

MINUTES

City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board
BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE
June 3, 2021

Meeting Location:
Online Meeting

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

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present

William Aaron
Sarah Dawe
Katherine Johnston - Chair
Luanne Kanzawa
Don Liddell
Dang Nguyen
Johanna S. Schiavoni

Members Absent

Victoria Curran
Micah Parzen

Staff Present

Andrew Field
Mathew Gordon
Codi Vierra
Christina Chadwick
Charles Daniels
Mario Llanos
Susan Lowery-Mendoza

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Johnston called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. and Mario Llanos 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 May 6, 2021

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED MS. KANZAWA / Ms. Dawe

A motion was made by Ms. Kanzawa and seconded by Ms. Dawe to approve the May 6, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. The motion carried (6-0-1) with Mr. Aaron abstaining.

REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES – None

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Daniele Laman – HPR International Cottages requested that the table outside of the House of Israel be removed. They are planning to start lawn programs on July 3-4. The House of Czech and Slovak will be offering in person summer camps. Thanks to Allstate Security for providing safety and security to the area.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT -None

STAFF REPORT -

Codi Vierra – City Council Third District reported the following:

Thanked Susan for her assistance. Their office has submitted names for District 3 seats for the Committee to the Mayor's office. Their budget memo is coming out soon and 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 – The City's Engineering and Capital Projects Department has issued the Notice of Intent to Award for the Botanical Building project to EC Construction. EC Construction was the lowest, qualified bidder. This is great news and we look forward to working with EC Construction to get this important project off the ground.

Muni Gym – Vax site demobilization is schedule from Tuesday, June 1 – Friday, June 11. Facilities will be on site June 1st to start disconnecting A/C units and other electrical outlets that were installed. Painters are scheduled to start the repaint on June 1st. They would start by power washing. Painters also have some windowsill repairs and plan on completing inside work by June 17. Gym Floor resurfacing is tentatively scheduled to begin on June 21st. Thank you to the Committee of 100 for their leadership.

December Nights -- The City is exploring various scenarios and concepts for December Nights as planning was delayed due to original public health guidance. We will be focusing on producing an event which allows the community to safely enjoy the experience and exploring ways to distribute attendance to assist in crowd control and visitor experience.

Tram Services – Tram services have started.

Park Lightings – We have a number of park lightings coming up including a recent George Floyd recognition and Memorial Day, followed by Juneteenth, World Elder Abuse Awareness and Pride

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

The Balboa Park Activity Center will re-open on June 15 for registered singles open play participants. She encouraged all to register on <https://apm.activecommunities.com/sdparkandrec>. The table tennis and badminton clubs will be registering their members for designated times. She provided an update on the 3rd Annual Scoop event held May 22 which will return to a neighborhood festival next year.

Balboa Park District Manager Mario Llanos reported the following:

- Just an update that Tram operations began last Friday May 28, 2021. The Tram runs daily from 9 AM to 8 PM.
- Most Shared Mobility Device or Scooter Corrals have been placed around the Park. Outside of a few isolated incidents, we have seen good compliance from scooter company's contractors

in staging. We will continue to monitor the situation. If anyone sees or has any complaints, please forward them to me with photos.

- Most of the Plaza De Panama has been resurfaced and striping redone in the plaza, Pan American Rd East, and Village Place as part of the Sewer and Water Pipeline Replacement Project. Next Fiscal Year we hope to address the rest of the Plaza surfacing in front of the San Diego Museum of Art and Mingei. We are currently working with the Mingei's contractor, who is staging in one of the areas we intend to repaint and stripe.

BALBOA PARK NON-PROFIT PARTNER UPDATES

Balboa Park Conservancy – Jackie Higgins reported the following:

The Visitor's Center in the House of Hospitality saw an increase of 43% for visitors from April to May. The vendors are creating a bottleneck on El Prado and are making a big impact on visitors who question their safety. She encouraged the City to find a solution. Visitors also ask when the Botanical Building will reopen and the concerts resume.

Balboa Park Cultural Partnership – Peter Comiskey reported the following:

Mr. Comiskey stated concern regarding park security for the safety of all. The Mayor's budget is devastating but the Councilmembers' memos are encouraging. The park organizations need to gain strength.

Committee of 100 – Roger Showley reported the following:

They received an award from SOHO for their work on the Automotive Museum and are planning for installation of the bears and flags in October. He provided an update on the poster contest. Work on the Municipal Gymnasium is underway by City staff who are painting the facility. They will begin fundraising for the restoration of the exterior. He is working with the Visitor Center to provide docents with tour information of the Palisades.

