

# MINUTES

City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board  
BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE  
May 6, 2021

**Meeting Location:**  
Online Meeting

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

## **ATTENDANCE:**

### **Members Present**

William Aaron (arr. 6:45pm)  
Victoria Curran  
Sarah Dawe  
Katherine Johnston - Chair  
Luanne Kanzawa  
Don Liddell  
Dang Nguyen  
Micah Parzen

### **Members Absent**

Johanna S. Schiavoni

### **Staff Present**

Christina Chadwick  
Charles Daniels  
Mario Llanos  
Susan Lowery-Mendoza

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Johnston called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Mario Llanos 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 April 1, 2021**

**MOTION:      MOVED/SECONDED   MR. LIDDELL / MS. KANZAWA**

A motion was made by Mr. Liddell and seconded by Ms. Kanzawa to approve the April 1, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried (6-0-1) with Ms. Curran Abstaining.

**REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES** – None

## **NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT**

Daniele Laman – HPR International Cottages thanked Susan Lowery-Mendoza for successfully negotiating their new Special Use Permit for the next three years and thanked Mario Llanos for moving the electrical outage date to Friday from 10:00 p.m. – 6:00 a.m. which will affect most of the Palisades area. Once the new cottages pass inspection for occupancy, they can start moving in. They are planning to start lawn programs on July 4. She also thanked Peter Comiskey for emphasizing the needs for the park's safety and security at the budget hearing.

**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT** -None

**STAFF REPORT** -

**Codi Vierra – City Council Third District reported the following:**

Their office is working on reappointments for the Committee with the Mayor's office. The budget review committee meetings are occurring over the next two weeks and Councilmember Whitburn is advocating for parks, art and culture. Everyone is welcome to communicate their concerns regarding the budget.

**Assistant Deputy Director Christina Chadwick reported the following:**

Botanical Building Construction RFP Update – The bidding process closed last week, and the evaluation process is beginning.

Municipal Gym - We are moving forward with the renovation of the exterior of the Municipal Gym and to start the work in June.

Park Lighting – More park lighting coordination efforts with the County and other entities are taking place in the park. Last night's red lighting was to bring awareness of missing and murdered indigenous women.

Budget Hearings – Thanked the Friends, Conservancy, Cultural Partnership and others that advocated on behalf of our Department.

**Balboa Park District Manager Susan Lowery-Mendoza reported the following:**

She provided an update on the operations of the City managed buildings in Balboa Park.

The Casa del Prado has reopened to Special Use Permittees and Civic Dance Arts classes that are allowable in the Orange tier and have an approved Safe Reopening Plans.

The War Memorial Building in being used by our Civic Dance Arts program to teach selected in person dance classes which started just yesterday. Since our Therapeutic Recreation Services Division relocated to Park de la Cruz, Civic Dance Arts is moving into that office space and will have a place to serve the participants of this City -wide program in person.

The Balboa Park Club is being used extensively by the City's Personnel Department to conduct testing as part of their hiring process. The facility will re-open when the tiering system allows for more people to be gathered indoors, Safe Reopening Plans are submitted and approved, and a safety compliance assessment has taken place – which is a requirement for all of our buildings to reopen.

The Organ Pavilion will host live in person Organ and Twilight Concerts in the park after the tier restrictions have fallen away as it is not possible for volunteers to control access, limit attendees and assign seating. Another concern of having controlled access concerts is crowding of the sidewalk outside the facility.

Balboa Park Activity Center is scheduled to re-open on June 15 for singles badminton, table tennis and pickleball. Volleyball is not an approved activity in the Orange tier. Participants will be required to register for time slots for these activities by using SDRecConnect, our online activity registration system. Our website will be updated with this information in the coming weeks.

The Municipal Gym has been operating as a vaccination site since February and is scheduled to cease operations on May 28. All equipment will be then be cleared and the gym floor will be refinished if needed. We anticipate reopening to recreational activities in mid-July.

The Recital Hall will continue to support vaccination efforts until the end of June.

Upcoming Special Events:

May 22 – Scoop San Diego Ice Cream Festival 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. Inspiration Parking Lot

June 18 – 20 Art Alive – Plaza de Panama

June 19 – New School of Architecture drive through graduation 10:00 a.m. – Noon.

**Balboa Park District Manager Mario Llanos reported the following:** He discussed traffic impacts in detail to Balboa Park as a result of painting the Plaza De Panama as part of the Pipeline Replacement Phase II project. The Southern end of the Plaza de Panama has been patched and the color bonding must be applied. The painting of the surface will need to occur during the daytime hours next Wednesday to Friday at Noon and the area closed to vehicular traffic.

He noted that the comfort Station in Morley Field at Jacaranda will be closed overnight at the request of the Police Department.

He introduced the new Balboa Park Senior Park Ranger, Araceli Dominguez.

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

**Balboa Park Conservancy** – Jackie Higgins thanked Parks and Recreation staff for all that they have done over the last year. Volunteer appreciation month is this month and the Conservancy has over 500 volunteers. Plant it Forward, sponsored by SDG&E educates people how to be a Garden Steward at home and provides free plants to give away. She thanked Megan Shaw, Lucy Warren and Lynn Langley for their efforts creating the curriculum. She thanked Susan Lowery-Mendoza and Marie Wiggins for collaboration with the door restoration work taking place in the Casa del Prado building.

