

# MINUTES

City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board  
BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE  
January 20, 2021

**Meeting Location:**  
Online Meeting

**Mailing Address:**  
Balboa Park Administration  
Building  
2125 Park Boulevard  
San Diego, CA 92101-4792

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Members Present**

Sarah Dawe  
Vicki Granowitz  
Katherine Johnston – Chair  
Luanne Kanzawa  
Don Liddell  
Micah Parzen  
Johanna S. Schiavoni

**Members Absent**

William Aaron  
Victoria Curran  
Kenneth Davenport – Vice Chair  
Dang Nguyen

**Staff Present**

Christina Chadwick  
Andrew Field  
Mario Llanos  
Susan Lowery-Mendoza

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Johnston called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. and read the statement listed on the agenda that this Committee meeting will be conducted pursuant to the provisions of the California Executive Order 29-20 which suspends certain requirements of the Ralph M. Brown Act.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 3, 2020**

**MOTION:      MOVED/SECONDED   MS. GRANOWITZ / MS. DAWE**

A motion was made by Ms. Granowitz and seconded by Ms. Dawe to approve the December 3, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried (7-0-0).

**REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES** – None

**NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT**

Danielle Lamman – Provided photos for staff to share of the new cottage construction progress.

Kathy Vandenhueval – Resident of Golden Hill and adjacent to Balboa Park is dismayed about the amount of trash on the 26<sup>th</sup> Street trails leading to the park, lack of code compliance, vendors all over the place even in the Plaza de Panama, and loud music and bands with offensive music which

are diminishing her family's enjoyment of the park. Would like to see the park have more attention and code compliance. She also objects to the Ferris wheel.

### **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Chairperson Johnson thanked all for being present this evening and introduced Codi Vierra, Deputy Chief of Staff and Community Representative for Balboa Park for Council President Pro Tem Whitburn (District 3).

### **STAFF REPORT**

Codi Vierra – City Council Third District reported the following:

- She stated that her position is Deputy Chief of Staff and Community Representative for Balboa Park for Council President Pro Tem Whitburn and also the primary staff person to the Public Safety and Livable Neighborhoods Committee. She thanked Parks and Recreation staff for being helpful and she is excited to work with everyone. She is reaching out to all Balboa Park stakeholder groups and encouraged everyone to connect via the website.

Assistant Deputy Director Christina Chadwick reported the following:

- **Water and Sewer Project** -- The Water and Sewer project has encountered various issues with new main pressure, which have caused several water service disruptions. We appreciate your flexibility and partnership during this time.

The daytime concrete pour on El Prado was initially delayed until after December 28th. The work will now begin on January 25 and will happen in two phases. Vehicles will not be permitted during this period.

#### **PHASE ONE - 1/25/2021- 2/4/2021**

Starting with the South side of El Prado

On 2/4/2021 We will be removing the fence and open the south side of El Prado for pedestrian use only – no vehicles

On 3/4/2021 the South side of El Prado will be open for vehicles (28 days after last poured for curing time)

#### **PHASE TWO - 2/4/2021 – 2/15/2021**

Concrete work on the North Side of El Prado

On 2/15/2021 the North side of El Prado will be open for pedestrian use only -- no vehicles

On 3/10/2021 El Prado will return normal access

There will be no vehicle access on El Prado from February 4, 2021 – March 4, 2021.

Please contact me or Mario Llanos should you have any issues or concerns.

- **Sidewalk Safe Vending Act (SB 946)** – Mayor Gloria announced his intent to bring forward policy changes to regulate sidewalk and pushcart vending. SB 946 gave cities the power to regulate pushcarts but limited the power to issues of health and safety.

We are aware this issue is of interest to many park stakeholders. We will provide more information on the policy as it is made available. More details are available [here](#).

- **Sky Wheel** – Proposers for the Sky Wheel are suspending this effort in light of business-related challenges caused by COVID-19. The project will not be moving forward at this time.

The Sky Wheel proposal passed the Balboa Park Committee by a vote of 7-1 in December and City staff received direction to begin due diligence to evaluate operational impacts and project feasibility. The item was expected for consideration by the Park and Recreation Board on Jan. 21. Thank you to David and the Cohn family for their dedication to Balboa Park and for bringing this concept forward.

