

## MINUTES

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

August 4, 2011

#### Meeting held at:

Balboa Park Club  
2150 Pan American Road  
San Diego, CA 92101

#### Mailing address is:

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

#### ATTENDANCE:

##### Members Present

Jeri Dilno  
Michael Hager  
Andrew Kahng  
Luanne Kanzawa  
David Kinney  
Don Liddell  
Mike McDowell  
Minnie Rzeslawski  
Michael Singleton  
Rob Steppke  
David Strickland

##### Members Absent

Jason Elrod

##### Staff Present

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

#### CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Kinney called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Andrew Kahng suggested a change to his Balboa Park/Morley Field Recreation Council report, to read as follows:

The Balboa Park/Morley Field Recreation Council approved the 2011 operating budgets for the Balboa Park Activity Center and the Morley Field/Municipal Gym at last night's meeting. The Recreation Council and user groups bear the burden of purchased non-hours of operation at the Activity Center – around \$20,000.00 per year and unfortunately, we anticipate operating at a deficit of around \$9,000.00 in 2011. One major challenge is the cancellation of rentals by outside groups due to recent very large increase in rental fees. The Recreation Council's budget subcommittee is preparing a report on the impact of the rental fee increases, which appear to be counterproductive when it comes to generating revenues for the City and the Recreation Council, making facilities available for the public's use.

**MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED (KINNEY/KAHNG) TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JUNE 2, 2011 MEETING. MOTION CARRIED (7, 0, 4) HAGER, STEPPKE, SINGLETON, MCDOWELL ABSTAINING.**

**REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES**

None

**NON AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT**

Glen Stokes noted the goals of the master plan. As stewards of the Park, you must not let the side trip become the final destination.

Jarvis Ross noted something that he had read on the internet about philanthropy; organizations changing their missions when chasing dollars that are ill fitting; that any dollar is not necessarily a good dollar if it derails the organization or subjects it to the whim of the self serving donor.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

David Kinney noted the following:

- The Balboa Park Conservancy was going to address the Committee tonight, but unfortunately had a conflict so they will be present at the September meeting.

**STAFF REPORT**

**Steve Hill, City Council District – District 3**

A written report was provided and read by Chairperson Kinney:

- The City Council approved the MOU with the Plaza de Panama Committee. Councilmember Gloria voted in favor of the MOU with the revisions to the document which would ensure that all alternatives are considered, further protections for the City, and assurances the all EIR technical data will be turned over to the City at the end of the process. Councilmember Gloria continues to advocate for a full public review process that takes all viable alternatives into consideration.
- Councilmember Gloria is a strong advocate for the approval of a contract before the Council in August for the Civic Organist.
- Mr. Hill will be returning to the office on August 8, however, one of his colleagues is available to assist in his absence.

**Susan Lowery-Mendoza, Balboa Park Facilities and Special Events District Manager**

- The City's Purchasing and Contracting Department has issued intent to award a contract for the Museum of Man's roofing project. Once the contract has been officially awarded, Park staff will meet with the project manager and contractor to mitigate any impacts to the Park and Institutions. It is anticipated that construction will start mid October, 2011 and will be completed in 180 days.
- At the City Council meeting yesterday, a ten year agreement for services with Dr. Carol Williams, the Civic Organist was approved. This will allow for Sunday concerts to continue and our relationship with the Spreckels Organ Society to remain strong as she is their artistic director, planning special programs. A second reading will take place in September.
- The Twilight in the Park concerts are well received every Tuesday through Thursday. They will conclude on August 25.
- Becky Yzaguirre, Facilities and Cultural Arts Area Manager in my section for over six years was promoted to District Manager in the Community Parks II Division. She did a fantastic job working with all of the special use permittees in the Park, coordinating facility use and ensuring that all of the details in preparation for December Nights were completed. She will be missed.
- Vicky Hara is the new Area Manager in my section handling the park use permits and overseeing the recreation facilities. She has prior experience working in the Park as Center Director at the Municipal Gym and Morley Field.

