

MINUTES

City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board **BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING**

April 24, 2013

Meeting Held

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

Jeri Dilno
Mick Hager
Luanne Kanzawa
David Kinney
Don Liddell
Mike McDowell
Minnie Rzeslawski
Rob Steppke
David Strickland

Members Absent

Andrew Kahng
Michael Singleton

Staff Present

Susan Lowery-Mendoza, Balboa Park
Bruce Martinez, Balboa Park

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Kinney called the meeting to order at 6:20 P.M. The regularly scheduled Balboa Park Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, May 2, 2013. A presentation regarding Mayor Filner's plan for temporary traffic management for Plaza De Panama will be heard tonight. This is an information item; therefore the Committee will not be taking any action. Mr. Kinney thanked Mayor Bob Filner for his great support of Balboa Park.

INFORMATION ITEM

Balboa Park Temporary Traffic Management Plan - Mayor Filner

Mayor Filner thanked the Balboa Park Committee and the public for their sincere interest in Balboa Park which is the jewel of San Diego. We will be celebrating the Park during the 2015 Centennial Celebration. Mayor Filner noted that he took his oath of office in this very room in Balboa Park Club. Twenty-five years ago he was the City Councilman for Balboa Park and they were thinking of a way to remove the cars from the center of Plaza de Panama. Their vision included a pedestrian experience through core of park, parking on the perimeter and a tram system.

Mayor Filner stated the following:

- He thanked Dr. Jacobs for his Plaza de Panama plan
- This plan will renew and meet the aims of Dr. Jacobs' plan, but on a temporary basis without permanent changes
- There will be a need to evaluate how the changes are viewed by our visitors, residents, museum institutions and all those who have a stake in the park
- The Cabrillo Bridge will close for four or five months in January 2104 for seismic retrofit and rehabilitation and so we may as well do it now to prepare for the closure
- There's no need for a lot of consultants for this project, we need to have input and control the outcome of the project
- Balboa Park will prepare for the Cabrillo Bridge closing and traffic changes for the Centennial Celebration
- He would like to have things in place by Memorial Day and reclaim the core of the park for pedestrians

Alan Jones, Deputy Chief of Staff presented the following plan details:

- Monday through Friday circulation- The Cabrillo Bridge will maintain its current form and function for automobile circulation moving through the park. Traffic moving into the Plaza de Panama will travel along two-way driving isles through the Southwestern corner of the park. The balance of the Plaza will be reclaimed for pedestrian usage.
- Weekend and holiday circulation - The Cabrillo Bridge will be closed at the west end of the Plaza and at the south end, automobiles would move in a u-turn fashion opening the entire Plaza and El Prado to pedestrians.
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible parking spaces in Plaza de Panama will be relocated to the lot south of the Alcazar Garden, and the new number of ADA parking spaces will exceed those lost in the Plaza de Panama.
- Valet will be relocated from the southeast corner of the Plaza de Panama to the parking lot south of the Casa de Balboa. It would be accessible from Park Boulevard.
- Resurfacing the Plaza de Panama- parking, signs, wheel-stops, and striping will be removed, additional landscaping for trees in raised planters, café style tables and chairs throughout the park, and an attractive form of separation will be created between the two-way automobile isle and pedestrian activity. The exact plan hasn't been defined. A tram stop and benches will be added to the south end of the plaza and an additional lane will be added for the tram. The drop off zone will remain in front of the Japanese Friendship Garden.

Mayor Filner asked for input as nothing is written in stone. The plan to begin on May 25, 2013 is only temporary and it doesn't cost anything to do the first phase in terms of signage and bridge closing. It will take care of most of the issues in terms of disabled parking, circulation, and access to the institutions. The plan is moving in the right direction, and is a low-tech, low-cost way of restoring the beauty of Balboa Park. We are open for questions and comments from the Committee.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS

- Mr. Steppke would like to support the Mayor's proposed plan
- Dr. Hager, representing larger institutions in Balboa Park, had the following concerns:
 - The process going forward in terms of listening to the comments and fitting those into consideration
 - Bridge closure and access to the institutions on the west side is always an issue
 - Will the bridge closure be during the day and open at night?
 - Will there be access to the Globe, Museum of Man, Air Museum, etc.?
 - Businesses, on the west side with closures, are concerned about customers not having access to restaurants because of neighborhood parking
 - Valet parking will be at the rear of the building near a trash pick-up site
 - Flow of traffic on Park Boulevard
 - Marketing and public relations being handled properly
 - Signage and way finding
- Mr. Kinney read the public comments from the speaker slips for those that did not wish to speak
 - Move as little concrete as possible
 - Is there a need for CEQA review for the bridge closure?
 - What's the budget?
 - What about park access?
 - Stay with the original master plan
 - Want what's best for Balboa Park
 - Define the process in more detail

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- The Balboa Park Cultural Partnership supports parking, access and way finding
- This will be a great public gathering space for families, young people, and seniors
- Share the Mayor's excitement and enthusiasm about the potential benefits
- Need to reclaim Plaza de Panama for the community
- Dr. Hager raised some very valid questions, but the only way to get an answer is by testing it

- The current parking lot has been destructive in the park for many years
- Plan to have architectural design students follow the Mayor's plan
- Thanked the Mayor for his presentation of the plan
- Plan will enhance the visitors' experience in Balboa Park
- Traffic coming from the west side is 40 percent, and shifting all cars to Park Boulevard will increase traffic by 66 percent
- New space should be fully ADA accessible
- Concerned about parking on west side of Balboa Park
- Change parking to diagonal parking on Balboa Drive
- Concerned about valet parking location
- Refine the bridge closing time on the weekends
- Need a time management program
- Tram parking – consider Inspiration Point for additional parking
- Don't need to separate tram from the drive isle; need dedicated bike lane
- Inexpensive and easy to complete
- Let's get started and try it out
- This is a plan that has been used in other big city parks
- The Japanese Friendship Garden is look forward to something happening in Balboa Park
- We are a little behind the 100th anniversary, need to get things going
- In the future, propose having the trolley go north on Park Boulevard to Balboa Park
- Thanked the Mayor and Committee for holding this special meeting. The plan addresses and attempts to retain historical use
- Would like to see a wine bar installed in the plaza
- Grateful that the mayor takes a personal interest in Balboa Park
- Panama de Plaza is a great entrance into the park.
- Traffic through the corner may be a bit awkward.
- The temporary proposal comes close to the vision that was established and approved by the public years ago under the city's master plan.
- There needs to be a people moving system that brings people into Balboa Park and connects them to the convention center, downtown, and the waterfront.
- What about parking for the archers and workers that use the parking lot every month?
- Mayor's plan looks to be precise and consistent with the Balboa Park master plan and the central mason for sites plan
- Glad to hear that the plan doesn't include destruction of destroyed resources.
- Includes a simple and cost effective circulation plan
- Remember that SANDAG has listed a vital bike route through the park
- Appreciates the Mayor's efforts to restore Plaza de Panama to a pedestrian only status on weekends and holidays
- Consider reclaiming the Plaza de California from cars on a temporary basis

- The Museum of Man is most impacted when the Cabrillo Bridge is closed because of the lack of parking
- How many seats will be on the tram?
- How frequent will the tram run?
- How many tram locations will there be and where will they be located?
- Will the trams allow for strollers and bikes?
- Concerned about the kids crossing at Bankers Hill.
- Consider pedestrian access across 6th Avenue

MAYOR FILNER'S CLOSING COMMENTS

We have a chance to make Balboa Park beautiful. There will be a first roll-out of an initial concept in a few weeks. The new tram system will be arriving next week. Pictures will be displayed for visitors and community to see. This is a chance for San Diego to become a real bicycle friendly community. CycloSDias will be held on August 11, 2013 and people will be able to walk and bike. Christian Jaffe has refurbished 1950 streetcars to be used for the Centennial Celebration.

CHAIRPERSON'S COMMENT

Mr. Kinney thanked everyone for their interest in Balboa Park and for coming out to the meeting. It's an exciting first step. There will be other opportunities for input and dialog as we move forward. Mr. Kinney thanked Mayor Filner for his efforts on this plan.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, May 2, 2013
 6:00 P.M.
 Santa Fe Room/Balboa Park Club
 San Diego, CA 92101

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowery-Mendoza
District Manager