Friends of Balboa Park – John Bolthouse reported the following:

Applaud Mayor Gloria's changes to the Parks Masterplan for park equity. Thanked Chairperson Johnston for work on the Parks Foundation and Charlie for championing the cause. The Balboa Park Carousel is now open to the public. A landmark sign was installed at the Golden Hill Grotto. They are calling for nominations of volunteers for their Inspiration Award. Due to the merger, this is the final report from the Friends of Balboa Park.

Save Starlight – No report

ACTION ITEMS

Consent

101. None

Adoption

201. Palisades Restroom and Organ Pavilion Restroom Improvements. Presenter: Charles Daniels, Park Designer, Parks and Recreation, City of San Diego.

Charles Daniels stated that the Department is seeking a recommendation on proposed conceptual plans for the Palisades restroom (Option 3) and Organ Pavilion restroom improvements (Option 4C.) He reviewed each of the site plans, the benefits of the layouts and stated that the goals are to provide ADA access, gender neutral facilities while increasing safety and security.

Committee Comment:

- What was the Project Improvement Committee's reaction? (supportive, and suggested the additional lighting in the Palisades)
- Plans look terrific. What is the biggest challenge or concern? (adequate access into the north side Organ Pavilion restroom)
- Request for a lactation station

Public Comment:

- Rene Smith - Two years ago, the public was stirred by the unspeakably vile conditions in our public restrooms. (See attached). City staff are, truly, shoveling against the tide. Today's two restroom designs provide the first down payment on rectifying those conditions in Balboa Park.

While everyone prefers new building construction, we live in the real world of cost constraints. Renovation of these two restrooms is the only feasible option. After a series of positive exchanges between P&R staff and "The Toileteers", we want to provide our positive endorsement with these comments:

1. Safety and security for all users but especially unaccompanied minors and individual men and women at low visitor hours were the overwhelming consideration in the redesign approach by us, the volunteers.
2. You will note the work done by P&R staff since the first presentation, and thank you Charlie, for employing site lines in the design discussions.
3. A location for Rangers, Police or volunteers helps to more securely "anchor" that part of the park.
4. Removing the west facing restrooms eliminates the easy, hidden access from the canyons.

Again, thank you City staff, including Christina, Charlie and HRB. We look forward to our Spanish Village and Morley Field engagement.

Roger Showley inquired if an alarm will be installed in the restrooms and asked who will staff the visitor's center?

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED MR. NGUYEN/MR. AARON

Motion A motion was made by Mr. Nguyen and seconded by Mr. Aaron to approve staff's recommendation. Motion carried unanimously (7,0,0)

Special Events

301. None

WORKSHOP ITEMS

401. None

INFORMATION ITEMS

501. District Manager, Susan Lowery-Mendoza Retirement Recognition. Presenters: Andy Field, Parks and Recreation Director and Christina Chadwick, Assistant Deputy Director, City of San Diego

Mr. Field, Parks and Recreation Director, committee members and members of the public thanked Susan for her 35 years of service to the Parks and Recreation Department and the City of San Diego. Ms. Chadwick introduced Mr. Gordon, Office of Mayor Gloria who presented a special proclamation on behalf of the City. Mr. Tully, Steve Stopper, Jennifer Mendoza, John Bolthouse, Daniele Laman, Jackie Higgins, Johanna Schiavoni, Katherine Johnston thanked Susan and wished her all the best in retirement.

502. Status of Appointments to the Balboa Park Committee. Presenter: Mathew Gordon, Director of Appointments, City of San Diego

Mr. Gordon let the Committee know that he is aware of the need for appointments to the Committee. The City is addressing each committee's needs on a time. He anticipates appointments being made on June 28 meeting to fill six- seven seats. Ms. Dawe asked if there is a possibility of appointments being made over the course of two meetings. Mr. Gordon will consult with the City Attorney's Office on the matter.

503. Peace Pole in Balboa Park. Presenter: Mel Gallegos, District Governor for the Rotary Year 2018-19, Rotary International District 53-40 encompassing San Diego and Imperial Counties.

Mr. Gallegos presented the concept of the Peace Pole which is an internationally recognized symbol for peace. There are over 250,000 peace poles including one at Stanley Park and one in Santee. The pole is 7ft tall and 1ft. in diameter. They are committed to maintaining the pole.

Public Comments:

- The idea is brilliant, and the color is bright – place it in the Palisades near the restroom
- Best located across from the Organ Pavilion near the House of Pacific Relations

Committee Comments:

- Like it a lot
- Nice symbol
- Thanks to Betty Peabody for bringing the concept forward through the Rotary Club

This item will return to the Committee with best locations as it is supported by the Committee.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

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Balboa Park Committee

June 3, 2021

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' REPORTS

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Next Scheduled Meeting: Thursday, July 1, 2021
6:00 P.M.
Online Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Lowery-Mendoza
District Manager