

## MINUTES

### City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board **BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE**

May 3, 2012

#### Meeting held at:

Balboa Park Club  
2150 Pan American Road  
San Diego, CA 92101

#### Mailing address is:

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

#### ATTENDANCE:

##### Members Present

Jeri Dilno  
Ricardo Flores  
Michael Hager  
Andrew Kahng  
Luanne Kanzawa  
David Kinney  
Don Liddell  
Mike McDowell  
Minnie Rzeslawski  
Michael Singleton  
Rob Steppke  
David Strickland

##### Members Absent

##### Staff Present

Susan Lowery-Mendoza, Balboa Park  
Bruce Martinez, Balboa Park

#### CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Kinney called the meeting to order at 6:11 P.M. and introduced Ricardo Flores, representing Center City Planning Group. Introductions were made around the table.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED (HAGER/ STRICKLAND) TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 1, 2012 MEETING. MOTION CARRIED (10, 0, 2) FLORES, LIDDELL ABSTAINING**

#### REQUESTS FOR CONTINUANCES

None

#### NON AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT

Kevin Swanson representing San Diego 2015, a private action towards creating a regional economic outreach for 2015 to showcase Balboa Park and the region as it was in 1915 and 1935. Looking at how the East Village could be integrated into the celebration, similar to an Olympic Village concept.

Kara Kong with the San Diego Marathon and Half Marathon wanted to remind everyone that the event will be held on Sunday, June 3, 2012. There will be road closures in the area between 5:00 A.M. and 9:00 A.M. They expect to be clear of Balboa Park by 9:00 A.M. Copies of the road closures and maps were left in the rear of the room which also contain their contact information. She has been in communication with the Balboa Park Cultural Partnership to accommodate Park employee access in the morning hours.

### **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

Chairperson Kinney reported the following:

- At last month's Park and Recreation Board meeting it was stated that the Park and Recreation Department for the first time in years, has no planned budgetary cuts
- The Department has received funds for a comprehensive user fees analysis
- In addition to our new Balboa Park Committee member, Ricardo Flores, the following members have been reappointed: Robert Steppke, Mike McDowell, Don Liddell, David Strickland, and Andrew Kahng.

### **STAFF REPORT**

#### **Susan Lowery-Mendoza, Balboa Park Facilities and Special Events District Manager**

Susan Lowery-Mendoza provided the following report:

- Staff accepted a check this morning from the Thursday Club Foundation for \$16,560.00 from proceeds of the Rummage Sale. The funds are designated for floor refinishing and extra hours of operation at the Balboa Park Activity Center, providing supplies for the Spring Egg Hunt and Toys for Tots Breakfast at Morley Field, sponsorship of the youth soccer and flag football sport programs and purchase Futsal equipment at the Municipal Gym which will provide new programming opportunities. Other Balboa Park beneficiaries include the Online Collaborative, San Diego Automotive Museum, the San Diego Puppet Guild, the San Diego History Center, the San Diego Model Railroad Museum, and the San Diego Museum of Man. Our Department values the relationship and support we have with the Thursday Club and acknowledges the countless number of hours worked by the volunteers.
- The Roofing Projects at the San Diego Museum of Man and the Casa del Prado are continuing. At the Museum of Man – the scaffold has come down on the main dome and they are currently working of the barrel roof. The project will continue for two to three months. At the Casa del Prado, the re-roofing of the main building and the theater has be completed with the exception of the replacement rock material and the

- arcades around the patio will be worked on next. The project should be complete in two weeks.
- April was a busy month with large events taking place in the Park. The month of May brings us:
  - Saturday, May 12, Liver Life Walk – Festival at the War Memorial Lawn and walk through the San Diego Zoo.
  - Saturday – Sunday, May 12 -13, American Indian Culture Days at Park Blvd. and President’s Way
  - Saturday, May 19, Girl Scout Bridging at the Spreckels Organ Pavilion with walk to the West side Lawn
  - Sunday, May 27, Ethnic Food Fair at the House of Pacific Relations.
  - The Spreckels Organ Pavilion hosts numerous school graduations through June
  - The Rock ‘n’ Roll Marathon will start on the West side of the Park and pass through the east side of the park on Sunday, June 3.

