gesick (ceded time to David Lundin)

Bonnie Bekken (ceded time to David Lundin)

Judy Swink (ceded time to David Lundin)

Linda Lahmann (ceded time to David Lundin)

Erik Hanson (ceded time to David Lundin)

Vi Mooberry (ceded time to David Lundin)

Rosie Hogan (ceded time to David Lundin)

Chris Olsen (ceded time to David Lundin)

David Lundin – Balboa Park Heritage Organization asked what would George Marston and Kate Sessions think? No one visits a national historic landmark to visit a parking lot. Support plans and encouraged staff and committee to move forward. The transformation of the Plaza de Panama is an example of a similar successful project. Suggests perpendicular parking on Balboa Drive to add parking.

Cia Barron (ceded time to Amie Hayes)

Ann Zahner (ceded time to Amie Hayes)

Loretta McNeely (ceded time to Amie Hayes)

Marlena Krcelich (ceded time to Amie Hayes)

Amie Hayes – For the 1935 California Pacific International Exposition, the newly completed Pan-American Plaza in the Balboa Park's Palisades was a landscaped pedestrian plaza encircled by park buildings. Eventually it as overrun with parked cars. Both the Master Plan and Precise Plan call for the Pan-American Plaza to be restored. SOHO has submitted letter of support to restore the South Palisades Plaza which is consistent with the Committee of One Hundred's larger restoration goal for this entire plaza as well as the City's stated goals for the project.

Stan Canaris (ceded time to Steve Stopper)

Sandra Malachowski (ceded time to Steve Stopper)

Philip Daniloff (ceded time to Steve Stopper)

Daniel J. Woodard (ceded time to Steve Stopper)

Chris Parks (ceded time to Steve Stopper)

Steve Stopper – On behalf of Save Starlight Organization is in support of the project. Starlight Bowl is one of the four institutions adjacent to the Pan-American Plaza and the project. Thanked all for their work on the project.

Jim Kidwell (ceded time to Andrea Zinko)

Julie Otto (ceded time to Andrea Zinko)

Mary Otto (ceded time to Andrea Zinko)

Andrea Zinko – Representing Marie Hitchcock Puppet Theater, stated that parents are afraid that their children will get hit by cars, there is nothing to keep people in the area and no availability of

picnic grounds for families. They do have four disabled people working in the theater that do need a close disabled parking space to the theater.

John Fallkey – Impressed with work put in to project planning. Need for parking is important and to improve transportation modes. Need a plan of action in a changing era to help the park become the class act that it needs to be.

Stan Canaris – Compared San Diego to Los Angeles and Anaheim. Disneyland was built in mid 50's, got rid of parking lots so park could spread out which is the pride of Anaheim. Balboa Park is the pride of San Diego. Resurrect the Palisades area to be shining stars in the park.

Alan – No Ace Parking or paid parking in the park

Speakers – None Opposed

Speakers (3) – Neutral

Ricard Lareao – on board the Committee of 100 and the Air and Space Museum. Commend the plans for the plaza, Plan B could be undergrounding parking. Improve walking and access.

Michael Warburton (ceded time to Robert Sidner)

Robert Sidner – members of the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership support improving the Palisades area, requesting the opportunity to participate in a study and refinement of a comprehensive plan to ensure plans meets needs prior to implementation. Encourage strategic planning and prioritization of projects to meet needs of park visitors including access, parking and services to the area. Mobility solutions and refinement of tram services are needed. The project overview does not include restriping of existing parking lots to create more parking.

Committee Comments:

- Is the comfort station part of the project?
Yes, 4.3 million for comfort stations includes the Palisades Comfort Station.
- Asked for information on the park's process and design review process by which this project was selected to move forward? Were conversations made with institutions affected? Many projects could have been selected in the Master Plan.
This project has been discussed for many years. Funding initiated the beautification process. Other projects happening in the area and concerned about pedestrian conflicts. Full support of Mayor's and Council's office.
- Never been an organized series of well thought out park projects. Glad cars are out of the Plaza de Panama, but think it is ugly. Well- meaning people come up with a plan and it gets supported, doesn't get well vetted or thought out.
- Need to update Master plan and prioritize projects and funding, need leadership to come together as a park and not be dysfunctional.
- Strategic planning, prioritization needed and identify funding, better processes are followed on planning committees than park and recreation committees.
- How will process for this project proceed now? Funds just allocated, will have a workshop with institutions is warranted, will ask Vicki Estrada to help. Project will be managed by Parks and Recreation with a collaboration with Streets Division.
- Stated support for the project, along with public input
- Timeline of project? Start project in September and will take six months
- Is there a parking problem in the park or are we past that? Parking spaces being created aren't in as favorable areas.

Mr. Carterette, Project manager with SANDAG reported that the project is close to going out for bid. He provided a project overview, key goals of the project, and showed slides of the configurations by area.

Speaker:

David Swarens – Consultation with community needed and encouraged an active link to 26th St. and Golden Hill

SUB-COMMMTTEE REPORTS

601. Land-Use and Policy – No report

602. West Mesa Subcommittee – No report

COMMITTEE MEMBER'S REPORTS

Ms. Granowitz asked the members when they would like to receive the draft bylaws.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: Thursday, September 5, 2019
6:00 P.M.
Balboa Park Club
2150 Pan American Road West
San Diego, CA 92101

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowery-Mendoza
District Manager