

MINUTES

City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board
BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE
February 3, 2022

Meeting Location:

Online Meeting

Mailing Address:

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

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present

Katherine Johnston
Dang Nguyen
Allison Soares
Brer Marsh
Victoria Curran
William Aaron Jr
Makeda Cheatom
Sarah Dawe
Chris Eddy

Members Absent

Molly Chase - Chair
Howard Blackson
Micah Parzen

Staff Present

Codi Vierra
Christina Chadwick
Victor Nava
Johnny Chou

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chairperson Katherine Johnston called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Johnny Chou 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 January 6, 2022

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED MS. DAWE / MR. NGUYEN

A motion was made by Ms. Dawe and seconded by Mr. Nguyen to approve the January 6, 2022 meeting minutes with the following amendments.

Item 201 Committee Comments by Brer Marsh:

- Florida Canyon has been designated for closure in the Balboa Park Master Plan.
- Roundabouts Increase traffic volume and encouraging more traffic seems contrary to the Balboa Park Master Plan.
- See this as further expansion of vehicle use in park and the best thing for Florida Canyon would be to expand its use by Balboa Park users rather than vehicles.
- Additional discussion on possible closure is required before this is installed.

Item 201 Public Comments by Mike Bullock:

- Correction from ... signalized intersections are delay to signalized intersections are deadly.

The motion carried (9-0).

REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCES - None

NON- AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Web Form – Michael J Welch, a resident who has lived in a condo building on the perimeter of Balboa Park for 17 years, and a longtime member of Friends of Balboa Park. He is also the Chair of the Community Relations Committee of the Del Prado HOA. The problem with the homeless and the mentally ill who camp and live in the Park, is no longer tolerable. The situation must change. We want our Park back. The groups and agencies within the Park have to take a stance and insist that there are laws on the books already to solve this problem, are enforced. He understands the problem is complicated and compassion is needed, but not acting is actually the most non-compassionate route. These people do not belong camping in front of museums, sidewalks, parking lots and grassy areas of Balboa Park. Forever Balboa Park needs a plan to exert its influence to remedy this situation. Again, we who use and love the Park, want it back. This problem should be on the agenda of every monthly meeting the Board of Directors has. He was here to see what is being done, and what you feel can be done.

Daniele Laman HPR International Cottages Liaison reported Cottages are temporarily closed, House of China will present a two-day lawn program on February 19th and 20th, they are celebrating Chinese New Year. House of Israel received a broken window a couple weekends ago but that's the only one that HPR Cottages has experienced in about two months. General question of how to join the Balboa Park Cultural partnership safety task force.

Mike Bullock, car parking policy, the way the Zoo is run and especially car parking there it really matters. People see that and it influences a lot of people. Human survival requires climate stabilization and the first climate stabilization for the industrialized world is in 2030. We also must reduce driving. Every employee car parking lot needs to be operated for the financial gain of the employees and needs to be operated by a third-party vendor that has the expertise. Zoo parking is free for the employees, it's free for the public and parking is never free and is bad for a car parking system. Once a successful example was in operation and there is a third-party vendor every company will want to do that. They will make more money off their parking because parking is expensive. Zoo is expensive to go in but very cheap to park your car, it should not be that way.

Web Form – Michael Tassiello, As chronicled in the front-page article in the San Diego UT on 1/31/22, San Diego has an insufficient number of pickleball courts to provide recreation for the growing number of folks, young and old, rich and poor, who enjoy this sport. Balboa Park has more than sufficient unused land to accommodate sensible development for this purpose. Morley Field is the logical location, but there are numerous other areas in Balboa Park's 1200 acres that would be suitable. The limited hours set aside for pickleball at the Activity Center are not sufficient. Please consider establishing a working group to look into this issue. What would be the reason not to do so? (I tried, but was unable, to upload the UT article.)

