

MINUTES

**City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board
BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE
June 5, 2026**

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

David Baron
Jake Banfield-Weir
Howard Blackson
Mandy Brown
Makeda Cheatom
Patty Riddle
Michael Singleton
Kathy Vandenheuvel

Members Absent

Allison Soares
Chris Eddy
Michael Robinson

Staff Present

Tyler Canales
Anthony Harrington

1. CALL TO ORDER

Allison Soares called the meeting to order at 4:09 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Tyler Canales called roll.

3. APPROVE MINUTES FROM May 7, 2026, MEETING

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED Ms. Vandenheuvel/Mr. Blackson

A motion was made by Mr. Baron and seconded by Ms. Vandenheuvel to approve the April 9, 2026, meeting minutes with amendments. The motion carried (6-0-1. Mandy Brown abstained).

4. NON- AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Web Form:

Brenna Derakshan - As an entrepreneur and Nurse Practitioner as well as someone who goes to and lives by Balboa Park, and was previously a member of the Spanish Village Art Center, I believe the focus should shift from constantly increasing parking fees, restructuring events like December Nights, or reducing arts spaces, and instead toward creating experiences that naturally generate revenue while strengthening the community. Balboa Park already has what people are looking for: beauty, culture, walkability, art, music, and community. However, it is lacking in drawing people in for activities that are inclusive for all, and ones which meet the needs of the neighborhood and community. The city should utilize what already exists within the environment. There should be an ice cream shop in the park, more high-quality food options, healthy and high-protein cafe at the Spanish Art Village cafe, which is closed, no grab-and-go concepts. People stay longer and return more often when there are meaningful experiences tied to the environment. If

there were a beer garden should become a consistent weekly event with live music, giving local musicians and artists opportunities to perform and gain exposure while also increasing revenue for the park and surrounding art spaces. Most importantly, the art community should expand inclusiveness and accessibility, especially for younger artists and newer members of the community. I did not feel this was present. Creative spaces survive by evolving, welcoming new perspectives, and creating environments where people feel inspired to participate. Balboa Park does not need to lose its soul to generate revenue. It should lean further into what already makes it special.

In-Person:

Adrienne Turner – Worked in the Park for 6 years in the 90s. Had a view of the gridlock during this time. Have charted all things that have happened about parking over the years. There has been a loss of 530 spaces. 1,100 spaces need to be added to accommodate the expansion of the park. Should create a parking structure.

Michael Warburton – Representing the Electric Building Tenet Committee. Thank the Committee for solidarity around being against paid parking. Thank City staff for meeting with BACC. Ac still broken since December. All issues brought up at previous meetings still remain.

Daniele Laman – Food cart violations are infractions only. Was a swatting incident at the Zoo. Had a training regarding that just before the incident. Rangers will lose 3 Balboa Park positions. Noted upcoming lawn programs. Check out UT article regarding bathroom closures.

5. **CHAIR'S REPORT**

None

6. **STAFF REPORTS**

Council District 3 – Ryan Darcy – An agreement was negotiated to end paid parking and a reduction of trash fees. Want to thank everyone who voiced their opinion regarding it. The agreement will be presented to Council on 6/8.

78th District – None

SDPD – None

Mayor's Office – Emily Piatanesi - Apologize for not coming last month, was in the Budget Review Committee. Changes will come Jan 1st for paid parking. Tomorrow morning at 9am is last Council Budget Meeting. Final budget will be 6/9. Will keep some hours for recreation centers and libraries. Money for these restorations comes from the Golf Division.

County Board of Supervisors District 4 - Joshua Dunn – Charter amendments were passed at the last Supervisor's meeting. \$2.7 million going for arts and culture and will be for individual artists. There is a Cultural Artists District.

7. **BALBOA PARK NON-PROFIT PARTNER UPDATES**

Forever Balboa Park – Katy McDonald – Happy paid parking has come to a resolution. It will help some things but the reversal will not solve it all either. Was not a great example of public policy. Hope the master planning process will give a vehicle to the major problem. Will get an announcement in the next couple of weeks which consultant will be awarded for the master plan. Hosting first Garden Party on 6/6 to celebrate all the renovations around the Botanical Building. Rose Garden Pergola construction expected to begin in August.

