

MINUTES

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

February 3, 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
Jason Elrod
Scott Glazebrook
Mick Hager
Andrew Kahng
Luann Kanzawa
David Kinney
Don Liddell
Mike McDowell
Michael Singleton
Donald Steele
Rob Steppke (arr. 6:06 P.M.)

Members Absent

Staff Present

Charles Daniels, Park Designer
Susan Lowery-Mendoza, Balboa Park
Bruce Martinez, Balboa Park

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Kinney called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M. Introductions were made around the table. Mr. Kinney announced that the agenda will be re-ordered; reports will be heard first followed by item #501 followed by #401.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A correction to the minutes of the December 2, 2010 was suggested by Susan Lowery-Mendoza, Page 1, Approval of Minutes: November 4, 2010 change the vote to read (4,0,2).

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED (HAGER/SINGLETON) TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2010 MEETING WITH THE ABOVE CORRECTION. MOTION CARRIED (9,0,2) KAHNG/STEELE ABSTAINING.

Mr. Kinney noted that the minutes of the January 8, 2011 meeting will be reviewed at the February meeting.

REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES

None

NON AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

- Jarvis Ross, Point Loma resident commented that Balboa Park is not an island and trolley service should be restored. MTS should be approached to improve service to the Park for people that don't live in the area.
- Kevin Swanson asked the question as to how the 2015 Centennial celebration fits into the plans. There is an opportunity to reach out throughout the region for revitalization. The Park Plazas can be used as event centers for the 2015 Celebration to generate revenue for the Park.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairperson Kinney reported the following:

- At the last Park and Recreation Board meeting, a report was received that the San Diego Regional Park Improvement Fund will rise above the threshold which means that some of the funds will benefit other regional parks.
- Regarding the 2015 Centennial, the City and the San Diego Tourism Marketing District have formed a committee and are raising funds to hire staff. The Cultural Institutions provided input under the auspices of the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership and everyone is thinking big.
- The Balboa Park Conservancy has held initial meetings and is moving forward on obtaining a Public Benefit, 501(C) organization status and creating a Memorandum of Understanding with the City of San Diego.

STAFF REPORT

City Council Third District – Steve Hill

- Mr. Hill invited all to attend Councilmember Gloria's State of Council District Three Address on Wednesday, February 23, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. at the Birch North Park Theatre.
- The 2015 Committee is tentatively scheduled to give an informational presentation to the Natural Resources and Culture Committee on March 2, 2011.

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

- The Park and Recreation Department's Civic Dance Arts Program is opening their show, "Outside the Lines" tomorrow night in the Casa del Prado Theater. The performance features the highest levels of dancers in the program and is imaginative, engaging and visually stunning. The show continues through Sunday, February 20 and flyers are available at the table.
- The Vietnamese American Youth Alliance hosted their San Diego Lunar TET Festival last weekend. It was reported by the Special Events traffic control Supervisor that the traffic flow along Park Blvd. was manageable and that the Inspiration Parking lot did not fill on any of the event days.

- Circus Vargas will be occupying a portion of the lower Inspiration parking lot from February 8 – 21.
- The Balboa Tennis Club is moving forward with a lighting project that will illuminate the lower six tennis courts which are located on the West side of the Club at Morley Field. The Balboa Park/Morley Field Recreation Council supported the concept at their meeting held yesterday.

Bruce Martinez Balboa Park Operations

- Approximately 25 trees were downed in Balboa Park in the last couple of months due to the storms.
- An asphalt repair project is scheduled to occur later this month. Areas of repair include: ADA parking spaces near the Balboa Park Club; the roadway around the Palisades Building and the Air and Space Museum; the Lower Inspiration Parking Lot; the parking lot near the Balboa Tennis Club and Dog Off- Leash area at Morley Field. The Department doesn't have definitive dates yet, but we are cognizant of the potential impacts this project has on the Institutions and we will do everything possible to mitigate any issues. As soon as the schedule is received, it will be distributed to the institutions for feedback.
- The fifth and final trail gateway located at Marston Point will be completed in the next two weeks. Staff is working with the Online Collaborative on smart phone apps for the trails along with maps for the different routes that people can download.
- The West Mesa benches were put in place in December and are well received.

CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM UPDATES

Michael Hager reported the following:

- In February, the Balboa Park Learning Institute has two exciting programs that are helping out community better connect with Balboa Park visitors, both on-site and virtually. Two workshops with Dr. Marianna Adams will explore the audience research gathered last summer, with an in-depth focus on “Who is visiting Balboa Park Museums and why” and “How do visitors value their Balboa Park museum experiences in terms of time and money?” The institutions that participated in the survey are involved in these sessions.
- There is also an evening program on Tuesday, February 15, 2011 from 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the Hall of Champions that will focus on how to write engaging stories about objects for an online platform. There is currently a waiting list for this program and another session may be added. In February, the Learning Institute is also working with the Balboa Park Online Collaborative on a series of focus groups to better understand what teachers, museum educators, and the university community would want from an online portal to the Park's digital collections.
- The Sustainability Program is the winner of the 2010 Sustainability Showcase Award for Commercial Buildings by the California Sustainability Alliance.

- On March 23 and 30, 2011, the Sustainability Program is offering a four part series at the Rueben H. Fleet Science Center. The workshop includes: 1) Basics of Sustainability 2) Energy, Water and Waste 3) Transportation, Agriculture and Land Use 4) Green Economy and Green Jobs.

ACTION ITEMS

Consent

101. None

Adoption

201. None

Special Events

301. None

WORKSHOP ITEMS

401. Balboa Park Plaza de Panama Circulation and Parking Structure Project, Alternatives Presentation and Park Reclamation Design Workshop – Mark Johnson

Mr. Kinney noted that there are 30 requests to speak and allotted two minutes to each person so that the presentation may be heard.

Public Comments:

- A resident of University Heights thanked the Committee for the process and outreach
- Egress needs to be considered for those who live on all sides of the Park
- Concerned that citizens will have to pay to park, pay to take the tram, pay to valet park
- Excited about the project but do not wish to have programming in the Plaza de Panama due to additional parking concerns and add to the noise level during Old Globe productions
- Concern that the archers will have to carry their equipment a long distance which would be detrimental to the Archers Club. Their Clubhouse is in a storage area of the Alcazar Parking lot restrooms. Inquired if the range could be re-located in the Park if the project goes forward.
- The project is visionary and will increase foot traffic and expand cultural opportunities
- Letters of support for the project were received from the San Diego Museum of Man; the Rueben H. Fleet Science Center; the San Diego Natural History Museum, the San Diego Museum of Art and the San Diego Air and Space Museum
- Run a tunnel under the freeway
- Alternative scenarios are disingenuous
- In support of the parking garage, but access off of Cabrillo Bridge is not good as access

off of I- 5 because leads through residential neighborhoods. Parking garage access is better at Park and President's Way

- In favor of removing the cars from the Plaza de Panama, but oppose the by-pass bridge; support the Park master plan; Managed traffic program could be implemented perhaps from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. which would achieve everyone's goals. It is easy, fast and affordable
- Wants Plaza free of cars, likes SOHO's plan, won't cost a fortune
- Supports goals of reclaiming public spaces, vision is a gift but the by-pass plan is not in keeping with the Historic District; close the Cabrillo bridge to vehicular traffic, support parking structure; a well managed tram system is needed
- Space above parking structure needs to be memorable, not just a lawn
- Referred to the 1915 Exposition in which vehicles were driven across the Cabrillo Bridge and now ironically, the 2015 celebration project is in direct opposition to what the 1915 Exposition celebrated, man's achievements such as the automobile. The bridge and arches were made for vehicular access.
- Dr. Jacobs is providing the opportunity and means to accomplish what has only been dreamed of for decades. This plan will allow for the 2015 Exposition venues. This plan is the only plan that is feasible and financed and accomplishes the objectives. The by-pass bridge is largely hidden by the trees. If this plan is defeated, we will again get nothing which will be a major tragedy for the City.
- We don't need traffic flowing through the Plaza de Panama; people will find ways to get into the Park, find places to park and public transit will catch up. A tram system could be funded by Dr. Jacobs.
- Grateful that the Mayor made the project a priority
- Would like to see the architectural style continued and concerned for people with disabilities
- Glad to hear that there are alternatives, the by-pass bridge doesn't belong, introduces modern architecture into Park; lots of research on pedestrian malls available
- The Park serenity will be ruined with the by-pass bridge, trolleys are needed, get the cars out of the Plaza
- The City is broke, the Park's infrastructure should be fixed first
- The Plaza size is very large; plazas around the world of that size are surrounded by high density in the middle of a city, plaza spaces are usually activated with cars driving around the perimeter, the North Plaza would be pedestrian only space

