

# MINUTES

**City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board  
BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE  
January 9, 2025**

**Meeting Location:**

Balboa Park Club Santa Fe Room  
2150 Pan American Road West\  
San Diego, CA 92101

**Mailing Address:**

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

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Members Present**

Allison Soares  
Howard Blackson  
Makeda Cheatom  
Chris Eddy  
Dang Nguyen  
Michael Robinson  
Tim Shields  
Kathy Vandenheuvel

**Members Absent**

Molly Chase  
Mary Mckenzie

**Staff Present**

Jon Richards  
Tyler Canales  
Anthony Harrington

**CALL TO ORDER**

Allison Soares called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES November 7, 2024**

**MOTION:     MOVED/SECONDED Ms. Vandenheuvel / Mr. Shields**

A motion was made by Ms. Vandenheuvel and seconded by Mr. Shields to approve the November 7, 2024, meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

**NON- AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT**

Web Form:

Andre Demara - A "Museum of Sound" would be beneficial for Southern California at Balboa Park. Multiple rooms with unique music from around the world in complete immersion, sound baths/ASMR, different frequencies of noise, rare animal and insect sounds, famously recorded sound bites, or unique cultural environments, all in 360-degree high-quality sound. The creativity would be endless. This would greatly benefit those with visual impairments and be a great experience for all ages. There is a lack of this type of museum. Here is a link from an Austrian museum that shares some similarities: Haus der Musik - [www.HDM.at/en/museum](http://www.HDM.at/en/museum).

In-Person:

Michael Singleton – Thanked City staff for adjustments made to the design of the Juniper roundabout. The Parking District has agreed to provide maintenance for it.

Andrea Zinko – Puppet Theatre is celebrating 78 years. 80-year anniversary will be in 2027. All charges were dropped against individual who broke into the Puppet Theater. Inquired if a bathroom will be added.

Daniele Laman – Requested sprinklers be turned off prior to December Nights and if City will be taking care of electrical for next year’s event. Introduced new President of HPR.

**CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT**

Congratulated staff on a wonderful December Nights event.

**STAFF REPORT**

Emily Bonner, Council District 3 – None

Michael Bravo, 78<sup>th</sup> District – None

SDPD – Introduced new Sargent for Balboa Park area.

Jon Richards, Deputy Director, Parks & Recreation – Thanked Balboa Park SDPD Team. Starlight Bowl RFP has closed and is being reviewed. The RFP for Village Grill will open on 1/16. Floors at Municipal Gym and Balboa Park Activity Center have been refinished. December Nights was very successful and had no major issues. The Botanical Building opened December 6<sup>th</sup> and had 20,000 visitors during the December Nights event, and is now open 7 days a week. A Master Plan updated will kick-off in July with Planning Department hosting community engagement sessions, but effort is contingent on funding. Consultant in charge of prioritization framework will report at next month’s meeting. There has been lots of vandalism in the park and staff work every day to remediate it. If you see something, say something. There has been an uptick in fires in the park and staff is working with SDPD and SDFD to investigate. There is a \$258 million budget shortfall City wide, and every department has been asked to give a 20% reduction. The 6-month Balboa Park calendar has been updated and posted online.

**BALBOA PARK NON-PROFIT PARTNER UPDATES**

Forever Balboa Park – Jackie Higgins - Botanical Building opening was a huge effort and they had 150 volunteers assist with the December Nights event. The Fall seasonal campaign raised \$200,000 to use for work throughout the park. Youth initiatives for K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade students continue throughout the park. Had 32,000 hours of volunteer service for 2024, which was equivalent to \$1.7 million worth of service. Introduced new CEO Katy McDonald. Work on Rose Garden Pergola and Phase 2 of Botanical Building continues.

Balboa Park Cultural Partnership – None

Committee of 100 – Ross Porter – None

Save Starlight – Steve Stopper – December Nights brought a good amount of people. Intrusions into the property continue.

Village Arts & Education Foundation – Frank Casciani – Jurying coming January 25. Annual meeting will take place on January 31. Will be working on policies.

**COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENT**

None

**CONSENT ITEMS**

None

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**Item 1. The San Diego Mineral & Gem Society Annual Picnic and Silent Auction Saturday, May 3, 2024, from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm.**

Public Comment:

Daniele Laman – Asked if parking would be an issue.

Doug Peeler (Responded) – Did not believe there would be an issue.

Committee Comment:

Makeda Cheatom – Inquired if any outreach had been made to BIPOC community. She would love to bring kids to enjoy.

Doug Peeler (Responded) – No particular focus made on any community. Anyone who shows interest is always welcome.

**MOTION:     MOVED/SECONDED Ms. Vandeneuvel / Mr. Nguyen**

A motion was made by Ms. Vandeneuvel and seconded by Mr. Nguyen to The San Diego Mineral & Gem Society Annual Picnic and Silent Auction. The motion carried unanimously (8-0-0).

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

**Item 2. Proposed Fee Schedule Update**

Public Comment:

None.

Committee Comment:

Howard Blackson – Inquired if golf fees were included in fee schedule.

Michelle Kelley (Responded) – No as Golf Division is an enterprise fund.

Chris Eddy – Asked for clarification on if fee determination was restricted to CPI.

Michelle Kelley (Responded) – No because of Prop 26 fees could have been more but tried to stay around a 19% increase.

Chris Eddy – Inquired if fees stay with the program they are paid for.

Michelle Kelley (Responded) – No. They all go to the General Fund.

Chris Eddy – Inquired if fees differentiate between non-profit and for-profit groups.

Michele Kelley (Responded) – Yes.

Kathy Vandenneuvel – Inquired if there was an overall cost increase from the previous fee study.

Michelle Kelly (Responded) – An increase of 19% from the previous fees.

### **Item 3. Update on Balboa Golf Course 9-Hole Remodel**

#### **Public Comment:**

David Swarens – Hopes 28<sup>th</sup> Street Park will be safer due to the new design.

#### **Committee Comment:**

Michael Robinson – Inquired if the project anticipated cost increases.

Darren Genova (Responded) – Cost increase were forecasted for the project.

Chris Eddy – Inquired if construction will be phased or the course closed and if the course is to be shortened will it then be 10 holes.

Darren Genova (Responded) – Anticipates course will have to be closed for some point during construction and the course will remain 9 holes.

Kathy Vandenneuvel – Inquired if the project includes sidewalk and improvements and if project will be best value, low term.

Darren Genova (Responded) – Sidewalks and improvements are not part of this project. Project will be best value, low term to get best qualified vendors.

### **Item 4. Update on Golf Course Drive Improvements**

#### **Public Comment:**

Daniele Swarens – Community has long awaited these improvements. Golden Hill DIF payed for some of the project. Hopes it is prioritized for timely completion.

#### **Committee Comment:**

Howard Blackson – Inquired how many travel lanes there will be.

Ramin Nasrabadi (Responded) – 2 travel lane, 11 feet wide.

Kathy Vandenneuvel – Thanked for the update. Inquired if there will still be public access to the horseshoe and if the tree replacement plan will be brought to the Golden Hill Community.

Ramin Nasrabadi (Responded) – There will still be access as whole mobility has been considered. In coordination with Parks & Recreation now on tree replacement plan.

**WORKSHOP ITEM**

**Item 5. Balboa Park Plan Update**

Public Comment:

None

Committee Comment:

None

**ADJOURNMENT** – 5:24 pm

**Notice of Next Balboa Park Meeting:**

February 6, 2025  
4:00 P.M.  
In-Person

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Canales  
District Manager