

“WE ENRICH LIVES THROUGH QUALITY PARKS AND PROGRAMS”

MINUTES

City of San Diego
Special Park and Recreation Board Meeting

January 31, 2007

Meeting Held at:

Balboa Park Club
2150 Pan America Road West
San Diego, CA 92101

Mailing Address is:

City of San Diego
Office of Park and Recreation Department
Director
1200 Third Avenue, Suite 1300, MS 56C
San Diego, California 92101

ATTENDANCE:

Members Present

Ginny Barnes, Acting Chair
Darlene Gould Davies
Norman Greene
Dan Mazzella
Bob Otilie
Olivia Puentes-Reynolds
Robert L. Robinson
Wilbur Smith

Members Absent

City Staff Present

Councilmember Donna Frye	Andy Field
City Attorney Mike Aguirre	Stacey Lo Medico
Ronne Froman	Gary Stromberg
Rick Reynolds	David Monroe
Ted Medina	Clay Bingham
Bill Anderson	Jo-Ann Novak
Patti Boekamp	Alex Sachs
Howard Kummerman	

CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair Ms. Barnes called the meeting to order at 6:10 P.M.

NON AGENDA ITEM – Scott Anderson - Park and Recreation Department is in crisis: Mission Bay Park has been handed over to Real Estate Assets to generate revenue; City failed to fund Mission Bay Master Plan; Sunset Point Park has been bulldozed and now lays under the Dana Inn; there has been a cover up of a toxic waste dump; Tecolote wetland development has been canceled; and State Trust Law violated by park money disappearing into the General Fund.

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT – None

DIRECTOR’S REPORT - None

ACTION ITEMS

Discussion of the concepts of:

- A. Transfer of staff and responsibilities, involving grounds maintenance, from the Park and Recreation Department to General Services Department
- B. Transfer of Park and Recreation Department Planning and Development Division functions to Engineering and Capital Projects and Planning and Community Investment.

Ms. Ronne Froman, Chief Operation Officer provided the staff report. Ms. Froman provided a bigger picture of the City with the following goals: first to repair foundation of City: second day to day operation plus additional issues things that have been around for 10-20 years; third laying a financial foundation for long-term financial recovery; and fourth establishing long-term operation and supporting governance under “Strong Mayor” form of government. Each individual piece is a full-time job in themselves but we are doing all four while doing day to day operation.

Twelve months ago we found a City organization that was worst than what they anticipated. The levels of dysfunction were amazing. There were no processes or systems to run the entire City. There were 28 different departments operating independently, including the Park and Recreation Department. Each department had different rules and regulation for Human Resources, Information Technology, vehicle maintenance, facilities, contracts and no discipline that was consistent across the organization. No data was easily available (1979 data system); there was little responsibility and little accountability.

In the past year we have stabilized the organization, built a leadership team, restructured the organizational functionally, and established Mission Vision and Values. San Diego is American’s Finest City-it is a well-managed City in a thriving community. We built the foundation for long-term financial liability, balanced the budget (13 weeks to complete), presented a financial strategy, embraced Kroll remediation, completed the FCC investigation, and created a five-year financial plan. We have a billion dollar deficit in our pension fund and a billion dollar deficit in our retire health care fund. We have handle water/wastewater issues, a deferred maintenance, ADA compliance, storm water run-off compliance, public liability and other issues. We are working on several issues and have a plan laid out to solve it.

Now that we understand the problem, we are doing now is analyzing all the processes, expenditures and revenues to solve the financial crisis. Strategies have been developed for each functional area, preparing position reduction using vacancies in addition to our Business Process Re-engineering to make our City more efficient and effective. Business Process Re-engineering (BPR) is very key in the future of the Park and Recreation Department. It involves teams with about 50 people, including employees and unions. We look at the “as is” processes and the “to be” processes to determine how to do our job more efficiently and more effectively. Rather than cutting positions out of our organization we are taking a look at how to do our jobs more effectively and more affectively. Thus far we have eliminated about 205 positions through the BPR process. We have eliminated about 330 vacancies, 38 positions were eliminated last year and our goal over the next three years is to eliminate 1,000 positions. But doing it methodically and logically and using a process is important. Refinancing some of our expense debt, re-allocating our Transportation Occupancy Tax, leveraging City assets in the sale

of property and updating leases, budget and financial clean up, looking at managed competition, working on a benefit plan for pension and health care reform. All of these pieces will be laid out as part of our FY 2008 budget.