- **Casa Del Prado** – The Conservancy received a private donation to enhance the Casa del Prado with new painting, landscaping, lighting and activation of the patio. Following the completion of the initial phase, the Conservancy identified leftover funds that could be repurposed for other Casa Del Prado needs. Park and Recreation and the Conservancy are now working together to identify additional projects including tile restoration, door refinishing and signage. We would like to thank the Conservancy for securing these funds and helping the City restore and enhance this special building.
- **Placemaking Efforts for Palisades** – The Conservancy and P&R are working together to collect cost estimates and develop a proposal for funding from the San Diego Foundation for the purpose of activating the Palisades. When COVID restrictions are lifted and the community can gather in this space safely, we want to be prepared for San Diegans to enjoy this beautiful new space to the fullest extent.
- **Mayoral Transition and Administration Changes** -- Mayor Gloria and his team are working hard to make operational changes and staffing decisions. This includes a new policy advisor for Parks and Recreation and Balboa Park. We are excited to work with Steven Hill on Balboa Park issues and Matt Yagaygan on general Parks and Recreation Department issues. Steven Hill has worked on Balboa Park issues for many years and Matt previously worked for Council President Georgette Gomez. Jesus Cardenas and Codi Vierra have also been appointed to the positions of Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff for D3 Council President Pro Tem Steven Whitburn. Codi will join us each month at the Balboa Park Committee. We look forward to working with our new colleagues to keep our parks looking their very best all year!
- **Bea Evenson Fountain Restoration** – The Park and Recreation Department recently completed a major plumbing and electrical restoration of the Bea Evenson Fountain. The project started in March and included the replacement of more than 600 linear feet of new pipe as well as other electrical repairs. The last time the fountain was up and running was December 2019. The newly restored fountain recently caught the eye of the UT over the Christmas break.
- **Inauguration Light Up the Night in Balboa Park** – Mayor Gloria will light up Balboa Park on Inauguration Day to honor lives lost to COVID-19. Cities across the country have been invited to illuminate buildings in unity and remembrance. The California Tower, Museum of Art, Casa de Balboa, Casa del Prado, the NAT, the Fleet and the Organ Pavilion will be lit in amber, red, white and blue. The Washington, D.C. ceremony will feature a historic lighting around the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool.

- **Parks and Recreation Employee Honored with Prestigious Lifesaving Award** – Park and Recreation employee Victor Gomez-Cervantes was honored recently with the Lifesaving Award for Professional Responders, one of the highest awards given by the Red Cross. In June 2020, Victor was working at the San Diego Convention Center when he used CPR to help save the life of a person, he found lying unconscious. Numerous San Diego media outlets covered news of Victor's heroic act and his Red Cross Lifesaving Award. One headline from NBC 7 San Diego last week read: *"You Know It's Serious When the Red Cross Calls You a Hero."* [Click here](#) to read about Victor's incredible story and how his Red Cross training helped him save a life.

Balboa Park District Manager Susan Lowery-Mendoza reported the following: No report

Balboa Park District Manager Mario Llanos reported the following: Thanked all for their patience with the online format.

### **BALBOA PARK NON-PROFIT PARTNER UPDATES**

Balboa Park Conservancy – Jackie Higgins reported the following:

- The Rose Garden volunteers who are now under the Conservancy performed their major pruning and the garden is prepared for spring blooms
- Parkwide implementation of the Signage and Wayfinding program is getting underway in the next three months and was a delayed due to COVID
- Online launch of Garden Stewards Volunteer Corps orientation training in March/April
- The Request for Proposals for Phase 1 of the Botanical Building and Gardens project was released last November and will be evaluated and awarded in late spring or early summer

Balboa Park Cultural Partnership – Peter Comiskey reported the following:

- Thanked the six councilmembers for their support of arts and culture funding in their budget memos as it is essential to Balboa Park organizations and others. He encouraged advocacy for Parks and Recreation Department budgets as well.
- Identifying targeted opportunities for planning and engagement of the community
- While re-opening timing is still uncertain, he encouraged visitation of the Japanese Friendship Garden. Their re-launching plans are updated regularly are ready to greet guests in a safe manner when permitted.

Committee of 100 – Roger Showley reported the following:

- Provided an update on the San Diego Automotive Museum Restoration
- Since the last exposition, the building has been rather plain looking. Last Monday, construction began to replace the four murals.
- Shane Liberty is the construction superintendent with Barnhart-Reese Construction
- The project will be completed in April
- People are enjoying the new Pan American Plaza and it is a great place to activate in the park

Friends of Balboa Park – John Bolthouse reported the following:

- Pleased to contribute toward the rejuvenation of the Palisades with funding for landscaping

- In the City Council budget memos given to the budget analyst, only three referenced Balboa Park. Balboa Park is more than just a District 3 park. He encouraged all to have their voices heard no matter where you live.
- Morton Bay Fig Tree project is progressing and should be completed in February. They hope to have some small celebration around Arbor Day.
- Glad to see that the mobile fire suppression is being used by the rangers to extinguish spot fires in Balboa. It was funded collaboratively by many of the park museums, Las Patronas and the San Diego Police Foundation. The Friends of Balboa Park have a public safety and security fund to accept donations.
- Provided an update on the parking and circulation study and will provide a presentation in the future
- The carousel remains shuttered; however, improvements on the interior are continuing

Save Starlight – None

### **ACTION ITEMS**

#### **Consent**

101. None

#### **Adoption**

201. Botanical Building Naming Opportunities and Donor Acknowledgement, Presenters: Christina Chadwick, Assistant Deputy Director, City of San Diego and Jackie Higgins, Director of Planning, Design and Programs, Balboa Park Conservancy

Christina Chadwick noted that she is joined tonight by Jackie Higgins, Director of Planning Design and Programs, Balboa Park Conservancy to request a recommendation on the Botanical Building Donor Acknowledgement and Naming Opportunities Program. It is a public/private partnership and she thanked the Conservancy for their leadership. Phase I will address the building restoration and reconstruction while Phase II will address the botanical collection and gardens restoration. She provided a brief overview and highlights of the last two workshops conducted on November 5 and December 3, 2020 and the pertinent policies.

