

# MINUTES

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

**Meeting Location:**  
Online Meeting

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

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Members Present**

Molly Chase - Chair  
Howard Blackson  
Dang Nguyen  
Allison Soares  
Brer Marsh  
William Aaron Jr  
Micah Parzen  
Sarah Dawe  
Chris Eddy

**Members Absent**

Katherine Johnston  
Victoria Curran  
Makeda Cheatom

**Staff Present**

Codi Vierra  
Christina Chadwick  
Victor Nava  
Johnny Chou

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chairperson Katherine Johnston called the meeting to order at 6:05 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   MR. AARON JR / MR. EDDY**

A motion was made by Mr. Aaron Jr and seconded by Mr. Eddy to approve the February 3, 2022 meeting minutes with the following amendments.

The motion carried (7-0-2).

**REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCES - None**

**NON- AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT**

Daniele Laman HPR International Cottages Liaison reported Cottages are having lawn programs, March 6<sup>th</sup> House of India and March 13<sup>th</sup> House of Ireland, March 20<sup>th</sup> House of Palestine and March 27<sup>th</sup> House of Iran. All the Cottages are open, hoping the brand-new Cottages will open after the walkthrough with Parks and Recreation. House of Ukraine is collecting children's clothes, shoes and diapers March 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> until 5:00pm. If anyone would like to help in other ways, check the House of Ukraine's website.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT** – Chairperson Molly Chase thanked Katherine for chairing last week's meeting and Christina, Johnny, and Victor for helping out while she had a baby boy and looking forward to bringing him to Balboa Park for the first time. Very excited about Mike coming onboard as the Chief Park Ranger, he taught and gave her tours of Balboa Park when she was a council rep for Todd working with Steve Hill. Our workshop item is the beginning of an important discussion about design and review. Members of this committee

and the public have been working hard for quite some time. Hopes that this starts the conversation that will bring multiple items and eventually action items that this committee will see that will have lasting impacts.

**STAFF REPORT –**

City Council Third District – Codi Vierra reported as mentioned last month budget priorities submitted, and community conversation tour coming up, several have been scheduled so far and you can sign up virtually right now and they are broken down by neighborhood but you can attend any of them. Focusing on Balboa Park and the Bankers Hill at the Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00am conversation. Sign up for the District 3 newsletter, they are sent out at the end of the month. Council recently passed the vending ordinance, Council Whitburn wanted to thank District 3 and elsewhere that called in and sent emails regarding needing regulation of vending within Balboa Park. It does prohibit sidewalk vending in certain areas of the park as well as during the summer moratorium. There's going to be an annual review to see if any further additions are needed and looking forward to seeing this come to fruition.

District Manager – Johnny Chou reported, San Diego Civic Dance Collage had three very successful weekends in February. The performances were both livestreamed and in person.

Question by Brer Marsh – Information on the Park Boulevard Bikeway Project?

Answered by Christina Chadwick – Currently the proposal is in the custody of Transportation Department, so as mentioned last month they are continuing to review the designs and when they are ready for public display they will present them to this committee.

District Manager – Victor Nava reported, we are excited to hear the announcement of Michael Ruiz as the Chief Park Ranger and additional funding for an additional security guard for the Central Mesa.

**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 reported that there was a big announcement yesterday, Dr. Elizabeth Babcock will be joining us April 4<sup>th</sup> as the first president and CEO of Forever Balboa Park. After an inclusive interview process and candidate review Dr. Babcock was selected and approved by the Board of Trustees. Very excited to have her begin her new role at the beginning of April of 2022. Dr. Babcock joins us from The California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. Where she served as the Chief of Public Engagement Officer and the Roberts Wilson's Dean of Education for more than ten years. Congratulations to Michael Ruiz for his new position and excited to work with him in his new capacity. Moving forward with some bids for the construction restoration and fire suppression system for the historic Carousel which is celebrating its hundredth anniversary in Balboa Park. Continuing to collaborate with the City on phase one and phase two of the Botanical Building and Garden Projects. Volunteers continue to support the City and Parks and Recreation in various ways, a large group of volunteers planted 10 trees on the west mesa around the redwood bridge club. We continue to look for opportunities for volunteers to support and expand upon the work that we do in Balboa Park.

