

MINUTES

City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board
BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE
March 6, 2014

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
Andrew Kahng
David Kinney
Don Liddell
Micah Parzen
Johanna S. Schiavoni
Michael Singleton
Rob Steppke
David Strickland

Members Absent

Diana Clark
Michael McDowell
Luanne Kanzawa

Staff Present

Susan Lowery-Mendoza, Balboa Park
Mario Llanos, Balboa Park

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Kinney called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m., and tabled the approval of the February 6, 2014 minutes for April's meeting.

REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES – None

NON AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. David Lundin reported he's been involved in trying to obtain documents and seek the truth, regarding the nearly \$3,000,000 in public funds and donations, from Balboa Park Celebration Inc. (BPCI). Mr. Lundin submitted a request for document production and has threatened to file a lawsuit.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Chairperson Kinney extended an invitation for the committee to attend the STEAM Family Day in Balboa Park on Sunday, March 16, 2014 from 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. There will be lots of activities for children. In addition, participating museums will be offering free admission to children 12 and under with a paying adult.

STAFF REPORT

City Council Third District – Mr. Steve Hill

Mr. Hill reported that on Monday, March 3, 2014 Mayor Faulconer was sworn in, and Council President Todd Gloria turned over the keys to the City and resumed his role as Council President. The following is a recap of some important action items accomplished during the six months Council President Gloria was Interim Mayor:

- Reorganized the City's management structure
- Received a green light on the convention expansion
- Opened the state of the art Central Library
- Approved Barrio Logan Community Plan
- Strengthened the City's border relations with Mexico
- Strengthened the City's living wage ordinance

City staff will be moving forward with repairs and reroofing the Balboa Club, home of the San Diego Chess Club, which is being funded through the deferred capital funds that were approved by Council in December. The project will start June or July 2014.

On Tuesday, March 4, 2014 BPCI voted to dissolve their corporation and return the organizing of the 2015 Centennial back to the City. Council President Gloria felt this was the right move for BPCI to make at this time and he will be working with Mayor Faulconer, and City staff to unveil a manageable and affordable event plan in the near future.

Committee Comments/Questions:

- Chairperson Kinney stated Council President Gloria inherited a mess and what he accomplished in six months as Interim Mayor was pretty outstanding. The City is in a much better position because of it.

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

Upcoming Events for March include:

- HVAC project at the Casa del Prado has been completed
- Freight elevator Modernization Project at Casa de Balboa is nearing completion
- Thursday Club Rummage Sale on Saturday, March 8, 2014 and Sunday, March 9, 2014 at the Balboa Park Activity Center.
- Saint Patricks's Day Parade and Festival will take place March 15, 2014
- San Diego Race for Autism will take place March 22, 2014
- Hot Chocolate 15/5k Run will take place March 23, 2014

Committee Comments/Questions:

- Since the Centennial Organizing Committee no longer exists, will the City maintain the summer moratorium for in the foreseeable future? Susan stated she has not received direction yet on this matter and hopes to have a report at the next meeting.

Mario Llanos, Acting Balboa Park Operations District Manager

- The City has been put on notice by the FAA and The San Diego International Airport regarding 14 Eucalyptus trees which are impacting the approach slope and possibly impairing visibility adjacent to the approach path the airport. In the upcoming weeks, tree crews will begin trimming the identified trees. City Arborists, independent arborists, and the San Diego Airport's arborist are working together to come up with a sensible approach.
- Over the next several months, Zoro Garden will begin its transformation into a world class Butterfly Garden led by The Friends of Balboa Park, City staff and other organizations. The project will begin immediately following the butterfly release on Science Day, March 16, 2014.
- Alcazar lot improvements will begin the week of March 17, 2014. This will provide better ADA access and increase parking spaces from five to fourteen. Construction is set to last approximately six to eight weeks.

Committee Comments/Questions:

- Chairperson Kinney asked if there would be any parking in the Alcazar lot during the improvements. Mario responded the project would take up all the parking. The entire lot would be closed.

CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM UPDATES

Mr. Micah Parzen stated Council President Gloria will announce the official launch of the annual Balboa Park Explorer pass at the media event on March 17, 2014 at 10:30 a.m. in the Air and Space Museum.

Balboa Park Sustainability Program

The Balboa Park energy and lighting fair will be held on Thursday, March 20, 2014 at the Reuben H. Fleet Science Center.

Balboa Park Learning Institute

- Park-wide customer service initiative is in its final stages of the training module and the final presentation will be May 21, 2014.
- The BPLI is working with InforMath to explore connections in math, sciences and art. The first research and intervention will take place on March 16, 2014 as part of the Balboa Park STEAM Family Day.
- The Art of Science Learning San Diego Incubator Fellows' will continue to explore solutions to the region's significant water challenges through September 2014.