**Balboa Park Cultural Partnership** – Peter Comiskey recognized the work of the Parks and Recreation Director and staff. Safety and security are a priority as well as maintenance staff. He is facilitating arts and culture support and is disappointed with the proposed budget, He is seeking operational support to pre-pandemic levels that is equity centered, funding of the Experience Plan and Penny for the Arts. He thanked all who participated in the Trustees event.

**Committee of 100** – Roger Showley – No report

**Friends of Balboa Park** – John Bolthouse reported the following:

Recognized the attributes of the volunteers, stands by Peter regarding the budget. Morton Bay Fig Tree viewing platform opening. The Carousel will open sometime in May on a Saturday. The next landmark sign will be installed at the Golden Hill Grotto. Social butterflies will be virtual this year on May 24-30 and in person next year.

**Save Starlight** – Steve Stopper reported the following: Working on the stage and concessions. Thanked the Mayor's Office for their support with the ADA grant opportunity. Thanked Councilmember Whitburn for support. The Palisades has been very busy, and All State Security is doing a great job.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Consent**

101. Balboa Park Golf Course Drive Improvements. Presenter: Charles Daniels, Park Designer, City of San Diego

Mr. Daniels stated that the Department is here tonight to get a recommendation on proposed changes to the project which was previously reviewed by the Committee. The project did not support the goals of the Golf Course Committee who supported the plan, but not the loss of parking spaces and there were issues with safety as the radius of Golf Course Drive not meeting current street design manual requirements. The Clubhouse Master Plan project will be adjusted for the new alignment. He presented a new plan that realigned Golf Course Drive that addresses safety and parking while maintaining the class I bike lane on the entire length of the roadway. A one-way road will loop in front of the Clubhouse which will separate through traffic from golf traffic, eliminates the non-conforming radius design and traffic can now be controlled to the Clubhouse with gates for added security.

#### Committee Comment:

- Impressive presentation
- Inquired how the bike lane is physical separated
- Asked about the preservation of the Pepper Grove (low point wear stormwater will collect)
- Asked about the lighting and support for providing security lighting on Golf Course Drive.
- As a South Park resident, excited about the project and appreciated the report.

#### Public Comment:

David Swarens - There are several areas which are still outstanding, which I hope that the Balboa Park Committee will consider and recommend.

Landscape design should include shade/canopy trees, consistent with City CAP and Urban Forestry goals, to provide a more comfortable route for users, and also it should incorporate any "on site mitigation" for impacts on the canyons which this project will encroach into.

This would benefit the project and enhance the experience for users, especially for pedestrians and cyclists.

Lighting design should be developed to support the multi-modal dedication for this important project, and not be based (only) on traffic engineering standards. and should be a pedestrian oriented design which will meet the core project goals and serve all users.

Lighting should support a safe and scenic experience for all and be compatible with the recommendations of the Golden Hill Community Plan, and, importantly, design standards elsewhere in Balboa Park.

Traditional acorn style fixtures meet all of these criteria, and I hope the BPC will support and recommend this approach to the lighting program.

Thanks to the BPC for your consideration, and previous support, and to Director Field for his professionalism and responsiveness.

Tershia d'Elgin-I am writing in full-throated support for the Balboa Park Golf Course Drive Improvements project on your May 6th agenda. We must all weigh every decision we make against the enormity of global warming, mass contamination and cultural injustice. Approval of this topic is therefore an easy decision.

The existing parkland minus byways for pedestrians and bikes is a relic from the 1950s. Golden Hill is one of those communities that functions as a frontier for change. For decades Golden Hill residents have railed at so large an expanse only navigable by gas-powered vehicles. At last Kathy Vandenheuvel, Victoria Curran and other dogged visionaries from the present, previous and future Golden Hill Community Planning Committee have guided the parkland into the 21st Century. Their project addresses transportation, recreation and climate challenges in a single scenic resource. Due-diligence, years of negotiation and planning with municipal designers and planners, as well as Balboa Park administrators should make this easy. And here's an idea to lessen the agency of piston-engines-only: Why not change the road's title to "Golf Course Way?"

Brer Marsh- happy to see the proposed changes and asked about what type of separation keeps bikes away from the cars (concrete curb).

Kathy Vandenheuvel – Chair of Golden Hill Planning Committee – supportive of the project and excited to get to this point but was disappointed that they weren't consulted at the 30% plan completion and frustrated that parking is the issue.

Rene Smith- When was the Clubhouse plan approved and what was the process for design review (included in the report)

**MOTION: MOVED/ SECONDED MR. NGUYEN/MS. CURRAN**

A motion was made by Mr. Nguyen and seconded by Ms. Curran to recommend approval of the proposed improvements. The motion carried unanimously (8-0-0)

**Adoption**

201. None

**Special Events**

301. None

**WORKSHOP ITEMS**

401. None

**INFORMATION ITEMS**

501. One Voice Experience Plan for the Balboa Park Cultural District. Presenter: Dr. Steven Snyder, CEO, Fleet Science Center

Mr. Snyder presented a draft scope of elements to include DEA Assessment/Community engagement; a Cultural Experience Plan; an Implementation Plan and Cultural Experience planning process recommendations. Plan elements include cultural attractions, arrival wayfinding; place/gardens; interpretations of public spaces; food and beverage; daytime activations; evening experiences; events; and onsite experience. They are focused on the next steps, detailing each element and making sure all voices are heard. They expect the RFP to be ready in July and thanked all for their engagement.

**SUB-COMMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS' REPORTS**

None

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting:                      Thursday, June 3, 2021  
6:00 P.M.  
Online Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowery-Mendoza  
District Manager