**Bruce Martinez, Balboa Park Operations District Manager:**

Bruce Martinez provided the following report:

- Balboa Park Arbor Day 2012 was held on April 27. This year we had a unique opportunity to replace essentially a grove of trees inside the Spreckels Organ Pavilion. With the assistance of the Friends of Balboa Park we were able to receive 16 donated trees and the Friends of Balboa Park, hosted a superb event to honor those who donated the trees and to those who were honored by the donation.
- The South Carousel Lot has just received an asphalt renovation and has been restriped. Anytime this type of work is implemented we have to also address ADA access to the area which was also done. The project should have been completed today and the lot ready for use tomorrow.
- Finally SDGE will be upgrading a main power transformer in the Rose Garden. As some of you know over the last few years we have had a couple of significant interruptions in services. Like all projects in the Park, City staff we will work closely with the project staff to mitigate any impacts on the institutions or the use of the Park.

**CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM UPDATES**

None

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Consent**

101. None

### **Adoption**

201. Recommendation on the proposed amendments to the Balboa Park Master Plan and Central Mesa Precise Plan, and Site Development Permit to implement the Plaza de Panama, Circulation and Parking Structure Project.

Chairperson Kinney noted that on seventeen occasions, this item has been presented to the Balboa Park Committee with workshops and opportunity for public comment and feedback. City Staff will present first, then the consultant, followed by public comment, committee discussion.

Charles Daniels, Park Designer with the San Diego Park and Recreation Department presented the following information regarding the Balboa Park Plaza de Panama, Circulation and Parking Structure Project:

- The public project review process for this project is considered a Process 5 approval which requires action by the City Council.
- Plan amendment initiation is required of the Planning Commission which was done on October 21, 2010
- Plan amendment and site development permit preparation with community input which has been occurring for the last 18 months.

The approval process requires votes by the advisory committees, review by the Balboa Park Committee, the Park and Recreation Board's Design Review Committee, the Park and Recreation Board, the Historical Resources Board, the Planning Commission, with final approval by the City Council. The project has been presented and input gathered at numerous committee input and advisory boards meetings.

The project requires amendments to the Balboa Park Master Plan and Central Mesa Precise Plan, and Site Development Permit and an Environmental Impact Report. He reviewed the recommendations of the adjacent planning groups. The Planning Commission identified ten issues to be addressed by the project.

Mark Johnson, Civitas noted that this is the eighteenth time the project is before the Committee. The project has been long, challenging, studied and debated which has improved the project.

Over 200 presentations have been given over the last 20 months. He provided a historical review of the Park and the importance of balance of needs between the 23 institutions, park space and automobiles. He reviewed the various plans which have not been implemented in the Park such as the Bartholomew Plan, Master Plan and Parking Management and Circulation Plan. There has been 55 years of debate of what should happen in the Park.

Mr. Johnson stated that tonight, the Committee is being asked to approve the amendments to the Balboa Park Master Plan and Central Mesa Precise Plan, and the Site Development Permit. He believes that this plan will open up the center of the park for people as the founders always intended, supports future conversion of a higher level of transit access to the core of the Park, provides direct access to the museums and other Park amenities, and finds a balance between providing historic benefit of the rehabilitation of the core for people and historic impact. Save Our Heritage Organization has released a Jacobs Plan "B" today on their website which is the Lewis Plan and has nothing to do with this project or Dr. Jacobs.

Chairperson Kinney noted the number of speakers and the number of opportunities to speak and suggested a 30 second time limit per speaker. Mr. Singleton suggested one minute per speaker.

**MOTION MOVED/SECONDED (KAHNG/SINGLETON) TO ALLOW FOR ONE MINUTE EACH PER PUBLIC COMMENT SPEAKER. CARRIED (11, 1, 0)**

Public Comment:

- Concerned about the project moving forward without seeing comments or responses to the EIR. There are environmentally preferable alternatives. The Precise Plan is already approved. Re-stripe Balboa Drive, close the Cabrillo Bridge for pedestrians when needed, and look at Gold Gulch for a parking garage location which has already been disturbed.
- Support the goals of the Plaza de Panama project however concerned with the bypass bridge at the ceremonial entrance to the park which will bring more cars in. A better park tram is needed. Close the Cabrillo Bridge to traffic – it will achieve all of the goals of the project.
- On May 19, a free public workshop looking at the alternatives will be held at the Mission Valley Library.
- An alternate plan - Plan "B" was presented to eliminate vehicle as the Jacobs' plan does, by creating a north rim road, south rim road, and underground parking beneath the Plaza de Panama which would result in additional parking spaces.
- Opposed to bypass road
- The Balboa Park Cultural Partnership, member institutions and collective boards support the project. Sixty –nine percent of park visitors come to visit Park institutions.
- Opposed to project

