

MINUTES

City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board
BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE
March 6, 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

Staff Present

Jon Richards
Tyler Canales
Anthony Harrington

CALL TO ORDER

Allison Soares called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES February 6, 2025

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

A motion was made by Ms. Vandenheuvel and Mr. Shields seconded by to approve the February 6, 2025, meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

NON- AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Web Form:

None

In-Person:

Daniele Laman – Training upcoming being held by the Zoo on terrorist attack preparation. Had 2 incidents of vandalism at the International Cottages. Stated all the upcoming lawn programs for the International Cottages.

Stephen Hill – Retiring from public service after 36 years with the City and 25 years in Balboa Park. Emily Piatanesi will be taking over. His last day is March 18th.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

None

STAFF REPORT

Michael Bravo, 78th District – Legislative package completed with 13 bills on various issues. Will be Chairing Arts, Tourism, Sports, Entertainment Committee. Having a Tacos and Taxes event at North Park Recreation Center on March 29. Looking for nominations for Small Business of the Year. All information can be found on the website.

Emily Bonner, Council District 3 – None

SDPD - None

Jon Richards, Deputy Director, Parks & Recreation – 30 different schools competed in drone races in Municipal Gymnasium. Working with ESD to abate encampments within the park. 2 water main breaks happened at Morley Field and were both repaired. Lighting issues have been happening throughout the park, mostly due to vandalism. Use Get It Done to report those issues with a picture. Starlight RFP has been awarded and negotiations are underway. Currently in evaluation phase for Village Grill RFP. Rummage Sale is 3/8-3/9 at Balboa Park Activity Center. Hot Chocolate Run is 3/9. Science Fair is 3/12 at Balboa Park Activity Center. Cherry Blossom Festival is 3/15-3/16 at the Japanese Friendship Garden. St. Patrick's Parade is 3/15 on the West Mesa. Mayor Gloria announced operational efficiencies and assumed City Manager role. Several Departments were consolidated into others. 31 unclassified positions were cut with a savings of \$5.3 million. Thank you to Steve Hill for his long service to the city and Balboa Park.

BALBOA PARK NON-PROFIT PARTNER UPDATES

Forever Balboa Park – Katy McDonald – Thanked City for allocating resources to a parking study and recognize it has been an issue. Urges City to work with stakeholders and recognize the impact to employees, volunteers and staff. Should have a comprehensive communication plan and any monies should be allocated to the park. – Jackie Higgins – Thanked Steve Hill for his work. Youth programming has served 800 students in K-3 initiatives. Held a tree planting on 2/21 with 60 students from High Tech High. Will have tree plantings on 4/11 and 4/25 with the one on 4/25 being on Arbor Day. Will have volunteer appreciation dinner on 4/3. Construction Documents for Phase 2 are complete and hope to have response from RFP on 3/7. Sparks Awards will be on 5/22.

Balboa Park Cultural Partnership – Peter Comiskey – Thanked Steve Hill for his service. Parking management technology to be installed in Alcazar Garden parking lot next week via a Right of Entry permit with Parks and Rec. Looking to install a different type of system at Organ Pavilion parking lot. Urges people to participate in City's budget process. Arts & Culture funding is important and people should speak to their Council Members about it.

Committee of 100 – Ross Porter – Thanked Steve Hill for service. Hopes to have Design Review on agenda in upcoming meetings.

Save Starlight – Steve Stopper – Currently in negotiating process. Thanked Steve Hill for his support.

Village Arts & Education Foundation – Frank Casciani – None

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENT

Howard Blackson – Thankful to his students for attending the meeting.

Chris Eddy – Inquired if Starlight RFP was for entire facility.

Jon Richards (Responded) – RFP is currently in negotiation.

CONSENT ITEMS

None

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Item 1. Approval of House of Pacific Relations (HPR) Ethnic Food Faire.

Public Comment:

Daniele Laman - Spoke to history of the event. Asked that the event be added to the Municipal Code.

Committee Comment:

None.

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED Ms. Vandenheuvel/ Mr. Eddy

A motion was made by Mr. Blackson and seconded by Ms. Vandenheuvel to approve the House of Pacific Relations Ethnic Food Faire. The motion carried unanimously (8-0-0).

Item 2. Approval of the Rock ‘n’ Roll San Diego 5K and Half Marathon/Marathon.

Public Comment:

Michael Meacham – Asked that the event work with the community in the same way that PRIDE does.

Committee Comment:

Kathy Vandenheuvel – Inquired how much money was received last and who was donated to. Recommended that some be donated to Forever Balboa Park to affect the park directly.

Colleen McDonald (Responded) – Apologized for not having that information on her. Open to recommendations for places to donate.

Dang Nguyen – Inquired if there were any changes to the event from last year.

Colleen McDonald (Responded) – No changes to layout. Just changed some start times.