**Bruce Martinez, Balboa Park Operations District Manager**

- It is with a great deal of happiness for Casey, that I report Casey Smith, Sr. Park Ranger has been promoted to District Manager in the Open Space Division. Casey has been a wonderful part of the BP Ops. team. While we wish him the best of luck in his new assignment his presence will be missed.
- We will be conducting interviews for the Balboa Park Horticulturist Position on the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of this month. I believe we have a good pool of candidates and hopefully we will be able to get through the process quickly and fill the position which has been vacant for almost a year.
- SR 163 Sewer Project. Details for August 5<sup>th</sup> through August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Times and dates for the closures were provided. Speaking with the Project Manager, it is estimated that the Project will be completed by the weekend of August 14<sup>th</sup>.

**CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM UPDATES**

**Michael Hager reported the following:**

- David Lang has left the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership and Paige Simpson is the interim Director.
- A number of programs are being planned for the fall. One course he wanted to

- everyone's attention is titled Visitor Comfort and Accessibility. The programs are listed on the website; [www.bpcp.org](http://www.bpcp.org)
- Nine Balboa Park Facilities Directors will be attending SDG&E's Building Operator Certification Course funded by the Partnership. The sustainability Program will be hosting behind the scenes walk-about tours to give an inside look of what actions institutions are taking to save energy and resources.

**Luanne Kanzawa reported the following:**

- Last month, representatives from 18 Balboa Park institutions attended a presentation by renowned storyteller and public interest communications consultant, Andy Goodman. This free opportunity was provided in partnership with the San Diego Zoo Global as they hosted the American Association of Museums board retreat in San Diego.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Consent**

101. None

**Adoption**

201. Sixth Avenue Tot Lot Enhancement

Charles Daniels, Park Designer asked for a recommendation on proposed enhancements to the Sixth Avenue Tot Lot, also known as the Solomon playground, located on the West Mesa, North of Quince Street, West of Balboa Drive. He described existing conditions and the age of the equipment. He also described the existing elaborate master plan for the area which reconfigures parking along Balboa Drive as well as the sidewalks, which is estimated to be a 2 – 3 million dollar project. Friends of Balboa Park are proposing to install a newer style of equipment by Landscape Structures which has taken a divergence from modular or platform styles, and provides a new way of experiencing play equipment.

Jim Hughes, Chairman of the Board of the Friends of Balboa Park stated that they have been working on this project for two years. It is an important playground and well known by many and their goal is to bring some life back into it. The master plan, being very costly is not achievable at the moment. The manufacturers have agreed to extend the warranty to meet the City's requirements and the Friends will be supportive of maintaining the equipment if necessary. The project and contractor is ready to go and the funding is in place. Mr. Hughes requested a vote of approval.

Committee Comments:

- This is an attractive enhancement to the Park
- Discussed how the equipment will fit in with existing equipment and the general development plan
- Inquired as to the children's age range the equipment is intended for, which is 5 -12 years
- Inquired as to the timeline. It could be completed this fall.
- Thanked the Friends for reaching out to the residents of the West side
- Inquired as to the life expectancy of the equipment and the fiscal impact on maintenance to which Mr. Hughes replied that the warranty will be at least eight years and that the Friends will be supportive of maintaining the equipment if necessary
- Thanked the Friends of Balboa Park

**MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED (MCDOWELL/SINGLETON) TO APPROVE THE PROJECT AS PRESENTED. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (11, 0,0).**

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

301. None

**WORKSHOP ITEMS**

401. Plaza de Panama, Circulation and Parking Structure Project

Mr. Irwin Jacobs reviewed the project goals, to eliminate vehicular traffic in the Plaza de Panama, Plaza de California, El Prado and the Esplanade. He noted that the team has been working on the project for 16 months and the plan will eliminate the pedestrian and vehicle conflicts. He also reviewed the key aspects of the proposal which includes the Centennial Bridge, re-purposed lots, parking structure with roof top garden and the financial support provided. The Committee is moving full speed on fundraising. The environmental impact review will provide technical analysis and factual information. The City Council approved the MOU with a 7-1 vote on July 19, 2011. Mr. Jacobs reviewed aspects of the MOU which provide for CEQA, public process and can be terminated any time.