ACTION ITEMS

Consent

101. None

Adoption

201. House of Pacific Relations International Cottages Plan Amendment Initiation

Presenters: Charlie Daniels, Park Designer, Park and Recreation Department and Vicki Estrada, Estrada Land Planning

Prior to the presentation, Chairperson Kinney explained to the Committee that they would determine whether the plan has enough merit, and if it meets the Master Plan requirements to go forward to the Planning Commission to initiate the plan amendment process. The Committee has been asked to make recommendations, not to approve the details.

Mr. Daniels and Ms. Estrada requested the Committee to advise if the supplemental criteria in the General Plan have been met, and recommend initiation of plan amendments to the Master Plan and Central Mesa Precise Plan.

Project Description:

- Constructing five new duplex cottages for use by house ten member nations
- Cottages would encompass approximately 8,200 square feet
- Pedestrianize and enhance Pan American Place
- Install new walkways to the cottages

Staff recommended not advising the Supplemental Criteria in the General Plan have been met and not recommend initiation of amendments to the Master Plan and Central Mesa Precise Plan.

Ms. Mary McDermott, the new president for the House of Pacific Relations stated there's a need to amend the existing Balboa Park Master Plan and Central Mesa Precise Plan, since the specified amount of expansion cottage square footage was reached a few years ago. Ms. McDermott requests permission to move forward with the process of amending the plans, and this will not include the proposed expansion at this time.

Ms. Estrada added the plan was presented to the Save Our Heritage Organisation (SOHO) Board and also the Historical Resources Board's Design Assistance Subcommittee. The plan that would be amended is the existing approved Precise Plan, which incorporates the bypass bridge and the Plaza de Panama Project, not the 1992 plan. The plan is consistent with the goals of the Master Plan and Precise Plan. Also, the initiation of the plan is not to concur with the adoption, it is to give authorization to move forward. She suggested the Committee approve Alternative I as specified.

Committee Comments/Questions:

- Mr. Singleton asked how they plan to create usable space and if there was an impact in 1935. He believes the plan doesn't meet the criteria. Ms. Estrada stated by pedestrianizing the asphalt and not the lawn space. Also nothing will be changed from 1935.
- Mr. Liddell asked if the plan is worth the pain and money. Ms. Estrada responded yes, I am fully convinced that it is worth the effort, time and money.
- Mr. Kahng stated this is one of the most comprehensively negative staff recommendations that he's seen. What is the net outcome of the efforts to include availability of extending the hours? Ms. Estrada responded the outcome is that there are meetings currently taking place. The decision to expand hours has not been decided.
- Mr. Kahng asked if there are any options the House of Pacific Relations is considering that could make better use of the existing footprints. What happens as more nations want to be included? Ms. Estrada stated she can't imagine that any more cottages could fit into this scenario. Are there any time sharing options for other nations? Ms. Estrada replied it could potentially be considered.
- Chairperson Kinney added that down the road there could be more nations that might also want cottages.

Mr. Parzen applauded the houses for their effort to be more inclusive and deliver more vital cultural activities in the Park. It's not clear as to why the public would be restricted to only five hours a week. His biggest concern is underutilization of existing cottages. The focus should be on reinvigorating them, so that they can serve their original intended purpose.

- Ms. McDermott replied there are things ongoing at the cottages, such as December Nights, Ethnic Food Fair, lawn programs and music programs.
- Chairperson Kinney asked where the food fair and December Nights would be relocated. Ms. McDermott stated there is more room in the area. The other area which is not being used at that time is the Palisades lawn.
- Ms. Schiavoni wanted to know more about the prior edition of cottages. There were four cottages that were added when the Master Plan showed there were to be eight when it was only 4,000 square feet. It turned out to only be four houses that were 4,000 square feet. Ms. Estrada replied the Master Plan did not say it would be eight. It showed eight envelopes, and basically stated somewhere within that cash line is where the cottage would be allowed to be built. The maximum 4,000 square feet was reached and that is why there's a request for amendment.
- Ms. Schiavoni asked if there was a request for consideration for other nations to have cottages. Ms. Estrada stated the notion to amend the Precise Plan to add more cottages has been talked about since the plan was approved. She doesn't recall it ever being brought up as an issue in the City staff plan.

- Mr. Parzen asked if the cottages have a strategic plan that outlines their envisioned role in the Park in future years. Ms. McDermott replied there is a long term strategic planning committee for the new cottages.
- Mr. Singleton stated to Mr. Daniels, it clearly states the three criteria have to be met in the initiation of planning. Is this the only time that the filter is used, or is the Planning Commission using the filter for initiating? Mr. Daniels responded these are the criteria for planning initiation. They are to be addressed by the Balboa Park Committee and the Planning Commission. Should the Plan amendment be initiated, then other criteria would be applied.
- Chairperson Kinney thanked Ms. McDermott for explaining the use of the cottages and for eliciting Ms. Estrada's assistance on this project. He stated it's a very worthy project for the International cottages.

