

MINUTES

City of San Diego Park and Recreation Board

MISSION BAY PARK COMMITTEE

December 7, 2010

Meeting Location:

Marina Village – Captains Room
1936 Quivira Way
San Diego, CA 92109

Mailing address is:

Park and Recreation Department
Developed Regional Parks
2125 Park Blvd.
Attn: Mission Bay Park Manager
San Diego, CA 92101

Members Present

Katy Bendel
Rick Bussell
Jim Greene
Cynthia Hedgecock
Kevin Konopasek
David Potter
Paul Robinson
Judy Swink

Members Absent

Lani Lutar (Exc)

Staff Present

Kathleen Hasenauer
Paul Jacob
Sharon Knutson
Stacy McKenzie
Scott Reese

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Paul Robinson called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

MSC IT WAS MOVED/SECONDED AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 9, 2010 MEETING.

(POTTER/KONOPASEK 7-0-0)

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT / COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Brian Davis, a wake boarder and water skier, requested the buoys in Sail Bay be moved further west. Mr. Davis would also like the all day use time in Mission Bay extended to May 1 to November 1.

NON-AGENDA PUBLIC COMMENT / COMMUNICATIONS – (continued)

Mr. Ralph Elliott asked that we should all try to get along. Mr. Elliott remembers the “old” days and how San Diego was. He says that we are all arguing and fighting for something and does the City even have the dollars to do this, he doubts it. Mr. Elliott requested that Fiesta Island be left alone.

Mr. Don Gross spoke of the quick turn-around time he experienced after a complaint was filed regarding a bent post from an automobile accident. Mr. Gross wanted to compliment the staff, and the District Manager, Stacy McKenzie, for their hard work. Mr. Gross spoke of a recent bee problem that was quickly taken care of also.

CHAIRPERSONS REPORT

Mr. Paul Robinson, Mission Bay Park Committee Chairperson, mentioned that he would only be conducting the first half of the meeting and would be turning over the Chair duties to Rick Bussell, Mission Bay Park Committee Vice Chair, as he would be leaving for a previously scheduled engagement. Mr. Robinson asked that comments made tonight on Agenda Item #201 be kept only to changes that have been made since the workshop that took place in September 2010.

STAFF REPORTS

Thyme Curtis, Council Representative 2

Ms. Curtis was not in attendance at this meeting.

Matthew Donellan, Council Representative 6

Mr. Donellan introduced himself as a representative for newly elected City Council Member Lorie Zapf, representing Council District 6.

Stacy McKenzie, District Manager, Mission Bay Park

Ms. McKenzie had no report at this time.

Chief Rick Wurts, San Diego Life Services

Chief Wurts was not in attendance at this meeting.

Lieutenant James Filley, San Diego Police Department, Northern Division

Lieutenant Filley was not in attendance at this meeting.

REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCE

None

ACTION ITEMS

Consent (These items are adopted without discussion; they can be moved to adoption by any Committee member.)

101. None

Adoption (Each adoption item requires individual action; they can be moved to consent by action of the Committee.)

201. Fiesta Island General Development Plan - Paul Jacob, City of San Diego Associate Civil Engineer; Mike Singleton, KTU& A

Paul Jacob, Associate Civil Engineer, City of San Diego, spoke to the Mission Bay Park Committee on the Fiesta Island General Development Plan Refinements. He spoke of the conditions of the Coastal Development Permits that authorized the Mission Bay Park Master Plan and the process of the initial plans for the development of Fiesta Island. Mr. Jacob gave a brief history of the work and a history of the modifications done on the plan to date, including a review of the plan by the Mission Bay Park Committee and public workshops, community planning groups, etc. Mr. Jacob also pointed out that the City is compelled, even in the economic arena we are in today, to go forward with this project due to monies that have been earmarked and accumulated in the Sludge Mitigation Fund for improvements to recreational opportunities on Fiesta Island. Mr. Jacob said that we are stewards for this park, inclusive of all user groups, we serve the public.