Bobbi Herdes of Recon Environmental stated she is assisting with the preparation of the EIR which will analyze alternatives and is the City's document. She noted the process underway started with the Notice of Preparation and will have a 45 day public review. A reasonable range of alternatives will be reviewed that obtain most of the basic objectives of the project. Development Services Department is compiling the list of alternatives which will later undergo the alternative analysis process.

Gordon Kovtun, Program Manager reviewed the next steps, going forward with the EIR and design review. At the June workshop, a summary of inputs were given to incorporate into the project designs. The technical studies will be completed and it is hoped to review up to date plans with the Balboa Park Committee in September.

Committee Comments:

- Will there be discounts in the parking garage for residents or the City or County?  
Mr. Jacobs replied that policies will be set by the City.
- Will environmental preferred alternatives be identified and also esthetic visual quality be evaluated?  
Ms. Herdes replied in the affirmative.
- Concerned about traffic in the Palisades parking lot which will be free of charge.  
The planning is based on no other paid parking areas.
- Will the by-pass bridge encourage more vehicles to come across the bridge?
- If the by-pass bridge encourages people to come to the Park, it is good for the institutions, helps the business climate and is welcome.
- Asked to clarify the EIR and DSD's role as to which alternatives receive a full review.
- Concerned about the lack of tram service to the Alcazar lot and a level path of travel to the Plaza de Panama.
- Concerned about the amount of traffic and noise in the Alcazar lot.

Public Comments:

- Jay Shumaker noted that slow traffic is the solution, not the problem. The project is over engineering for a problem we don't have. Large public spaces are often empty. Restoration of the Alcazar Lawn should be evaluated. With the plan proposed, we might be creating a short cut from the West side to the East side of the Park, with higher traffic speeds.
- Patrick McArron requested that the parking garage be located in Gold Gulch to eliminate noise conflicts with the closeness of the Organ Pavilion
- Kevin Swanson commented on the small two person vehicle used 100 years ago and the possibility of that type of vehicle being used today. Also, evaluate the parking structure placement at the Inspiration lot.
- Dan Soderberg noted that the plan should have fewer impacts on the National Historic District. Other large parks have the same issues. Golden Gate Park decided to close the Park one day per week to vehicular traffic and it has been such a success, they are adding another day. In Central Park, they are looking planned closures as well.
- Jarvis Ross called the proposed plan the most destructive project in many years to the Park. By-pass Bridge advocates are counting on DSD to manipulate the EIR. The historic entryway of the Park will be comprised. SOHO's low cost plan should be looked at as the City is struggling to fund programs in the Park. There have been times that bridge has been shut down in the past.

402. Balboa Park Centennial

Chairperson Kinney thanked the Centennial Host Committee for presenting at this meeting as there is a lot of excitement about the Park's Centennial.

Mike McDowell who is currently serving on the Host Committee and Corporation for the 2015 Celebration provided background information and noted that Mayor Sanders formed the working group to move forward developing concepts. He provided a presentation including historical information on the previous expositions. There is unprecedented collaboration and the Celebration is to take a page from the past, share a vision of Balboa Park. The 2015 Centennial will celebrate ideas, innovations and inspirations and will stimulate the local economy. It will tell the story of past, present and future at many venues, in several languages, throughout multiple media. It will attract visitors from around the nation and hopefully the world. The vision is being shaped by Balboa Park users and stakeholders. A successful outcome will bring new respect and resources for Balboa Park, elevate the stature of our cultural institutions and an enduring legacy of collaboration that will enrich the community for generations to come. A one million dollar fund is being secured as seed money for the Committee. It is estimated that 300,000 room nights would be sold which would have a significant economic impact.