Public Comments: 17 - in favor

House of Pacific Relations (HPR) International Cottages Plan Amendment Initiation

- Letter of support from former Ambassador Charles S. Shapiro, the President of the Institute of the Americas.
- Letter of support for cottages from Honorary Consul Kate Leonard honoring the President of the San Diego Consular Core (SDCC) for Japan.
- House of Peru Queens shared thoughts in support of the cottages.
- President of HPR's House of Peru urged the Committee to respond positively to the request.
- Letter of support for cottages from San Diego County Supervisor, Ms. Dianne Jacob.
- Founder of the House of Peru thanked the Committee and hopes they will support the project.
- Letter of support for cottages from the President of the downtown San Diego Lions Club and Retired U.S. Navy Captain Robert Golf.
- Letter of support from Mr. David Edick, President of the San Diego World Affairs Council.
- Letter of support for the HPR from the Chair of the City of San Diego International Affairs.
- Letter of support for cottages from the Regional Director of UltraGlas.
- Founder of the House of Mexico expressed his concern in support of the cottages.
- President of the House of Mexico urged the Committee to approve the amendment.
- House of Spain urged approval of the new cottages.
- President of the House of Spain recommended the approval of new cottages.
- House of India stated the cottages share the rich diversity and culture of the people of San Diego.
- House of Turkey strongly in favor of the new cottages.
- House of Korea would like to have a permanent house in Balboa Park.
- House of Finland stated it's important for the houses to have a physical cottage presence, so they can present their culture.

Speaker Slips: 7 – in favor

House of Pacific Relations International Cottages Plan Amendment Initiation

- Mr. Bruce Coons, Executive Director of Save Our Heritage Organization (SOHO) stated SOHO's goal is to support the concept and not any specific designs or orientations of the cottages yet. They have voted to initiate the process.
- Mr. Diego Gutierrez, President of the House of Columbia would like to defy myths associated with Columbia.
- Mr. Zoltan Gidofalvi, Vice President of the House of Hungary, it's important to have a strong presence.
- Mr. Bassemah Darwish, House of Palestine, stated the expansion would mean the inclusion of so many houses missing from Balboa Park.
- Mr. Edward Galvan with the San Diego County Art Mart Association stated they support the cottages, but felt they will eventually be displaced. It's important to have a visible spot as the process moves forward.
- Mr. Romulo Sarno, President of the House of the Philippines, stated the cottages are self-sufficient.
- Ms. Alisha Morrison, House of Pacific Relations, stated tents that set-up on the lawn are houses that are in need of cottages for the Ethnic Food Fair. She hopes the Committee will support the initiative.

Committee Comments/Questions:

- Mr. Strickland stated the San Diego community deserves to have all countries represented. He's concerned about expanding for more houses and the need to find an appropriate location.
- Mr. Singleton stated the programs are great and more countries need to be represented. Since the project has to meet all three criteria, and he's not convinced on criterion B and C. He feels the criteria can be met, but not based upon what was presented.
- Mr. Parzen stated this is a difficult issue. He's been inspired by the public's comment. Mr. Parzen's biggest concern is that the request is premature. There needs to a comprehensive strategic plan that reveals how the five additional cottages' activity will fit into the larger plan.
- Mr. Steppke added he's hesitant about some of the area being exclusive and not open to the public. The amendment of the Master Plan and Central Mesa Precise Plan was not a slam dunk. He believes it's a little premature.
- Mr. Kahng stated it is incomprehensible that there is no house of Mexico and India. Operation of the houses needs further developing. He feels the process should commence, but would like more details on the strategic plan.
- Mr. Liddell is not in support of the initiative and believes the Committee's responsibility is to go with staff's recommendations.
- Chairperson Kinney stated the Committee is being asked to send a recommendation to the Planning Commission about whether a plan amendment about the process should be initiated. If the Planning Commission approves it, then the project will come back before the Committee in more detail.

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED MR. LIDDELL/ MR. STEPPKE

A motion was made to accept support staff's recommendation on both points one and two.

Ms. Estrada inquired about options to move forward and whether the Committee is advisory to the Planning Commission.