Committee Comments:

- Is there a gap in the sign manual as it doesn't address donor acknowledgement? (Sign Manual covers wayfinding, directional and interpretive signage primarily and donor acknowledgement is found in City policy)
- Laud the Conservancy for its process and a great product. Noted that the land acknowledgement is not included or referred to in the staff report. Encourage support in earnest.

A five-minute recess was taken to reconnect one member to the meeting.

### **MOTION      MOVED/SECONDED   MS. GRANOWITZ/MS. SCHIAVONI**

A motion was made by Ms. Granowitz and seconded by Ms. Schiavoni to adopt the staff recommendation and a recommendation that ongoing work be done with respect to a land acknowledgement. The motion carried (7,0,0).

### **Special Events**

301. None

### **WORKSHOP ITEMS**

401. None

### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

501. Report on Next Steps for Balboa Park “Framework for the Future” Planning Initiative. Presenters: Andy Field, Parks and Recreation Director; Danell Scarborough, Facilitator, City of San Diego

Mr. Andrew Field, Parks and Recreation stated that this is the culmination of a long-term planning effort designed to elevate the park experience called the Balboa Park Framework for the Future. The goal is to inform strategic decision-making and investment by aligning priorities, resources and experiences visitors want to enjoy in the park. He noted the park master plans, park plans and reports. In February 2020, a meeting was held with several hundred in attendance to gather input on what must be addressed, and themes emerged:

- Maintenance and infrastructure
- Sustainable funding
- Parking access, circulation and mobility
- Security and Safety
- Project prioritization, Planning and Review
- Governance
- Programming, culture and amenities

The themes were refined, and additional data was gathered by the polling and survey. He introduced Danell Scarborough who stated that there are four initiatives underway and pending as next steps:

- 1) Community outreach and engagement – which was undertaken and completed
- 2) Prioritization framework – to guide decision making with a scoring system, prioritize projects identified in previous studies and new projects identified with data gathering, facility assessments and building condition reports with incorporation of costs resulting in details how and why the projects are prioritize.
- 3) Mobility, Access, Circulation Parking Recommendations – Summarize studies for traffic flow, signage speed limits, accessibility, sidewalks, drop-offs, circulation, and ADA accessibility, decrease barriers, multi-model access, Parks and Recreation staff would work with various City Departments and potentially a consultant.
- 4) Governance models and sustainable funding structures. A peer city analysis would be undertaken to determine what operating agreements other city parks operate under. Also, looking inward to analyze best practices in San Diego and benchmarking and funding mechanisms and strategies. This would be undertaken by Parks and Recreation staff with consultant assistance.

Mr. Field stated that there are challenges and thanked all for their support and feedback.

**Public Comments:**

Steve Snyder – President/CEO of the Fleet Science Center and member of the board of the Cultural Partnership is excited to lend support of the framework which provides an opportunity to add other initiatives to further elevate Balboa Park. The One Voice Experience Plan is an initiative to be intentional on what a visit to the park means.

Kathy Vandenheuval –Wants to ensure that the neighboring community planning groups are considered stakeholders; Downtown, Golden Hill and North Park.

Makeda Dread Cheatom – Executive Director of the World Beat Cultural Center. As a member of the Cultural Partnership and lead for the “IDEA” task force (inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility task force), she expressed support for the Framework Report. It is the hope of the task force that all feel welcome and engaged.

Rene Smith- Think beyond what the vision was originally for 2030 to a vision for 2035. Look at the work done by the New School of Architecture in 2013 for the East Mesa in preparation of 2015. It reimagines the park. Think broadly and boldly.

**Committee Comments:**

- Congratulations to the City to engage in this community process. It is an exciting time even with the pandemic to move forward with new Mayor and Council. Build on the One Voice Experience Plan to which is desperately needed in the park.
- Thanks for continuing to press forward even with the challenges of the year.
- Appreciate presentation and involvement of the community. We all have the same goal and hope that together, we can move forward the IDEA and visitor experience plan of the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership.
- While some work was done, more details are needed. What is the next step? Hoping for something more substantial. Concerned that the process for preparing the RFP be transparent.  
(The study will be subdivided into the three areas. A consultant may be brought on board to identify how the Council Policy 800-14 can be utilized for the park).
- Let's not do another study, want to have action. Conditions haven't changed much and don't re-hash the past.
- Thank you, staff has done a lot of work. There isn't a City document that prioritizes projects and an innovative way to do so is needed. There is value in looking at governance and sustainable practices strategies and funding. There have been parking studies in the past to move vehicles, however a solution to moving people is also needed.

**SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- 601. Land-Use and Policy – No report
- 602. West Mesa Subcommittee – No report

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS' REPORTS**

None

8

Balboa Park Committee  
January 20, 2021

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting:                    Thursday, February 4, 2021  
6:00 P.M.  
Online Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowery-Mendoza  
District Manager