As a streamlining measure we have eliminated the Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Neighborhood Customer Services and were distributing all of the functions under that Deputy within the City. This effort has saved 13 positions. Park and Recreation Department will report directly to Ronne and the day to day responsibilities will be handled by Ms. Froman's assistant Rick Reynolds. Park Planning and Development will be distributed to three departments: Engineering Capital Projects, Planning and Community Investments and Development Services.

Instead of having a single group that's responsible for providing all of the support services within that part of the organization, were using the entire City organization, so Park and Recreation Department can truly focus on park programs in our communities. Park and Recreation Department including park maintenance will move directly under Ms. Froman and at the same time ask the facility staff to work with park recreation staff on a BPR to look at Park and Recreation Department maintenance. We're going to do a complete review of our park and recreation programs and decide how we want to run our park and recreation programs within our Park and Recreation Department. Ms. Froman is ready to include the members of the Park and Recreation Board in this process and keep bringing updates back to this Park and Recreation Board as they go through this process. The goal is to find the most efficient and effective way to operate every function in the City including park and recreation. Make certain that park and recreation focus on park and recreation programs and issues, and let the support function of the City worry about support functions for park and recreation. The goal is to make our Park and Recreation Department even better by using our scarce resources prudently. The intention is not to take money from Park and Recreation Department to be able to solve the financial problems.

Mr. Reynolds responded to a question from Ms. Barnes: the transition of Park Planning and Development Division will take place over the next month. The goal is to consolidate for efficiency purposes; we've been told that is how it was several years ago. For some reason it was separated. We know there are efficiency for having all planning in one place for the whole City. Know there are efficiencies for having all planning in one place for the whole City and it goes seamlessly with the City master plan and 20-year plan for the City. Park and Recreation Department was looking at their planning and another section was looking at planning for entire City, there was a communication problem between them. The same thing with Capital Improvements Projects: we were going down two different stove pipes. We weren't getting the efficiencies we could get across the City and leveraging ourselves to make what is best for the entire City. Mr. Bill Anderson, Planning Director, is responsible for the planning and development piece for the City and will be merging those together so he can fit in as they do the redevelopment to take care of parks in those regions and make sure we take care of parks and regions to get the right level amount of parks in the areas where we are doing the redevelopment in the City. We see this as a very good move for us to help us be more efficient in those two main areas.

Ms. Barnes opened up for brief questions from the Park and Recreation Board Members

Mr. Mazzella – The concern of efficiency and effectiveness of delivering services to the public the process is all encompassing as Park and Recreation Department and recreation representatives

otherwise cutting for the sake of cutting could create a sequence of unanticipated consequences which could set us backwards. The parks are like the welcome mat for the City of San Diego. Only one chance to impress tourist with that first impression, Concerned that the lost of services on the Park and Recreation level could adversely impact far reaching levels. With the goal to eliminate positions it's causing Park and Recreation staff to multi task. If they have to decide to do a park activity or some other activity in one of the other departments they may be required to respond to a service on a non-park level. This could adversely impact the Park and Recreation Department.

Response from Ms. Froman: The Mayor is very proud of our parks and does not want to do anything to harm them. BPR team creates standards and measures. Mr. Reynolds will want your concerns heard so they may be address. Our goal is to be the model for the country.

Mr. Robinson – Transparency did not happen. Concern of leadership being pushed under General Services which is responsible for faded street signs and holes in the streets. Were concerned about the same behavior and leadership when it comes to our parks. How will this work differently? How does this work with Article 5 in Charter Section 26? Has there been a 2/3 vote by City Council?

Mr. Reynolds – We are doing a study to determine if it is feasible to move Park and Recreation Department maintenance to General Services. Mayor can move temporarily but will have to go before City Council for 2/3 approval vote. Response from Ms. Froman: Mayor has the authority to restructure temporarily under Charter Section 28. Park and Recreation Department will still exist and the Director will still be in place.