Project Update and Presentation of Alternatives by Mr. Mark Johnson

The presentation is available online at <http://www.balboapark.org/plaza-de-panama/designs>

Mr. Johnson stated that he appreciated the public's comments to this vexing situation. He stated that each of the alternatives have issues, dependent on the different points of view. Mr. Johnson wanted to be clear that his client is the Plaza de Panama Committee, and the funding sources are: A self supporting bond for the garage and tram and operations of both; private donations for everything else. He discussed the goals which are to remove the cars and create restoration of the Plaza which cannot be reversed by policy decision. The Historic Resources Board, will determine compliance with the Secretary of Interior standards for historic preservation. The City

Council will be voting on the project about a year from now. The EIR process should begin in March and the design is continuing.

The alternatives were reviewed using the six principles that were adopted by the Committee in 2005 as identified in the 2004 land Use, Circulation and Parking Study.

- Inspiration Point Garage
- Quince Street Alternative
- Old Globe Garage
- 6th Avenue Parking Garage
- Pedestrian Only Cabrillo Bridge

Drop -off and valet operations are important elements to the Park. A full evaluation of each alternative cannot be conducted without additional data.

Design principles were provided for the Plaza de California, El Prado West, Esplanade and the Plaza de Panama.

Those in attendance were asked to participate in a break-out session with designers for the next thirty minutes.

Chairperson Kinney called the meeting back to order at 8:20 p.m.

INFORMATION ITEMS

501. SR-163 Sewer Lining Project, Dirk Smith- Public Utilities Department

Chairperson Kinney noted that this project came before the Committee last year. Mr. Smith provided an update on the sewer lining project which starts at Washington Street south to Interstate 5. They negotiated a permit with Cal Trans to perform the work beginning in March through Memorial Day. The SR163 Freeway will be closed between I- 8 to I- 5 from 11:00 p.m. Friday to 10:00 a.m. Saturday and 11:00 p.m. Saturday to 11:00 a.m. Sunday during this time period with the exception of April 9 and April 17 which have large special event attendance. Cal Trans requires a transportation management plan for public notification of the project.

Committee Comments:

- Mr. Hager stated that the impacts to the institutions with the closure being later than 9:00 a.m. are great.
- Inquired if a staging area is needed
- Spring Break is a very busy time of year with the largest visitation
- There was no opportunity for input
- Mr. Hager asked Mr. Kinney to write a letter asking to minimize the impact and make an effort to be open by 10:00 a.m.

- Inquired about the traffic mitigation plan alternative routes identified to Balboa Park?
- A communication plan can be placed on the Balboa Park website with a link to the Cal Trans site.
- Referred back to the minutes when this item was first discussed
- It was requested that an action item be placed on the next agenda to further address/explore this issue

SUB - COMMITTEE REPORT

601. Land-Use and Policy – Chairperson Kinney noted that this subcommittee will hopefully get running in February.
602. West Mesa Subcommittee – Don Liddell reported that they passed a motion to better manage relationships with the Park and the residents. The motion would put in place a moratorium/curfew on special events and states:

Special Event set-up would be allowed no earlier than 24 hours prior to the start of the event; no set-up activity to occur between 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.; any exceptions to the foregoing requirements must have prior approval Balboa Park Committee based on specific written findings justifying the exception.

Chairperson Kinney stated that he will refer this item to the Land Use and Policy Committee.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS REPORT

- Balboa Park/Morley Field Recreation Council – Andrew Kahng reported that the Recreation Council elected its new slate of officers and Jerry Harris is the incoming Chairperson. The Recreation and its member organizations committed another \$8,000.00 towards purchased non-hours of operation at the Balboa Park Activity Center in 2011. The Thursday Club stated their intentions to provide substantial support for purchased non-hours of operation, floor refinishing, new sound system at the Balboa Park Activity Center, scholarships at the Municipal Gym and other needs. The Recreation Council expressed their deep appreciation for this. The Recreation Council is interested in the Plaza de Panama project and potential parking and circulation issues.
- Golden Hill Planning Group – Scott Glazebrook noted that in December, the Greater Golden Hill Planning Committee approved in concept a project which involves a re-design of the entry to the Golden Hill Park which should come forward to the Balboa Park Committee in the future.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kinney adjourned the meeting at 8:31 P.M.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, March 3, 2011
6:00 P.M.
Balboa Park Club
Santa Fe Room
San Diego, CA 92101

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowery-Mendoza
District Manager