- Goodhue's book was shared which speaks about the view from the West side. The trees were intended to be there.
- Project is an abomination, don't vote before the EIR comes out
- 23 Park institutions are unanimous in support of the project, enhances the park
- The project improves traffic circulation
- Funding the project because it is by far the best solution, a civic minded individual has devoted millions and a lot of time to try to help this City. He deserves to have a decision made in a timely manner while working through the process.
- As a runner and South Park resident, he has had several near misses in the Park with autos, he supports the project
- Support the project, but in opposition to the bridge because it is a poor use of funds because the bridge will be closed during all major special events.
- Reduce the CO2 level in the Park – implement Jacobs' Plan "B"
- People with disabilities approve the project
- The proposed project will not comply with land use regulations; environmental impacts from the soil removal alone are huge. Project is overkill to only get net 274 parking spaces
- The project does nothing to restore the Park, build a parking garage in Inspiration Lot and tunnel underneath Park Blvd.
- Lack of restrooms in the Alcazar Garden lot– one unisex restroom will not be sufficient to service the archery range
- Want to see no cars going across the Cabrillo Bridge and a parking lot in the Marston Loop area, increase tram service
- The system is working, new plans are emerging, get the best plan for the City
- Support the plan, west entry is needed, plan is visionary
- Urge to vote no as the North Park Planning Committee did
- Support project, reclaims plazas, increases uses park space and maintains the east/west access
- Plan is not compatible with the Secretary of Interior Standards also, net gain of 162 spaces after excluding valet spaces
- When coming to volunteer, a place to park is needed
- Support plan, best practical plan, realistically attainable, best chance we have
- Peninsula Planning Board voted against the bypass bridge
- Support the project, will be the best for the most visitors
- Support the project, time to do something, continue to defer decisions for 55 years
- Find the plan unappealing and disruptive to build, concerned about privatization, concerned about native American artifacts
- Recognize the importance of the project, makes substantial improvements, urged to approve

Chairperson Kinney thanked the public for their comments. The Committee is the first of four boards/commissions that will be taking a position on the project.

Committee Comments:

**MOTION MOVED/SECONDED (STRICKLAND/ SINGLETON) THAT THE PROJECT AND SIX ELEMENTS (PLAZA DE PANAMA; EL PRADO AND PLAZA DE CALIFORNIA; CENTENNIAL BRIDGE AND CENTENNIAL ROAD; ALCAZAR PARKING LOT; THE MALL AND PAN AMERICAN PROMENADE; AND THE ORGAN PAVILION PARKING STRUCTURE, ROOFTOP PARK, TRAM AND ARIZONA STREET LANDFILL) BE DISCUSSED INDIVIDUALLY. COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS TO BE MADE ON EACH ELEMENT BY THE COMMITTEE.**

Discussion and Committee member comments:

- Will there be an opportunity to ask questions of the consultant? The Chairperson stated that there will be time to do so.
- Statement was made that we are here to discuss the project as a whole, that there is no reason to separate the votes.
- It is important to hear fully vetted comments before passing amendments to the Precise Plan.
- It is in the best interest of the public to delay action until we hear back from City staff.
- There have been 18 months of presentations and it is a complex project,
- There are parts of the plan liked and parts disliked and if asked to vote on the project as a whole, would have to vote it down or entertain a motion to delay the vote.
- The Committee has a responsibility and should be providing the most input not just providing a yes or no vote.

**VOTE: THE MOTION FAILED (2,9,1) KINNEY ABSTAINING**

Mr. McDowell stated that in his opinion, the process has been thorough and participatory. There is no plan that will be embraced by all and this plan meets high standards. He is confident that the plan will accomplish the project goals, making the Park safer and adding to the beauty and accessibility of the Park. As stewards of the Park, we need to begin planning and implementing now for the next hundred years.

**MOTION MOVED/SECONDED (McDOWELL/HAGER) TO SUPPORT OF THE PLAZA DE PANAMA PROJECT FOR APPROVAL OF THE AMENDMENTS TO THE BALBOA PARK MASTER PLAN AND CENTRAL MESA PRECISE PLAN, AND SITE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT.**

Discussion and comments:

- a subsidiary motion should be considered as there is a disagreement of opinion that there has been plenty of time to study the project or review the documents and the Committee has not seen the EIR comments and questions remain unanswered.

**MOTION MOVED/SECONDED (SINGLETON/STPEPKE) TO DELAY ACTION UNTIL THE NEXT BALBOA PARK COMMITTEE MEETING TO ALLOW TIME TO REVIEW THE EIR COMMENTS AND ALL OF THE AMMENDMENTS.**

Discussion and comments:

- Supports was given to motion as there has not been enough time to ready the documents provided and would like to see the EIR comments.
- Disagreement was expressed with delaying the vote.
- It was stated that there are no surprises in the amendments, they have had the EIR since January and the amendments to the plan have very faithfully followed the information presented at the workshops and presentations made.
- Additional opposition was expressed in delaying the vote as there have been many meeting and presentations to groups and there will always be more issues brought up.