Mike Singleton, KTU & A, presented a slide show which served to explain the changes on the newest draft of the Fiesta Island Precise Plan, Alternative 5f.

The main changes between the Alternative 5f plans and plans previously viewed by the Mission Bay Park Committee are:

- Adjusted wetlands Opening: Decreased dredging equals more beach.
- Decreased depth and extent of wetlands: Trails have been trimmed and the overlap with the Least Tern site has been removed.
- Increase of fill in the sand management area.
- The reclassification of an area formerly designated as a natural habitat to a natural recreation area within the fenced leash-free area.
- Relocated and expanded the volleyball and horse-shoe courts.
- Changes to tri-mound areas – eliminated concrete seating
- Re-configuration of the Campground area brought about the change to approximately 12.15 acres for camping use. Decreased native re-vegetation area plus the eel grass issues had to be taken into account.
- Refined pier and beach swimming area

Mr. Jacob continued with information regarding beach aquatic uses. Mr. Jacob explained how there is a water quality issue that needs to be taken into consideration for the paddlers and how the swimming beaches must be marked with a buoy system. Fiesta Island will not be changed a lot and only two (2) per cent of the changes are on the roadways.

Changes per location/area:

- South Central Area:
 - Campground – 12.5 acres
 - Re-located native garden
- South West area:
 - Eel grass, potential buoy marking
 - Re-configuration of all leash free areas here
 - Turf area before you get to the parking area
 - Wash down area for dogs
 - Everything is fenced
 - Pathway connections to the shoreline area
- South East area:
 - Largest turf area
 - Day use and overnight camping
 - Only changed acreage of native vegetation

Re-cap of acreage on Alternative 5F: Total Acres on Island: 485.72

Land Use:

• Regional Park:	36.79 Acres
• Full Time Fenced Leash Free Dog Area:	88.64
• Group Camping & Overnight Camping Area	10.27
• Non-Native Open Space	-0-
• Natural Recreation Area	74.36
• Sand Management Area	7.59
• Shoreline Parking	64.07
• Sand Recreation Area	31.55
• Swimming Beach	2.33
• Inter-Tidal Shoreline Parkland	18.45
• Dredged Shoreline / Wetlands	1.91
• Youth Camping & Aquatic Center	24.07
• Fenced Habitat Area	90.24
• Stoney Point	1.64
• Roadways and Parking	33.81

Re-cap of acreage on Alternative 5F: Total Acres on Island: 485.72

Dog Use Areas

• Fenced Leash Free Area	88.64
• Swimming Beach and Habitat Buffer	3.97
• Leash Free Unfenced	201.70
• Leash Free Unfenced @ Intertidal Shoreline	18.45
• Dogs – Under Voice Control – parking lots and roads	33.86
• Periodic Leash Free	20.70
• No Dogs Allowed Areas	31.50
• No Dogs or People Allowed (habitat areas)	89.00

The original Master plan had a cost estimate of about \$236 million dollars. Mr. Singleton explained that with the changes, the cost of the current proposal is now at about \$99 million, and of that figure, approximately \$35 - \$40 million is for habitat restoration.

Mr. Singleton continued to explain the next steps in the approval process after tonight's meeting:

- Update of the draft element of the Precise Plan
- Start the Environmental Review Process with Development Services Department
- Present to the Design Review Board
- Present to the Park and Recreation Board
- Present to City Council Sub-Committee
- Planning Commission
- Present to City Council

Mr. Scott Reese, Park and Recreation Assistant Director, emphasized to the audience the importance of going forward from this point. Mr. Reese spoke of the next steps in the process and the time frame to be expected. Mr. Reese explained how the process between being here at this meeting and the Park and Recreation Board will probably be an eight (8) to twelve (12) month progression. The next this item will be heard in front of a group will be in January / February 2011 at the Park and Recreation Department's Design Review Committee. Mr. Reese also confirmed that the costs for this project are in line with other large, long term projects of this nature.