Web Form - Jack Carpenter, The Friends of Balboa Park "Parking and Circulation study" confirmed that insufficient parking is a crisis in the park. We are told that the restriping on Park Blvd. will result in fewer parking spaces. If they used the bikeway on 5th Ave as a model it would be safer and not eliminate parking.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – No report

STAFF REPORT –

City Council Third District – Codi Vierra reported the District 3 newsletter went out during the end of January. Budget priorities came out, information of community conversations is

starting in the spring possibly March. Feel free to reach out to the District 3 office with anything Balboa Park related or anything in District 3.

Assistant Deputy Director – Christina Chadwick reported, SB 946 and Sidewalk Vending, this is an issue of interest and concern impacting the parks system citywide, not just Balboa Park. The City recognizes the need for regulations and licensing enforcement. A local ordinance that will regulate sidewalk vendors in compliance with Senate Bill 946 is scheduled for public discussion at the City’s Economic Development and Intergovernmental Relations Committee on February 9th. We encourage your participation at the meeting, and of course, we look forward to Mayor Gloria signing the final ordinance following the City Council’s discussion and formal approval. Second update, City of San Diego Strategic Plan, Mayor Gloria recently released an update to the City of San Diego Strategic Plan. Please check out the new Strategic Plan website or download the plan in English and Spanish. Pershing Roundabout Item and Florida Drive, last month the Committee approved an item for the installation of the roundabout on Pershing. The motion included requests for the closure of Florida Drive among other things, however only the Pershing roundabout was publicly noticed. Per the Brown Act, this Committee is unable to discuss the conditions brought forward because they were not on the agenda. In the future, staff will clarify what discussions are appropriate based on the agenda and/or pull the item. Budget Season, the City’s IBA Office will give budget explainer next month. The IBA has also released its annual budget memo outlining the budget priorities of the City Council. We encourage you to play a role in the budget process by advocating for park needs. Special Events Pilot: Mixed Age Alcohol Policy, the Special Events Department has introduced a Mixed Age Alcohol pilot program for large events. I will send a handout to stakeholders via email for those interested in what this pilot allows for. Pershing Bikeway Project, the Pershing Bikeway project has started. We will continue to provide community updates on park impacts as the project moves forward. Our Chair Molly Chase did have her baby, his name is Wyatt, we are all thinking about Molly and wishing her and her husband and her new baby all the best in the first few days as a family. We encourage you all to congratulate her with us.

District Manager – Johnny Chou reported, Collage 2022 Dance Concert by San Diego Civic Dance Association concert will begin Sunday February 6, 2022 at 2:00pm at Casa Del Prado Theater. Victor Johnson has replaced Marie Wiggins since her retirement, and we welcome him in his new position as the Area Manager for Balboa Park Facilities.

District Manager – Victor Nava reported, Parks and Recreation, City-wide Support Services team helped with the peace pole installation. It is located on the southern entrance to the Cottages. They also repaired two benches and bricks at the Ginko Tree Circle. The City-wide team repaired the sidewalk leading to the entrance of the Centro Cultural de la Raza. Lastly, Balboa Park, Central Mesa staff installed new plants in the planters near the Museum of Us and made some corrections to the irrigation system.

BALBOA PARK NON-PROFIT PARTNER UPDATES (Time allotted to each speaker is determined by the Chair; however, comments are limited to no more than three (3) minutes)

Forever Balboa Park – Jackie Higgins thanked nearly 50 attendees from all over the park and the City that participated in the CEO finalist interviews last week. The finalist interviews have been completed and we hope to have an announcement by the end of February. Forever Balboa Park met their end of year fifty-thousand-dollar challenge for the end of year giving campaign which generated over a hundred thousand dollars. Thanks to all who continue to support our work and our advocacy for Balboa Park. The County of San Diego awarded Forever Balboa Park with a grant that supports the satellite visitor center kiosk that will be in the Palisades area. Will be working in partnership with the City and other stakeholders to implement this in the coming year. The park improvement committee has received four