**VOTE: THE MOTION FAILED (3,8,0).**

Chairperson Kinney informed the Committee that the original motion still stands.

**MOTION MOVED/SECONDED (McDOWELL/HAGER) TO SUPPORT OF THE PLAZA DE PANAMA PROJECT FOR APPROVAL OF THE AMENDMENTS TO THE BALBOA PARK MASTER PLAN AND CENTRAL MESA PRECISE PLAN, AND SITE DEVELOPMENT PERMIT.**

Discussion and comments:

- The consultant was questioned about how the plan supports transit options?
- Consultant responded to the question regarding tram service, walking, bicycle access and traffic studies.
- Inquires were made about increased traffic from the West side due to it being a shorter distance than the existing route.
- Consultant responded with results of the traffic analysis and SANDAG forecast model.
- Opinions were expressed that the garage is better suited in the Inspiration Lot, that the plan has been widely discussed but not changed in any way, and sets a precedent for applicant based plans.
- It was stated that the parking garage capacity is not what it could be and if enough people look for free parking it won't work for the garage.
- Much has been heard, it is about the visitor experience and the Jacobs' Plan provides a balance that the Park's cultural institutions support it.
- As a native San Diegan that regularly uses the Park. There is a valid argument that this is an opportunity to be seized. There is a need to look forward and do the best for the most people. I support the plan as does the Balboa Park/Morley Field Recreation Council.

Chairperson Kinney called for a vote on the original motion that has been moved and seconded.

**VOTE: THE MOTION CARRIED (7, 4, 1) KINNEY ABSTAINING**

**Special Events**

301. Father Joe's Thanksgiving Day 5K – Rick Kozlowski, KOZ Enterprises  
Susan Lowery-Mendoza reviewed the proposed route change for the 5K which will take place on Thursday, November 22, 2012 which will allow for continued growth of the event.

**MOTION MOVED/SECONDED (McDOWELL/SINGLETON) TO APPROVE THE CHANGE TO THE ROUTE AS PRESENTED. (12, 0, 0) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

302. ESRI User Conference Party – Allison Rynne, Audacity Events

Susan Lowery-Mendoza reviewed the request to host an event in Balboa Park during the summer moratorium on Thursday, July 26, 2012. A staff report was provided. The event was held inside park institutions in 2011, with nearly 8,000 attendees transported by motor coach from the San Diego Convention Center. The event was a success with little impact to the public. In 2012, contracts are being pursued at seven institutions with The Prado providing the catering. Use of the Botanical Building Lawns, Casa del Prado patios, Cascades, El Prado, and 32 parking spaces are being requested. Staff's recommendation is to request that the Park and Recreation Director extend a waiver to the Summer Moratorium for the ESRI event with the following changes: fencing only of the East Botanical Lawn and no amplification of the entertainers on El Prado from the Cascades to the Plaza de Panama.

Committee Comments:

- Concerned about noise at the Old Globe  
Allison Rynne responded that she is in communication with the Old Globe and with the waiver, outdoor use will be pushed farther east, away from the Old Globe
- Inquired of staff what revenues will be received by the City  
Susan Lowery-Mendoza responded that revenues of \$7,315.00 are anticipated for the event.
- It was noted that the majority of the event occurs inside the institutions and the outdoor spaces are for transitional uses.

**MOTION MOVED/SECONDED (HAGER/STRICKLAND) TO RECOMMEND A WAIVER TO THE SUMMER MORATORIUM FOR THE ESRI USER CONFERENCE PARTY ON JULY 26, 2012. (12,0,0) CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**WORKSHOP ITEMS**

401. None

**INFORMATION  
ITEMS**

501.

**SUB - COMMITTEE REPORT**

601. Land-Use and Policy – None

602. West Mesa Subcommittee – None

**COMMMITTEE MEMBERS REPORT**

Balboa Park/Morley Field Recreation Council – Andrew Kahng reported that the Recreation Council had a special meeting on March 7, 2012. A motion was passed for our Chair to write a letter in response to the EIR expressing the Council’s support of the Plaza de Panama project, along with the Council’s specific request for new processes for ongoing review and necessary changes to parking policies.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

**Next Regular Meeting:** Thursday, June 7, 2012  
6:00 P.M.  
Santa Fe Room/Balboa Park Club  
San Diego, CA 92101

Respectfully submitted,

*Susan Lowery-Mendoza*

Susan Lowery-Mendoza  
District Manager