Public Comment:

There were sixty-seven (67) speaker slips for Agenda Item #201, Fiesta Island General Development Plan. Of those sixty-seven, thirty-seven (37) were in favor of Agenda Item #201 and ceded their time to Alise Shatoff, speaker for the group FIDO; one (1) was in favor Agenda Item #201 and spoke on her own; twenty (20) of the speaker slips were in support of Agenda Item #201 and ceded their time to Les Hopper, Wendy DeWitt and Cheance Adair, all members of the paddling communities; and, one (1) was for support of agenda Item #201 but did not specify a group; seven (7) were opposed to agenda Item #201. Some of the speaker slips had "with changes" written on them.

Public Comment (continued):

Alise Shatoff, FIDO member; spoke to the Committee regarding Item #201, Fiesta Island General Development Plan. Ms. Shatoff passed out a hand-out to Committee member called "Fiesta Island FIDO Briefing December 7, 2010." Ms. Shatoff gave a brief history:

- 1972 - Dogs were banned from city beaches and Fiesta Island and Ocean Beach Dog Beach were set aside by City Ordinance 10843 for off-leash use. The sludge mitigation area opened to off-leash use when sludge processing stopped in 1998.
- 2002 - Sea World commercial land use changes triggered the Coastal Commission request to pursue increased public recreation areas in Fiesta Island and South Shores.
- 2005 – Fiesta Island General Development Plan update began using remaining Sludge Mitigation Funds.

Ms. Shatoff also shared some facts regarding dog owners:

- Forty (40) per cent of all households have a dog; over 700,000 dogs in San Diego County.
- Excluding Fiesta Island, only 0.1 per cent of public parkland is available for off-leash
- Fiesta Island is unique, and it attracts tourists from other countries and states.
- Ms. Shatoff spoke of the economic impact dog owners have on San Diego due to employment and sales tax revenues.

Ms. Shatoff pointed out that they are trying to save the last of its kind. She also pointed out that is not the number of acres that is of issue, but the configuration of those acres; that there is no comparable area for people to exercise with their dog; that the last remaining beach access for off-leash exercise should not be reduced; and, that this area is used 365 day a year, not just for special events. The conflict emerged when City planners proposed the elimination of the off-leash dog use area and placing the paddlers in the middle of an existing heavily used fenced off-leash area. In 2008, FIDO surveyed the paddler sites and created a matrix ranking location using the paddler provided requirements. Ms. Shatoff said the results showed the top ranked sites are South Shores and Mariner's Basin. Ms. Shatoff also read from a memo from Council President Pro Tem Kevin L. Faulconer, Councilmember Sherri Lightner, and Councilmember Lorie Zapf supporting the endeavors of dog owners. Ms. Shatoff said that FIDO supports some reductions in off-leash use outside the fenced area; they support the move of the paddlers to an alternative site; they support a reduced turf and increased natural area; environmental improvements and reduced costs and would like to see further savings. Ms. Shatoff reiterated that there is room for all users. FIDO would like the Committee to make a motion to recommend initiating the process to place Paddler Event area outside the fenced off-leash area, such Mariner's Point and South Shores; put a restriction on the number of special events that limit access to off-leash acreage and reduce cost of plan by reducing road intrusion into off-leash area.

Public Comment (continued):

Les Hopper, a member of the paddling community, and an avid user of Fiesta Island, spoke to the Committee regarding Item #201, Fiesta Island General Development Plan. Mr. Hopper passed out a hand-out to Committee members titled "The Paddling Community: Who Are We?"

The paddling community is composed of these major groups in the Mission Bay Park area:

- Outrigger Canoe Clubs – rapidly growing team water sport
 - HanoHano
 - Ikuna Koa
 - Kai Elua
 - San Diego Outrigger
 - All Clubs are 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations
 - There are over six hundred (600) members aged from 12 to 70 years old
 - Clubs practice throughout the year, they are regular users also
 - Races are held throughout the year in San Diego with over 2,500 participants.
- San Diego Dragon Boat Team
 - This group has been in San Diego for over 25 years
 - Second largest participation sport in the world after soccer
- San Diego Junior Olympic Canoe and Kayak
 - Established in 1997
 - Has almost one hundred (100) members
 - Program for kids with over 20% winning scholarships
 - This group uses the most polluted area of the bay
- SUP / Paddleboard / Kayak

Mr. Hopper stated that those in the paddling community believe Fiesta Island should be a shared resource and are very disappointed with the Council members who sent out a letter and decided to make an opinion based on meeting with just FIDO; paddling groups are disappointed the Council did not listen to both sides of both groups.