grant applications which will be reviewed in March for recommendations to the San Diego Foundation Balboa Park funds and that meeting will be Wednesday, March 9, 2022. Looking forward to the design and implementation of the fire and suppression system as well as the structural restoration of the historic Carousel, which is celebrating its one hundredth year anniversary of being in Balboa Park this year. Bill Brown is celebrating his fiftieth year of working on the Carousel in Balboa Park, congratulations to Bill. Forever Balboa Park is continuing to work in collaboration with the City on the Botanical Building and Gardens Restoration Project. Forever Balboa Park also continues to address the inclusion diversity equity and accessibility through our work on the bilingual signage, bilingual brochures, and bilingual videos for park visitors. The Board of Trustees has drafted and accepted a DEIA statement for the organization. Partnering with City groups and Community groups as well as our Tree Stewards to replace and replant sixty trees across the Park this season with more to come in February and further in Spring. Working with the city and the rose garden leadership team to complete some long overdue upgrades to this garden in January following the annual hard pruning of the roses all the irrigation sprinkler heads were replaced with pressure regulating heads, next you'll be seeing some trees pruning to allow more sun onto the rose beds as well as some updated signage in that garden, so thanks to the dedication of the Rose Garden Volunteers and the City staff for keeping this garden looking absolutely stunning. Forever Balboa Park volunteers have provided over eighteen hundred of service in January of 2022, nearly sixty thousand dollars' worth of service to the Balboa Park.

Balboa Park Cultural Partnership – Peter Comiskey report each year the Cultural Partnership invites Trustees, Board and Steering Committee members to attend an event called Trustees Connected. This is an opportunity to elevate the usual discussion to sharing passion for the park. Each of you will receive an invitation for the 2022 Trustees Reconnected for May 18 at 6pm and I ask you to save the date now. We are in budget season. I would ask those listening and members of the committee to join in our advocacy efforts around the following topics. Consistent and focused messaging has the best potential to garner support. We have additional wording around each of these matters should you wish to provide your own commentary. Funding for the Commission for Arts and Culture. Each year we must fight for essential funding for baseline operations for the city's core Arts and Culture programs – developed and delivered by over 100 non-profit partners including all of the cultural organizations in the park. We are advocating for the devastating cuts to Arts and Culture be reversed and the funding return to the pre-pandemic level of \$14.3M. Safety and Security: Recent issues in the park, highlighted by the elevated arson activities, show that an additional and meaningful security presence is highly necessary for the Central Mesa for every night – 7 days per week. In addition, the increased workload that could be delivered by the coming consideration of the Street Vending Ordinance and responses to incidents within the park during the day require a boost in both ranger and police presence. Unsheltered Services: We all seek for an empathic approach to assisting the unsheltered individuals in the Park. The numbers of unsheltered people in the park is growing and must be addressed with dedicated support, such as a homeless outreach team, allocated to the central mesa. Parks and Recreation: Maintaining the amazing asset that is Balboa Park requires people. We need to invest in additional team members to raise the level of maintenance within the park – particularly as the pandemic wanes and large numbers of visitors return to Balboa Park. The capital reinvestment need has not diminished, even though some significant capital maintenance programs are underway. A number of buildings continue to require capital investment in roofs and other infrastructure, and we must take the next step to fund the restrooms by returning or re-funding the money that had been allocated for that project. There is more, there always is, but for this budget cycle these are the issues that must be addressed post-haste.

Balboa Park Online Collaborative – No report.

