

MINUTES

**City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board
BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE
July 10, 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
Makeda Cheatom
Chris Eddy
Tim Shields
Jake Banfield-Weir
Michael Robinson
Michael Singleton
Patty Riddle
David Baron

Members Absent

Howard Blackson
Mandy Brown
Kathy Vandenheuvell

Staff Present

Tyler Canales
Victor Johnson

CALL TO ORDER

Allison Soares called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES June 12, 2025

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

A motion was made by Mr. Shields and seconded by Ms. Riddle to approve the June 12, 2025, meeting minutes.
The motion carried (6-0-3).

NON- AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Web Form:

Kathy Vandenheuvell - I am the Greater Golden Hill Representative on the Balboa Park Committee but am unable to attend tonight's meeting. I wanted to express my concern regarding the impact of paid parking in Balboa Park on my community of Golden Hill. Golden Hill does not have any park space other than the adjacent Balboa Park. During the most recent Community Plan Update for Greater Golden Hill this park deficit was prominently mentioned in several sections of the plan update and reflected in our CIP priorities. Golden Hill also has limited safe pedestrian access to the Central Mesa of the Park and has limited public transportation consisting of one bus line that goes through Golden Hill from North Park to Downtown and does not provide direct access to Balboa Park. Further this bus route has limited frequency on the weekends when many people wish to visit the park. I would ask that the City consider the burden this policy will have on the Greater Golden Hill community in further limiting our ability to enjoy the Park with our families and strongly consider either keeping a significant amount of parking free for residents

only or at a minimum provide shuttle service from the Greater Golden Hill community to the Central Mesa. The Golden Hill Recreation Center, which does not have any public transportation options, would be an ideal location for providing such a shuttle option for the community.

In-Person:

Diana Hyatt – Casa de Balboa sewer drain backup issues.

Daniele Laman – Attended Balboa Park safety and security meeting. Looking forward to working with Save Starlight. Concerned about ICE showing up for the House of Portugal event. Still awaiting a repair timeline for repairs of the House of Czechoslovakia. Announced July Lawn Programs. September 6th & 7th will be a special celebration of 90 years of HPR Cottages.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

None.

STAFF REPORT

Ryan Darcey, Council District 3 – CPPS funding has been renewed for FY26 and accepting applications. SB569 has passed and reported to the State Transportation Committee and heard on July 14th.

Michael Bravo, 78th District – None

SDPD - LT. Geoff Decesari introduced new A/LT. Heater Sudden who will be servicing the area of Balboa Park. SDPD officers will be moving forward with establishing a direct presence at the Starlight Bowl. National Night Out will be occurring on the West Mesa with more information to come.

Tyler Canales for Jon Richards, Deputy Director, Parks & Recreation – Will be sending out updates electronically.

BALBOA PARK NON-PROFIT PARTNER UPDATES

Forever Balboa Park – Katie McDonnell-The Botanical Building has won 5 awards: 2025 Preservation Design Award, 2025 AIA San Diego Design Award, The Preservation of Honor Award, SEAOSD Excellence Award, and San Diego Design Week Design Award. Carousel Day is scheduled for July 25th. Additional new board members. Happy to be working with the City of San Diego regarding paid parking in Balboa Park.

Balboa Park Cultural Partnership – Peter Comiskey – Various Capital Expenditures by the Natural History and Timken Museum along with a few others planned throughout the park. Keep that in mind when discussing potential opportunities between the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership, The City of San Diego, and Individual Philanthropist to keep advancing Balboa Park. Ensuring that people love Balboa Park and are willing to invest in the place that they work.

Committee of 100 – Kevin Carpenter- Municipal Gymnasium Project: Fabrication is occurring, but onsite work is schedule to occur in September. Concerns with equitable access to the park as it pertains to paid parking in Balboa Park.

Save Starlight – Steve Stopper – None

Village Arts & Education Foundation – None

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENT

Patty Riddle - Reported on various events that occurred at the Balboa Park Activity Center. For more detailed information please review distributed information.

Mike Singleton - introduced himself to the board.

CONSENT ITEMS

None

INFORMATION

Item 1: Historic Sign Installation

Presenter: Kevin Carpenter, Nancy Carol-Carter, Committee of 100

Public Comment:

None

Committee Comment:

Patty Riddle – Offered to discuss the historical significance of the Federal Building.

Tim Shields - Ensure to work with the institutions to coordinate signage locations.

Mike Singleton - Great opportunity to tell the stories of Balboa Park

Chris Eddy - QR Codes or another form of quick response data can be placed on the signs to inform the public.