Balboa Park Cultural Partnership – Peter Comiskey report two items the Cultural Partnership's work to develop a community-driven experience plan for the common spaces of the cultural district is reaching the milestone of selecting a project vendor. After more than a year collaborating with stakeholders and community members, the Balboa Park District Community Advisory Board and Taskforces have made a selection and are starting the contracting process. Second, 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. 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 \$14.3 million. 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. With the passing of the Street Vending ordinance, the park will have a disproportionately high education and enforcement requirement. This will fall on to Park Rangers. We will need an increased presence for park rangers, with a dedicated function for vending management, for at least the next twelve months. Services for those who are unsheltered. We all seek 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.

Balboa Park Online Collaborative - No report.

Committee of 100 - No report.

Save Starlight - No report.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

##### **Consent**

**101. None**

##### **Adoption**

**201. None**

##### **Special Events**

**301. None**

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

**401. None**

#### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

**501. Design Review Exploratory Committee** Presenter: Mike Stepner, Exploratory Committee Chair, Committee of 100

Committee Comment: Mr. Blackson, Mr. Marsh, Mrs. Chadwick and Mr. Parzen

- Mr. Blackson, we have been working on this for a while and appreciate Mike for coming here and presenting. Very professional and always wonderful and has been such a great mentor and appreciate what you have given to San Diego and design profession. I can support this in anyway, yes, I will. Mr. Marsh is a mid-century modernist and Balboa Park is actually a classical San Diego architectural expression that expresses the best of San Diego, so I'm curious the hear what Mr. Marsh says because I love design and love Balboa Park and thankful to be here. Was kidding about Mr. Marsh about mid-century pro tendencies because all architecture and better

design is good for San Diego, it's good for our citizens, good for our visitors, good for making people feel connected, good for society. It's not an extra additive cost to San Diegans, it's an extra added value that we can do as a volunteer group. Thank you, Mike Stepner. I don't want this to go without being mentioned, part of the root of this is for the bathrooms issue. Where there's too much money too much time and not enough bang for our buck. We think that this design review process will help us with those types of issues into the future. As we move into the next generation of Balboa Park leadership.

- Mr. Marsh, thanks Mike, looking forward to this, architecture is a team sport. Having the opportunity to not only participate in the development of projects but also to hear the comments of your peers even when they're classists. I think makes all projects better, you can walk around the park and you can see many different architectural styles represented from the Timken Museum to the building of the Panama 66, which was designed by Bob Mosher. To the Palisades where you have some unusual streamline modern architecture. The Park itself is actually quite eclectic. You need more than one perspective to try and make sure the right things get built. There are so many good people that want to participate that providing a platform for them or a forum, I think can only be for good. Questions or curious have the public would participate in this or how other members, design professionals would be selected in addition to people from the Balboa Park committee. How that committee would actually function.
- Mrs. Chadwick, thank Mike Stepner and all of the participates for the working group for all of the work that you have done recently over that past year to develop this proposal. First, wanted to make clear that that this Balboa Park committee is not a technically a community planning group. To the extent that it's referenced in the slides that's inaccurate. If it was considered a Community Planning Group there would be other council policies that would apply to the governance of what we're trying to create here. Wanted to make sure that's clear for the record. Referring to Mr. Marsh question on how individuals from the community would be recruited or could participate, we will get into more specifics in April. The subcommittee would be subject to brown act requirements would meet which would mean that all of the meetings would be publicly available to anybody that wanted to participate or observe discussions that would be brought before the subcommittee. Specific to people participating actually as members of the committee it would only be available to those that are sitting on the Balboa Park Committee exclusively, appointed to the committee that would have a formal participatory role.
- Mr. Parzen thanked Mike for the presentation and all of the work that you have put into it. I know you had a lot of meetings and a lot of perspectives we really appreciate bringing in Jim and Bill from the partnership. I think we all agree that design is critically important. It's also clear that design is subjective in many levels. Encourage as you move forward that you do bring on a very diverse set of perspectives as Brer mentioned in particular bringing on younger people who may see sort of the future of the park very differently from those of us who have been here for a long time and are in a different generation. As I understand it a subcommittee would be advisory to the committee which is advisory. Correct? Yes. Are you open to a beta test period? I know you had suggested a change in the bylaws creating a full-fledged subcommittee. It may make sense to start as a beta test period and create a committee to the extent that's allowed by our existing bylaws. Give it a trial run for a year and see how it goes see what kind of issues come up and if it is all going according to plan and accomplishing the objectives. Then go for a bylaws overhaul. Is that something you would consider?

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS REPORTS** – None

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Notice of Next Balboa Park Meeting:**      April 7, 2022  
6:00 P.M.  
Virtual Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Victor Nava  
District Manager