Committee of 100 – Roger Showley reported that they are finishing up the restoration of the Auto Museum. If anyone is interested, they are welcome to join sometime next week to visit the fabrication factory. Mike is finishing up the two Grizzly Bear statues that go on top of the building. With the help of the Parks and Recreation staff, they are now authorized now to investigate the municipal gym structure to see how the application of the ornamentation replacement can be done and that's the key to getting that project finished. Policy matters, urging the City to bring back design and review and design assistance in the Park. The City Attorney has vetoed that idea. The Balboa Park Committee should include more experts in design and development who can advise on the details of new projects. It requires the appointed authorities to have the same priority that we think there should be but that's the state of that request so it's they're not going to approve the idea of a special experts committee unless the city council changes ordinances and makes that possible. Hope that your committee will discuss on an agenda next month because it's to your benefit to get expert opinions on these things and you aren't getting that so much as you could be. We are busy working with the City's Planning Department the Parks and Recreation Department to master plan the rebuilding of the San Diego High School and make it a much more park oriented facility than it has been for 140 years and everyone seems to be very excited about that. The Planning Department is going to be applying for a grant to make that planning effort, which is very good news. Ross Porter is the new President of the Committee of 100. He was very active in running the speckles organ society for many years now he's going to be the President of the Committee of 100 which is great news. Thanks so much to Catherine for all your support.

Save Starlight – No report.

ACTION ITEMS

Consent

101. SOHO Grant Opportunity Letter of Recommendation

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED MR. NGUYEN / MS. CURRAN

A motion was made by Mr. Nguyen and seconded by Ms. Curran to approve the SOHO Grant Opportunity Letter of Recommendation. The motion carried unanimously (9-0)

ADOPTION

201. None

Special Events

301. SDAM's Shifting Gears Car Rally

Public Comment:

- Mike Bullock, climate crisis, cars in our county are responsible for forty-one percent of the greenhouse emissions, electricity is twenty-five percent, methane gas is seven percent. Cars are a huge part of the problem. Climate stabilization target is 2030 to electrify cars. 1916 project discussing plantations, they had a lot in common with a Nazi work camp where humans were dehumanized in large numbers and suffering that was outrageously bad. We are trying to survive and do not want to miss the 2030 stabilization. We need to have some balance about cars. Happy to volunteer and willing to present a PowerPoint presentation.

Committee Comment: Ms. Cheatom and Mr. Marsh

- Ms. Cheatom, Happy Black History Month, didn't understand plantation. We need to think about the words that we are using and have insight. Grandfather worked at the plantations; he was a slave.
- Mr. Marsh appreciated Mike's comments. He has built and taken apart cars and put together cars. Missions of the Park is to know it's cultural outlook on the community and on the City. Cars are undeniably a large part of that. Mission of the San Diego Auto Museum is in line with what Mike is saying. Cars are a part of our Culture and eventually gasoline engines are going to be in museums only. We can't deny the environmental impacts and externalities of the automobile. We can find space to enjoy them as objects of art and is an important part of our history and culture of the City. Suggestions of raising awareness of the impacts of cars are valid but would argue that no one is more aware of the impacts of the declining viability of automobiles than classic car owners. Think it going to be a good event.

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED MR. AARON JR. / MR. EDDY

A motion was made by Mr. Aaron Jr. and seconded by Mr. Eddy to approve the SDAM's Shifting Gears Car Rally. The motion carried unanimously (9-0)

WORKSHOP ITEMS (No action taken; subject discussed by the committee and staff.)

401. None

INFORMATION ITEMS

501. Fiscal Year 2022 Parks and Recreation Grants Update. Presenter: Ryan Barbrick, Supervising Management Analyst, Parks and Recreation Department

Public Comment:

- Daniele Laman, Chollas Lake is going to be done in winter of 2022? Yes, only for the electrical upgrades to bring electricity to the park.

Committee Comment: Mr. Marsh

- Ms. Marsh noticed eight million listed for the Botanical Building Restoration, understands that there was money previously diverted from restrooms updates and restorations towards the Botanical Building. Does that mean money might go back towards restrooms. Restroom issues seem to be pressing.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

COMMITTEE MEMBERS REPORTS – None

ADJOURNMENT

Notice of Next Balboa Park Meeting: March 3, 2022
6:00 P.M.
Virtual Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Victor Nava
District Manager