Item 2: San Diego Natural History Museum Atrium Roof Replacement

Presenter: Matt Jawlik, San Diego Natural History Museum Time Wright, Wright Management, Inc

Public Comment:

None

Committee Comment:

Chris Eddy – Have you considered utilizing the ceiling as a projection screen?

Matt Jawlik (Response)- Yes, Options are currently being discussed. Our exhibit design team are excited for the potential options.

Allison Soares - Recommended providing updated pictures of the new designs and projections.

Michael Robinson – How will the repair work effect the visitor experience?

Matt Jawlik (Response)- The plan is for the museum to be open as much as possible. There will be times when the museum will be closed, and construction will overlap. The goal is to limit the visitor experience as little as possible.

Jake Banfield-Weir – Is the drainage going through storm water or will it require retrenching?

Matt Jawlik (Response) - With the installation of new and more roof drains the volume of roof water will drain into the current wastewater system.

Makeda Cheatom – Inquired if the building was a LEED Gold Certified Building.

Matt Jawlik (Response) - We are LEED Silver Certified Building.

David Baron – With a lead time of eight months that is a quick turnaround. Good Luck

Patty Riddle – Would like to consult with them to discuss roof repairs of the Balboa Park Activity

Michael Singleton - Is there anything happening in the area on the left where the elevation is different?

Matt Jawlik (Response)- Believes, that it is just the silhouette against the sky (image) and there is no additional plans for that area.

DISCUSSION

Item 3: Timken Museum of Art Expansion Project

Presenter: Charlies Daniels, Project officer II, and Stephani Green, Landscape Architect- Parks & Recreation. Megan Pogue, Executive Director, and David Kinney, Board Member- Timken Museum.

Public Comment:

None

Committee Comment:

Chris Eddy – Why does it have to be improved material? Why does it have to look any different than the building itself? Since, it is not designated as a historical building.

Carry Cent (Response) - Even though it is not designated as an historical structure per the City's Municipal code. It is eligible for historical designation and doing something that doesn't resemble the historical may require additional permit.

Allison Soares - How do you anticipate keeping people from walking through the and tracking it into the museum? How do plan to keep the skylight clean?

Megan Pogue (Response) - Mats and volunteers would help keep the areas clean from debris and water.

Michael Singleton - Congratulations on the work you have done. The standard for compatibility looks like everything belongs together. The slight change in natural color will be able to tell what the new addition.

Makeda Cheatom – Are you going to be a solar or utilize solar panels. Are you a LEED Silver or Gold building? How would you get the dirt out of the basement?

Megan Pogue (Response)- The city would like us to place solar panels on the arcade. Not yet LEED certified building. Dirt removal will have to occur at night to limit visitor impact.

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED Mr. Baron/ Mr. Singleton

A motion was made by Mr. Baron and seconded by Mr. Singleton to accept the project as presented. The motion carried unanimously (9-0-0).

WORKSHOP ITEMS

Item 4: Balboa Park Paid Parking

Presenter: Emily Piatanesi, Office of the Mayor, Conrad Wear, Program Manager, Parks and Recreation.

Public Comment:

Peter Comiskey - Asked the committee to show support for this item but with much more opportunity for free parking. At a minimum of 3 hours of free parking. The cost of parking should be at a minimum as opposed to the suggest \$18.00 dollar parking fee. Should be working to do everything we can to encourage more patrons to attend shows, restaurants, and other programming in Balboa Park.

Daniel Laman - Read a letter that was written to City Council and the Mayor from House of Pacific Relations (HPR) chair on how the paid parking will adversely affect the volunteers, visitors, and residents of HPR.

Michael Stepner - This proposal doesn't consider what Balboa Park is, and who the park is for. Along with how paid parking will adversely affect the citizens of San Diego and how they utilize it. The proposal for paid parking is just a revenue source.

Mike Warburton - The proposed information should've been better distributed if feedback was wanted. The various parking proposals for non-paid parking are a farce. The proposal for generated revenue should be represented in net and not gross.

Ross Porter - The implementation of paid parking should be an emphatic No! This proposal shows no plan for parking management and is just thought of as a revenue stream. All people benefit when they can come to the park, and we are harmed when people cannot access the park.

Lorraine Sunny Van Cleave - Concerned for how the placement of the proposed Tier 1 parking adversely affect the International Village and its volunteers. Will there be an adequate amount of ADA parking available as mandated by federal standards?