Mr. Hopper read and quoted from City Policy #700.08 "It is the policy of the City Council to develop, operate and maintain Mission Bay Park as an aquatically oriented recreational resource for the use of the general public." Mr. Hopper asks that the Committee keeps that in mind this evening. Mr. Hopper also mentioned that the paddling groups have races and events all year, the events are held in different areas of the Bay and do not close off Fiesta Island to dog groups.

Public Comment (continued):

Wendy DeWitt, a home owner and a resident of the area, asked the Committee for a permanent home for the paddling community. Ms. DeWitt said the paddling community needs an area different from the ones motorized boats use for the following reasons:

- Clubs are regularly forced to move
- Amenities such as restrooms and showers not available
- Launching and paddling often unsafe
- Existing locations not optional
 - Far from ocean and forced to use polluted waters, clean water is very important to paddlers as they are in the water a lot
 - The carrying of large canoes, paddleboats and kayaks difficult over a long distance
 - Launching into a water-ski drop off location and / or a motorized boat ramp not safe for non-motorized boats launching from shore
 - Storages are unsecured

Ms DeWitt spoke of why the Southwest beach is the best for the paddling community.

- Boat location adjacent to calm water with a safe launching zone
- Cleanest water in the bay
- Ready access to ocean and the Sea World Channel
- Safe and secure location for equipment

Ms DeWitt also said how the paddling community is a very culturally diverse group both age-wise and in nationalities. Paddling communities give back to the community by way of beach clean-ups, children's programs, challenged athletes and veteran programs. Ms DeWitt also cited City Council Policy 700-08 in that it is mandated to develop Mission Bay Park for aquatic usage.

Cheance Adair, a member of the paddling community, spoke on why Fiesta Island should be a shared resource. Ms Adair said that 409 of 485 acres are already dog use areas. She mentioned the existing Master Plan had allowed for no dog use areas and the current area usage is at 84% of the total acreage. Ms Adair also feels that the FIDO website is spreading misinformation and that FIDO is only being asked to share .09 acres out of 365 – 370 total acres. She also stated that no user group should be given exclusive Fiesta Island beach access to the exclusion of all other groups in San Diego.

Ms Adair stated that Ms Katy Bendel, Mission Bay Park Committee Member, was once on the Board of Directors for FIDO and she asked that Ms. Bendel recuse herself from any

Public Comment (continued):

voting. Ms Adair said that Fiesta Island is already one of the largest dog use areas in the United States and that aquatic dog use areas already exist in Ocean Beach and Coronado. Ms Adair stated that South Shores does not work for the paddlers because:

- Small sand area
- Over a quarter mile from parking lot to usage area
- Adjacent to boat ramps – safety issue
- Previous landfill area Ms Adair reiterated the request for a permanent home for the paddlers. The Southwest passage area works best for them, not South Shores. Ms. Adair said the paddlers do not support Alt 5F, but do support Alt 4H.

Mission Bay Park Committee Chairperson Paul Robinson mentioned that he had four speaker slips that stated “accept proposals with the right to accept changes.” Chairperson Robinson was perplexed as to what that meant, so names on the slips were called for clarification and he received no response except for one (1) “pass”.

Carolyn Chase lives in Pacific Beach and supports FIDO, read statements from interested parties unable to attend tonight’s meeting regarding their support for keeping the dog area at Fiesta Island. Ms. Chase also read a statement from former Councilperson Donna Frye. Ms. Chase stated that the Sludge Mitigation Funds can be used for other projects in Mission Bay Park and she is appalled staff would tell you otherwise.