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED Mr. Blackson / Mr. Nguyen

A motion was made by Mr. Blackson and seconded by Mr. Nguyen to approve Rock ‘n’ Roll San Diego 5K and Half Marathon/Marathon. The motion carried unanimously (8-0-0).

Item 3. AEA Prioritization Framework.

Public Comment:

Michael Stepner – Thanked Steve Hill for service. In support of recommendation.

Daniel Laman – Inquired about HPR priority and saw that it had plumbing and electrical but not sewer.

David Swarens – Participated in the community outreach. Few priorities in East Mesa. Would like to see more focus in this area. Treatment of historic buildings could be better. Historic resources should be better considered.

Committee Comment:

Kathy Vandenheuvel – Appreciates the hard work done and the presentation. Noted that adding a note of rescoring should be added to the report. Surprised at how things were weighted.

Laura Zucker (Responded) – Took notes from the community input to determine weighting.

Kathy Vandenheuvel – Noted that the bar chart only reflected online responses.

Laura Zucker (Responded) – Online and in person input was all considered.

Kathy Vandenheuvel – Noted that a number of projects were listed as none CIP. Why did they end up there?

Daniel Payne (Responded) – These were considered potential staff level items. Just depends on scale. Some items could be flipped over to CIP.

Kathy Vandenheuvel – Inquired how strongly the lists will be adhered to and if they can be changed.

Laura Zucker (Responded) – List should be considered a living document and should be reevaluated on an ongoing basis.

Kathy Vandenheuvel – Inquired if the Design Committee subcommittee could only be made up of Balboa Park Committee Members.

Jon Richards (Responded) – Yes

Kathy Vandenheuvel – Would like to see non-profit partners included in subcommittee. What is the process to finalize the report.

Jon Richards (Responded) – The report is finalized and today is the day to give any final comments.

Howard Blackson – See a lot of near-term recommendations with thresholds of project sizes and types. Master plan would with those. Longer term projects are still near term. Need to update bylaws. Departments are coordinated enough. Could be a living document. Would like to see 3

sections. Could there be a sustainability, economic, and social equity bucket. Could help with financing for those projects.

Daniel Payne (Responded) – Would hope criteria would help develop masterplan.

Laura Zucker (Responded) – Not having clear consensus was keeping projects from moving forward. Was trying to get a community consensus with the report. Things will change over time. People have come together over these criteria.

Kathy Vandenneuvel – Like the report overall. Feel it should be clarified that rescoring should be done and it should be considered a living document.

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED Mr. Blackson / Mr. Eddy

A motion was made by Mr. Blackson and seconded by Mr. Eddy to approve report with the clarification that it is illustrative, and the projects should be rescored. The motion carried unanimously (8-0-0).

INFORMATION ITEMS

Item 4. Fleet Science Center Building Project

Public Comment:

None.

Committee Comment:

Howard Blackson: Asked where the new doors would go to.

Paul Siboroski (Responded) – Doors would lead into the café on the plaza side.

Kathy Vandenneuvel – Inquired when the work might be done.

Paul Siboroski (Responded) – Finalizing construction documents next week. Hope to have construction in the fall.

Item 5. Balboa Park Parking

Public Comment:

Rene Smith – Eager to see next steps. Would suggest that work that was done before review. Want everything tied into the framework.

Peter Comiskey – Should be cautious about big data. Found some biases in the past. Challenge is keeping people in the park due to parking issue. Have to ensure residents are not negatively impacted. Looking at parking management. Ideally, need to use new technology. Look at tiered approach. Need secure and safe staff parking. Park Blvd needs to be revisited. Should not rush the process.

Michael Meacham – He is with Parking District. Wants to do whatever he can to help. Dynamic pricing could be solution to parking issue.

Andrea Zirko – Need to look at the issue slowly. Parking lots are full at 8am. A parking study should be done in the off season.

Committee Comment:

Tim Shields – Presentation provides the premise that parking turnover is a good thing. Institutions want patrons to stay. More definition of fees staying within the park. Need to be careful about dynamic pricing. That could be an issue with affordability.

Makeda Cheatom – Need to think this over. A lot of people are not used to paying money to come to the park. Thought Park was supposed to be free. Lots of patrons will frown on this.

Kathy Vandenheuevel – Support people spending more time in the park. Use technology to help. Access to the park is not that great from the neighboring communities. Would also like to know how Zoo parking lot would play into it.

Chris Eddy – Turnover aspect not thought out that well due to the expanse of the park and how long it could take to get back to vehicle.

Howard Blackson – Think the report is good data to help Balboa Park Cultural Partnership. Need better management plan.

Allison Soares – Should ensure that there is an employee/volunteer parking area.

WORKSHOP ITEM

Item 6. Balboa Park Plan Update - Tabled

ADJOURNMENT – 6:08 pm

Notice of Next Balboa Park Meeting: April 10, 2025
4:00 P.M.
In-Person

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Canales
District Manager