Conrad Wear (Response) - Yes, the required standards for the amount of ADA parking are met in the proposal. As proposed free parking is designated for the Inspiration lot.

Committee Comment:

Allison Soares – Very disappointed that the Balboa Park Committee couldn't get this information ahead of time to fully review and discuss. Allowing us not to be able to provide clear and concise information that we can report to the various communities we represent. We all do not want paid parking in Balboa Park and 2-3 hours of free parking is insane.

Emily Piatanesi (Response) - This and more information can be provided. This proposal will be presented to City Council as an Information item, and we are looking for feedback from your committee.

Makeda Cheatom - Marginalized communities that visit Balboa Park will be adversely affected by this proposal. Visitors that regularly attend long-term special events should be considered. Paid parking along Park Blvd will affect not only parking but those individuals who visit my café. Considerations should be made because people will have a hard time paying these fees.

Chris Eddy - is the end goal that the revenue generated by the Zoo parking lot will stay with the Zoo? How does a free period work?

Emily Piatanesi (Response) - Cannot confirm because full negotiations with the Zoo have not happened yet. At Inspiration Point or other lots there will get a 2–3-hour free parking period. The enforcement process is still under review.

Mike Singleton - Is there a possibility that the Zoo will not be part of the Tier system? All the parking should be consistent. As a potential revenue source for Balboa Park. Will the money generated stay in Balboa Park and will it be an additional revenue source along with traditional City funds that are normally allocated to Balboa Park? Has the West Mesa been discussed. What about the meter parking along 6th Avenue? Additional ideas and better rates should be discussed regarding residence, parking management and improve shuttles.

Emily Piatanesi (Response) - There will be a negotiation process concerning their Zoos lease agreement will be occurring. The revenues generated will be utilized to explore alternative transportation options in the park. The revenues need to stay in the park. The West Mesa has been discussed. Revenues generated along Balboa Park side of 6th Avenue will stay in the park. Residential rates are being discussed.

Tim Shields - The concept of paid parking feels rushed and not fully researched. Concerns for how the revenue will be distributed due the many mixed reports on how the funds will be allocated to other areas of Parks & Recreation. Clarification is needed regarding hourly and daily rates. The price for parking doesn't hold value to someone who is going to visit one or two museums. The burden of parking cost is carried more by patrons who visit the park at the end of the day as opposed to earlier in the day and should be changed. Two hours of free parking is not enough and doesn't encourage park visitation and needs to be reconsidered. There are no certainties on the details of this proposal. There should be more Tier 2 lots and should be approximate to employee and volunteer parking. There should be no paid parking in Balboa Park at all. Minimum lot rates are preferred and a guarantee that funds generated will remain in the park and not used to supplement budget shortfalls.

Emily Piatanesi (Response)- The rates will be per day. A scale rate based on the location of the lots. The original proposal was scheduled to start paid parking in January 2026 but at the request of City Council the proposal was expedited.

Michael Robinson - Paid parking will adversely affect access to all citizens that utilize Balboa Park. Marginalized communities will disproportionately be affected even more. I say No to paid parking in Balboa Park. How does this affect people that park in the park and work downtown or areas around Balboa Park?

Emily Piatanesi (Response) - We understand that parking for the Navy and Students is a contentious issue. In our current proposal free parking is available for the first 2-3 hours but after that fee will be charged.

Jake Banfield-Weir - Paid parking will adversely impact the parking for the surrounding communities of Balboa Park. These communities are already struggling for parking and traffic congestion. People will start becoming creative about where they are going to park which will lead to other safety hazards and concerns in the communities that surround the park.

Conrad Ware (Response)- We are aware of those concerns.

Patty Riddle - Encourages further negation with San Diego Zoo Parking. The proposal will adversely impact patrons of the Balboa Park Activity Center and traffic in Balboa Park. The international cottages are important. Is the cost of implementing a parking fee worth the cost and expense of enforcement. Is it worth risking the reputation of San Diego as “Americas Finest City”.

David Baron - Parking by the students of City College and San Diego High utilize the Inspiration Point lot and could create an issue. Parking considerations should be strongly made for all the volunteers that work in Balboa Park. A real solution should be made for volunteers.

Emily Piatanesi (Response) - We’ve committed to making determinations that will be made on who and where volunteers park and how passes will be distributed.

ADJOURNMENT – 6:13 pm

Notice of Next Balboa Park Meeting:

September 4, 2025
4:00 P.M.
In-Person

Respectfully submitted,

Victor Johnson II
Area Manager