

WORKSHOP NOTES

City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board
Balboa Park Committee
June 5, 2008

ATTENDANCE:

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jennifer Ayala
Laurie Burgett
Jeri Dilno
Vicki Granowitz
Andrew Kahng
David Kinney
Mike Mc Dowell (Arr. 5:37 pm)
Mike Singleton

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mick Hager (Ex)
Donald Steele (Ex)

STAFF PRESENT

Bruce Martinez
Susan Lowery-Mendoza
Kathleen Hasenauer

Call to Order-

Chairperson Granowitz called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm. Introductions were done. Vicki reminded everyone to fill out a public speaker form in order to comment on the Balboa Park Study.

Chairperson's report –

Chairperson Granowitz: The June 18th meeting will include individuals from Forest Park, St. Louis. Gary Bess, Director of Parks, Recreation and Forestry for the City of St. Louis and James Mann, former Executive Director, now Board Member of Forest Park Forever Foundation. Also Mike Nelson with the San Diego River Conservancy and Rob Hutsel, Executive Director of the San Diego River Park Foundation. A larger attendance is expected, therefore, the meeting will be held at the War Memorial Building. The meeting will be on City TV. The July 3rd meeting has been cancelled due to the July 4th weekend and the next meeting on July 24th will be in the Recital Hall. At that meeting we will be hearing from the City of San Diego Real Estate Assets Dept., Park and Recreation Balboa Park Cultural Partnership. The discussion will be about right of entry permits, contracts, and leases. Further meeting agendas are still being worked on.

Workshop Items -

Chairperson Granowitz welcomed the guest speakers and also reminded everyone that they must fill out a speaker slip in order to comment on the Balboa Park Study. She also clarified once again that Balboa Park is not going to be privatized.

1. Dorothy Leonard- Chair of Citizens Advisory Committee for Mission Trails Regional Park

Dorothy is also a Founding member of Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation which was founded 20 years ago. She has been involved with the park since 1974.

Citizen's Advisory Committee

- Reports directly to Mission Trails Regional Park Task Force
- Any things that need special permits go through the City Council
- Any changes to the Master Plan must go through the City Council and County Board of

Supervisors

- Formed a foundation to support the park
- They don't have an Executive Director, but they are setting money aside for that position
- The foundation raised \$3M out of \$5.5 M needed for the visitor center. The City paid the rest.
- They have a Source of income from Mission Trails Antennae Fund that nets about \$100,000 from land lease and this money helps with capital improvements.
- They contracted with the City to be the Project Manager, so the Mission Trails Regional Park Board Members attended all meetings between the City and the contractors. When the building was completed the keys were handed to the City Manager.
- Almost everything in the building is owned by the Foundation
- They have a Facility Operations Committee (collaboration between city staff and board members) that addresses any concerns with the Visitor Center, Equestrian, Campground, etc.
- They have a Center Director, Administrative Assistant, and Ranger staff.

Chairperson Granowitz opened the floor for questions from committee members and the public to Dorothy, after the questions, Dorothy could be excused.

#1 Question - *When the arrangement was made, how do the City and the County overlap?*

Answer - *It was a County and City joint purchase. There was an arrangement made so that all the income from the facilities on the top of the mountain be spent only on Mission Trails Regional Park. The City pays for all the maintenance.*

2. Craig Adams- Executive Director, San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy

He would like to point out the difference between his conservancy and the Central Park Conservancy model. He has two themes; “think organic” and “he is not here as a model, but instead as there are lessons to be learned”. The Chair will have Central Park’s policies and guidelines in the near future for the committee to review.

San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy

- 20 year old organization
- It has an organic history
- The Conservancy was formed after Citizens went to politicians to ask that a River Park be established
- The Conservancy was very actively involved in the creation of the JPA that was talked about at the last meeting
- For years it was primarily an advocacy organization, but they are now an operational organization and they do no advocacy
- They have a 15 member self selected Board of Directors
- They have three employees, two years ago there was only 1, himself
- \$320,000 operating budget
- \$4.5M in assets
- Surplus is used for campaigning
- The River Park has limited resources, so they are basically there to fill in the gaps
- They do land acquisitions
- They are a membership based organization. There are anywhere between 1,000 - 1,200 members. Members pay between \$35 - \$10,000 a year (this is how they get most of their money)
- Capital type campaigns (some people don't want to be members, they just want to fund bigger, one time projects, such as buying land, extend trails, etc.)
- There was a plan from day one

- Their Board represents people off the street
- Central Park may be one of the most sophisticated models of a Conservancy (they had many years to form a structure before the conservancy was even established)

3. Paul Meyer - Immediate Past Chair of the Balboa Park Trust at The San Diego Foundation

He is an attorney by profession and has had some experience with Public/Private Partnerships.

He is here as an individual, not to represent any organization.