Chairperson Paul Robinson gave Mission Bay Park Committee Member Katy Bendel an opportunity to respond to a previous request for her to recuse herself from voting on the issue before the Committee tonight. Ms. Bendel explained that she was never an officer of FIDO but was on the Board of Directors and all that was disclosed when she interviewed for this appointment. Ms. Bendel did not recuse herself from the vote.

Committee Member Comments/Questions:

- How much is in the Sludge Mitigation Fund?
 - A: \$1.9 Million
- Committee Member commented that the Committee applauded the many people who have worked on the issue.
- Committee Member commented that alt 5f is a real good plan that accommodates a lot of different users.
- Committee Member has a question about why the paddlers have to be put right in the middle of the off leash area. There should be someplace that will be a compromise for all groups.
- Committee Member thinks the funds should be and have been used for other areas.

Committee Member Comments/Questions: (continued)

- Mission Bay Park Committee Member Judy Swink wanted to clear some issues regarding the Sludge Mitigation funds:

The Coastal Commission told the City they needed to remove sludge beds; City was not in a position to do so at the time. Coastal Commission imposed a “fine” of an annual fee of \$1 million dollars to go into a Sludge Mitigation Fund. Of the \$1 million dollars, \$500,000 per year had to be deposited for improvements for Fiesta Island. The study being discussed was paid for by these funds. South Shores has no funding; therefore there is no South Shores Improvement Plan. The money that will be used (over many years) on different phases of Fiesta Island improvements will never come out of the General Fund. The \$1.9 Million is ten (10) years worth of the \$500,000 deposits and will start as matching funds for grants the City will be able to seek for each phase.

The current master planning process never excluded nor omitted dog off leash users. At the 2005 Planning Workshop there were representatives from the off leash dog users who raised the issue that the Mission Bay Park Master Plan did not allow for off leash use. The entire Mission Bay Park Committee unanimously that the off leash dog users needed to be accommodated to the greatest extent possible without the exclusion of others. The Coastal Commission did not state that the roadway was unnecessary and additional years were added to the plans due to FIDO requesting changes, the paddlers came in after.

MSC IT WAS MOVED/SECONDED AND CARRIED WITH TWO (2) OPPOSING TO ACCEPT THE FIESTA ISLAND GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALT 5f AS SUBMITTED AND RECOMMENDED BY STAFF.

(POTTER/SWINK 6-2-0)

SECOND MOTION: MSC IT WAS MOVED/SECONDED AND MOTION FAILED WITH SIX (6) OPPOSING THE RECOMMENDATION FOR THE COMMITTEE TO LOOK AT AN ALTERNATIVE SITE FOR THE PADDLERS.

(HEDGECOCK/BENDEL 2-6-0)

SPECIAL EVENT PERMIT REVIEW

Special Events (Special Events that require road or plaza closures, or will potentially impact park and/or commercial operation, are brought to the Committee for a formal recommendation. They can be moved to Consent by action of the Committee.)

301. None

WORKSHOP ITEMS (No actions taken; discussed by the Committee and staff.)

401. None

INFORMATION ITEMS

501. None

SUB-COMMITTEE

601. None

COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS/COMMENTS The reports are non-debatable.

None

ADJOURNMENT Vice Chair Bussell adjourned the meeting at 7:30PM

Notice of Next Regular Meeting: Tuesday, January 4, 2011
6:00 PM
TBA
San Diego, CA 92109

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy McKenzie
District Manager, Mission Bay Park

Please Note: If there are any questions, please contact Sharon Knutson, at (619) 235-1157. This information is available in alternative formats upon request. To request an agenda in Braille, large print or cassette or to request a sign language or oral interpreter for the meeting, call Sharon Knutson, at (619) 235-1157 at least five (5) working days prior to the meeting to ensure availability. Alternative Listening Devices (ALD's) are also available for the meeting, if requested at least five (5) working days prior to the meeting to ensure availability.