Ben and Nikki Clay were introduced as co-chairs of the 2015 Centennial Celebration. Ms. Clay reported that a 501C(3) organization has been established and many of the board members and advisors are in place. Office space has been made available at the Hall of Champions and an administrative aid has been hired, who is also working for the Conservancy.

Ben Clay noted that they are recruiting a CEO to manage the Celebration, a person who will be key to the success of the event. They want to keep the community informed and are looking for comments and suggestions. They requested to be listed on the monthly agenda for ongoing reporting and conversation and are requesting the same with the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership. The Committee will be presenting a MOU for approval by the City, hiring the CEO, assisting the institutions with grants for program planning and conducting a community outreach/open house for input. Additionally, formulation of a budget and revenue projections, sponsorship packets, drafting a program schedule and plan will begin. The Host Committee structure will be formalized and implemented.

Committee Comments:

- Thanks for involving the public
- Thanked all for taking on such a large effort

## **INFORMATION ITEMS**

### 501. Balboa Park Surveys

Howard Greenstein, Park Designer , Development Services Department noted that the surrounding community plans are being updated, including the recreation element for Greater Golden Hill, Uptown and North Park communities. A telephone survey was conducted to determine overall usage, priorities and preferences for park facilities within their communities and their use of Balboa Park. The survey results were presented to the planning groups. The survey is one of the tools that will be used to update the plan process.

Josh Williams of BW Research Partnership provided information regarding the survey of 475 residents. The general priorities and use of both Neighborhood Park and Balboa Park were identified. Some of the conclusions found were a high level of satisfaction with parks, the desire to see facilities improved rather than developing new facilities, and the importance of trails, paths and walkways.

#### Public Comment:

- Beth Jaworski, representing the board of the Uptown Planners, who has a background in research, is concerned about the methodology used, which is retrospective instead of prospective. She stated that it is misguided for future park investment.

#### Committee Comments:

- David Strickland of Greater Golden Hill noted that he doesn't believe 125 phone calls are adequate. A random, door to door survey of users would provide a better assessment.
- Rob Steppke of the North Park community had a comment about the process. A baseline can be accomplished through a survey, however the survey is being used to update the community plan and the community planning groups had no knowledge of the survey and did not have input on it. Equivalencies are being measured.
- Don Liddell of Uptown noted that it should be a data point, used with other varieties of data to be factored into the planning process.
- Mike Singleton noted also that the data should taken into account with other factors. Those that were willing to take the survey are most interested in the issue.
- Andrew Kahng noted that the conclusions are a bit of a stretch since .5 percent of the population was touched. He asked for comparison data or similar studies conducted over the years.



Park Committee  
August 4, 2011  
Page 9

Luanne Kanzawa inquired as to the purpose of the survey. The purpose was stated to use Balboa it as a tool to help with plan updates on how we should be spending funds and to help develop policies.

### **SUB - COMMITTEE REPORT**

601. Land-Use and Policy – None

602. West Mesa Subcommittee – None

### **COMMMITTEE MEMBERS REPORT**

Vice Chair - Mike McDowell reported on behalf of the tourism industry that San Diego is in a high tourism season with the conventions and events in town. The City should be very busy for approximately one more week at near sold out conditions.

Balboa Park/Morley Field Recreation Council – Andrew Kahng reported that the Recreation Council members are very interested in the Plaza de Panama project and are educating themselves about it. They are interested access, protecting parking for recreational users, especially youth, seniors and other local residents who use the facilities for frequently for short term parking.

Golden Hill Planning Group - David Strickland reported that the Community Garden requested information about presentation made regarding community gardens. The community planning group has been monitoring the City Council docket and is concerned about the by-pass bridge.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

**Next Regular Meeting:** Thursday, September 1, 2011  
6:00 P.M.  
Ballroom/Balboa Park Club  
San Diego, CA 92101

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowery-Mendoza  
District Manager