Public/Private Partnership Agreements

- Worked with Petco Park, One America Plaza, Downtown Police Headquarters, and other projects
- In other cities he worked with; Staples Center in Los Angeles, representation of the San Diego Padres for development of their Spring Training Facility in Arizona, in Sacramento he worked with the Adaptive Reuse of the Sacramento Army Depot
- A public agency is a principal in a transaction; as a seller of land, as an ongoing owner of land, as a tenant, as a financier of a transaction.
- The City of San Diego is the ongoing owner of Balboa Park
- When a public agency moves from being a sovereign to being a principal in a transaction, that is a Public/Private partnership
- Where are the standard forms for these kinds of deals? There is no such thing. There are many variations.
- There is no "supposed to look like". An agreement can be whatever the party needs.
- Begin with a memorandum of understanding
- How do you start on some set of documents if there is no standard set? Craig explained everything you need to know in order to start your own set. It starts with the knowledge of your own industry.
- Start studying the agreements applicable with other urban parks that are comparable to Balboa Park.
- Hear the public's concerns and possibly create an agreement that addresses those concerns
- You may want to start by preparing a statement of principles

Chairperson Granowitz opened the floor again for questions.

#2 Question - *Craig, in regards to the conservancy relating to Balboa Park, what has worked and what has not?*

Answer - *Not sure if he has the answer. Be organic; don't make gigantic organizational changes from what is currently established. Things that didn't work are naming rights; stakeholders don't want memorial recognition on benches. Conservancies are flexible and can always evolve.*

Public Comment (limited to 3 minutes each)

Public Speaker #1 - Maureen Roy, Escondido

"I found out on Monday about this meeting, I don't not know exactly what the City is up to because minutes are not available. We have a large amount of land for public use and San Diego is quite crowded. There are people that have bought condos for the view of the park. I am sure that they have not been informed about what the City is up to. This park is used by the community for many things. One of those things is the St. Patrick's Parade, which I am involved with. The Park is a great cultural gathering location. Nothing should be done with Balboa Park. We don't want our park built on the issues of Central Park or anywhere else. I just want to let this group know that I am opposed to any building <developing> in Balboa Park."

Public Speaker #2 - Pat Flannery, Point Loma

"This is like citizen abuse, we sit for an hour and a half of being told what's going to happen to us and it's pretty disgusting at the way this is being done. You go out to sell this to the public. It's been done lots of times in San Diego. Why not ask the public what they want, this is not New York. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. You say it is not privatization, well it's just semi-privatization. We don't need anything, we already have the revenue. If this city is broke, it is because of City Unions and Developers; they pillage the treasury. We have more than enough money; we have \$250 million without getting interest with the CCDC alone. You can call it what you like, this is privatization. If the City does not maintain it's number one asset, than shame on the City not on the people."

Public Speaker #3 - Eric Seagal,

"Recently I found out about a proposal to cut down numerous Eucalyptus trees. For many years the City of San Diego has waged war on the trees and nature of this region in favor of a transformation from a sleepy coastal town to a bustling metropolis. This was supposed to build us up economically benefit the people, instead we are bankrupt not only financially but morally too. They say that cutting down the trees is for safety of falling down trees. I have never heard of someone being hurt from a fallen tree. Already there were four giant dumpsters full of trees from Balboa Park. It used to be that government was instigated by the people, for the people to protect life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It used to be nice to go to BP, but not anymore. Everyday it seems that another tree is coming down. San Diego used to be known as America's Finest City for its unspoiled natural beauty. I am the founder of Sacred Earth Society and I suggest that the trees be left alone."

Chairperson Granowitz clarified that projects are not being discussed at this meeting; this is just a policy discussion. At the end of what this committee is doing, they will make a recommendation. There may be a change of governance or there may not be any change at all. This is to deal with deferred maintenance. The Balboa Park Study is available in the website for anyone that would like to read it.

More questions and answers:

#3 Question - *This committee's goal is to answer some of the questions posed by the study, what more can this Committee seek to achieve within this calendar year?*

Answer - Paul: *This committee should try to reach a consensus about a basic structure. It is possible to decide on that within this calendar year. It will not be possible to recommend a form of contract.*

Craig: *He doesn't disagree with Paul but if you have the luxury of reaching a consensus, don't neglect to get the issues documented and don't rush the essential steps.*

#4 Question - *What is the extent of independence that the conservancy has from the JPA?*

Answer - *The basic secret of their relationship is communication. The question of who does what is handled by who has the resources to do it.*

#5 Question - *How does the self selection of the Board work? How do you provide for transparency?*

Answer - Craig: *They've never had any problems with their selection process. In terms of transparency under state law, their kind of organization is not bound by the Brown Act. They just have a commitment to be as transparent as possible.*

Paul: *The contract can be set up to reflect the transparency of the group. For example, have quarterly meetings in front of the City Council.*

Chairperson Granowitz wanted everyone to have an understanding of contracts and redevelopment areas. Irvine Great Park is a redevelopment area and although they were initially chosen as a model to

review, she doesn't think it holds much for this group. Balboa Park is not going to be a redevelopment area.

She will pull the documents for everyone to review, and some news articles as well to see how it all went wrong. She also wanted to clarify why she invited Paul Meyer as a speaker. She wanted him to talk about Public/Private Partnerships because there are public/private partnerships existing in the Park already. The city maintains ownership of the buildings in Balboa Park and they are leased to a non-profit to provide a service the City desires. The July 24, 2008 will review existing Balboa Park Lease Agreements by the Real Estate Assets Dept.

The Chair thanked Paul and Craig for all the information they provided.

The meeting continued with rest of the items on the agenda.

-Notes submitted by Vanessa Nieves