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED MR. STEPPKE/ MR. STRICKLAND

A motion was made to amend the original motion. The motion is to accept staff's recommendations and to encourage the House of Pacific Relations to return to the Committee with an updated plan of additional information in the future. Motion was approved (2-7-0)

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED MR. SINGLETON/ MR. STEPPKE

A motion was made to table the action on this project and request the applicant work with staff, come back to the Committee with a revised plan. Motion was approved (8 -1-0)

Special Events

301. House of Pacific Relations Ethnic Food Fair – Ms. Mary McDermott, President and Alicia Morrison, Chair of the House of Pacific Relations (HPR) Special Events Committee

Ms. McDermott is requesting a waiver to the Summer Moratorium to use the Palisades Lawn, International Lawn and House of Pacific Relations Lawn on Sunday, May 25, 2014 from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Set-up will be Saturday, May 24, 2014. No road or parking lot closures will be required. Ms. Morrison added she is also seeking a waiver for the Ethnic Food Fair that hosts thousands of visitors each year and allows HPR member organizations to raise funds.

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED MR. SINGLETON/ MR. STRICKLAND

A motion was made to go along with staff's recommendations to extend a waiver to the Summer Moratorium for the Ethnic Food Fair. Motion was approved unanimously.

302. None

WORKSHOP ITEMS

401. None

INFORMATION ITEMS

501. Update Cabrillo Bridge Project – Lou Melendez, Project Manager for CalTrans

Mr. Melendez reported he met with Park Administration on February 11, 2014, and confirmed CalTrans will not be able to meet the original date to open the deck for vehicular traffic by May 1, 2014. CalTrans has had challenges with retrofitting the pier walls. They are behind 151 days and expect to open the deck by mid-July to mid-August. CalTrans' project completion would extend till the end of December 2014. Mr. Melendez is proposing a change of work order with the contractor to open the deck for vehicular traffic from May 26, 2014 through September 1, 2014 from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. with intermittent closures.

Public Comments/Questions:

Mr. Peter Comiskey, Director of Balboa Park Cultural Partnership

- Not convinced the project will be over by December 2014
- Flabbergasted the project is now extending into December
- There will be major negative impacts on the institutions

Ms. Betty Peabody, Founder of Friends of Balboa Park

- The project added 15 minutes to her driving trip to the Park
- Need to consider the 2015 opening

Committee Comments/Questions:

- Mr. Singleton asked if the change orders moved the timeline back. Mr. Melendez stated yes, change orders have impacted the contract time. The prospect of punishing or holding the contractor to a specific amount of time is diminishing on a daily basis. The contractor most likely will not suffer too many negative impacts.
- Mr. Parzen stated the project is a great impact on the institutions.
- Mr. Strickland appreciated the update, but wished the information had been given sooner.
- Mr. Kahng is concerned about timeline projections.
- Mr. Liddell stated CalTrans should let the contractor go.
- Mr. Singleton asked about the impacts the closures are creating.
- Chairperson Kinney added he hopes the bridge will open as soon as possible and for CalTrans to work on the scheduling.

502 – 504. Proposed Balboa Park Equivalencies for items 502, 503, and 504 - Howard Greenstein and Ms. Deborah Sharpe, Park Planning, Neighborhoods and Economic Development Department

The City is currently in the process of updating three community plans that are adjacent to Balboa Park. The staff presentation included a review of the recreation element for all three communities; proposed equivalency sites, and areas of Balboa Park that are often used as community parks. All three communities are severely deficient in population-based park land. The first public draft will be ready by the summer and the goal is to have final approval and acceptance by City Council early next year.

Committee Comments/Questions:

- Chairperson Kinney stated he's very impressed with the choices which will allow for improvement of these areas.
- Mr. Strickland asked how equivalencies take away from proposed parks in Golden Hill. Mr. Greenstein responded they won't affect other proposed parks in Golden Hill.
- Mr. Singleton asked who controls input on what happens. Mr. Greenstein stated in Balboa Park there's no need to wait for land to develop a new park.
- Mr. Kahng invited Mr. Greenstein and Ms. Sharpe to the Balboa Park Morley Field Recreation Council's meeting on April 2, 2014.
- Mr. Liddell is pleased with equivalency selections. He requested a presentation for the Uptown Planners.

- Mr. Steppke wanted to know the ratio the three communities would be sharing. Ms. Sharpe stated they don't have the projected populations at this time. She added current financing plans will be done by creating project sheets.

SUB-COMMMTTEE REPORTS

601. Land-Use and Policy – Mr. David Kinney
No report.

602. West Mesa Subcommittee – Mr. Don Liddell
No report.

COMMITTEE MEMBER'S REPORTS

No report.

ADJOURNMENT – The meeting adjourned at 10:14 p.m.

Next Schedule Meeting: Thursday, May 1, 2014
 6:00 P.M.
 Balboa Park Club
 2150 Pan American Road West
 San Diego, CA 92101

Respectfully submitted,

Mario Llanos
Acting District Manager