Balboa Park Cultural Partnership – None

Balboa Park Committee of 100 – Kevin Carpenter – Design Assistance Committee is ongoing. Excited about updated master plan. Off-site work for Muni Gym has gone slower than expected.

Save Starlight – Adam Van Susteren – What can Save Starlight do to get a lease? Cannot raise funds for the theatre without a lease. Helping with the Twilight concerts on 6/11.

Village Arts & Education Foundation – Grateful about paid parking being overturned. Has affected the youth camps but have added adult camps. Potters show will be 6/13-6/14. Opera will be 7/24-7/25.

8. **COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS**

Kathy Vandenneuvel – Would like to see funding restored for restrooms in Balboa Park.

Makeda Cheatom – Would like to see that funding restored as well.

Patty Riddle – Need a sewer and bathrooms committee. BPAC has a badminton camp for kids.

9. **REQUEST FOR ITEMS TO BE PLACED ON CONSENT AGENDA**

None

10. **CONSENT AGENDA**

None

11. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

Item 1: San Diego Pride – Credentialling Area

Presenter: Greg Spielman, President, North Park Little League

Public Comment:

Daniele Laman – Part of Chollas Little League – Very much looking forward to this coming through the Committee. Please push this through.

Committee Comment:

Jake Banfield-Weir – Will there be a kitchen?

Greg Spielman (Responded) – It’s just a snack shack. This is just the patio area around it.

Howard Blackson – Know there is a bigger idea. What permit are you getting?

Nate - NPLL (Responded) – Should be a Right of Entry permit.

Howard Blackson – Is there any relationship with the City College Knights?

Greg Spielman (Responded) – Trying to work together to get consensus.

Kathy Vandenneuvel – Excited about the potential of this project. What is the total cost?

Mike - NPLL (Responded) – Shade sails with drive the cost and the risk. First estimate was \$120,000

Kathy Vandenneuvel – Looking to fund this yourselves. Is there anything that would increase the maintenance costs for the City?

Greg Speilman (Responded) – Will relieve the City of some of the maintenance burden.

Kathy Vandenneuvel – Did you consider partnering with Forever Balboa Park?

Greg Speilman (Responded) – Would love to engage more with other side of the Mesa. Did not consider that.

Makeda Cheatom – Was there any tests for toxic materials?

Greg Speilman (Responded) – ESD has been monitoring this for many years. There has been no issues with that.

Patty Riddle – Have you been in discussions with the Velodrome?

Nate NPLL (Responded) – Have reached out to them but have not had any response from them.

Michael Singleton – Project looks great. Please continue to be engaged with the master plan.

12. ACTION ITEMS

None

13. WORKSHOP ITEMS

Item 2: Balboa Park Master Plan

Presenter: Howard Blackson

Public Comment:

Michael Warburton – When going through experience process, we reached out to people who don't use the park. It would be good to do the same with the master plan process.

Committee Comment:

Kathy Vandenneuvel – Biggest things are having real public transportation to get to the park and making sure adjacent communities get some attention as well. How much money has been spent to date on this as there has been no outreach yet?

Makeda Cheatom – Is Vicky Estrada opposed to this plan?

Howard Blackson (Responded) – Vicky is a part of the Burnham Center and is in support of the master plan process. More worried about the program management chaos.

Makeda Cheatom – Can institutions come to the meetings?

Howard Blackson (Responded) – Yes. We are just a working group.

Kathy Vandenneuvel – Are these meeting publicly noticed?

Howard Blackson (Responded) – I believe the large ones are.

Michael Singleton – Talked about phases last time. There have been good ideas that need to be reevaluated and worked into it. The how is so important. Start with the why and then turn it into the how.

14. ADJOURNMENT – 5:59 pm

Notice of Next Balboa Park Meeting:

July 9, 2026
4:00 P.M.
In-Person

Respectfully submitted,

Tyler Canales
District Manager