Ms. Puentes-Reynolds – We need assurance that Park and Recreation Board and the public will be involved in this process. Ms. Barnes received assurances yesterday (1/30/07) that all will be part of this process.

Mr. Smith – Management team that Mayor has assembled is from the outside and looking at things from their own perspective. A lot have a military background and probably bring the military model to the decision making process within the City. We deliver municipal services; need to value the input of employees need to give and take. People input have not been sought or considered.

Mr. Otilie – Are you considering park and recreation maintenance for managed competition? Ms. Froman: Yes that is one we are considering, are putting a plan together now and will announce shortly. Mr. Otilie encourages doing that. Mr. Otilie thinks it's great that the Mayor's Office has brought Park and Recreation Department up to the "front of the line" in this process. It has been in fact a dysfunctional department for some time; there are serious concerns I think a lot of us have regarding the leadership of that organization and the efficiency of the organization. I think any change is good change. This sounds like a well-thought out change to end the dysfunction. Let me also put in a plug in for Mission Bay Park. There is a financial dysfunction associated with this department. Years ago Mission Bay Park was burden with commercial development. This was done to generate funds for the Park and Recreation Department. At this time none of that money has been directed to Mission Bay Park even though it generates about 45 million a year.

Ms. Davies – Business Office needs to be available, and we need informed personnel to dialogue with Park and Recreation Board. Parks will fall apart if we don't have this. Councilmember Frye attended

first meeting and Councilmember Madaffer attended last meeting (1/18/07). In the past have had a liaison with the Mayor's office but now there is a vacuum.

Mr. Greene – In past administration did not communicate to one another. How will you see that these departments interface? What steps will be taken to facilitate this communication? Ms. Froman responded that they have already started this facilitation and have been communicating with Directors, have Management Team meetings, all of our Executive Team meet once a week, the Directors meet once a month, and that communication link has been worked on for the last year. In order for a function to be supported by the rest of the City, we must have a good communication network. We cannot continue to operate with 28 separate different directors, and it is up to the Executive Team who are new to turn our City around.

Mr. Robertson - Still don't hear how separate groups will function together. Ms. Froman stated that they are putting together a City management plan which is a process that brings all the directors together to discuss standards, measures and objectives. That set plan is being put in place now. It is way of managing the City that we have not had before, holding people accountable.

COMMUNICATIONS

Councilmember Donna Frye – Learned about the proposed Neighborhood and Customer Services transition in a memo dated January 30, 2007 (yesterday). Legislative branch and the public are not “in the loop” What they are learning is what they read in the paper, or what they hear through rumors/innuendos, or what they are told after the fact. That is not good public policy! Not the first time this has occurred, this is one of many in a list of decisions that have been made that Councilmember Frye has found out by reading the newspaper. Causing a great deal of time and energy it is not streamlining or efficient. Efficiency comes from clear open communication that involves the legislation branch and involves the public. If the legislative branch is not involved then the public is not involved. Councilmember Frye urged the public to participate on the debate item on February 5, 2007. This is public money, this is public park land, and this should be a public process.

City Attorney Mike Aguirre – Balboa Park is the Department most outstanding Park and Recreation Department in the United States and with the zoo is a national treasure. Need to deal with financial crises, time for all citizens to decide on what sacrifices they are willing to make to preserve the Park and Recreation Department as we know it. Important for our elected Mayor to come forward with his plan and to carefully and precisely explain. Everyone has to recognize efficiency improvements. Concern may lose the Park and Recreation Department; talk of private trust taking over Balboa Park; talk of development taking place in the Park and Recreation Department that is inconsistent with its fundamental use and purposes. Our generation seems to be unable to develop new parks of the type of Balboa Park like others before us. Mayor, Ms. Froman and Mr. Reynolds has all gotten our attention and now under our democratic process we all need to pay close attention as Councilmember Frye suggested. That we make sure we understand that we know exactly what were doing and make sure we leave the situation as good or better for the next generation as we inherited. The only reason we have the Park and Recreation Department is because of all the hard work that all of those put into to it and commit to it. Mr. Aguirre supports the Mayor and believes he is trying to work for the best interest of the community. The City Attorney's Office is committed that everyone civil rights will be preserved

and that all information will be disclosed for all involved. If need be City Attorney's Office will get involved and issue a public report making sure the public interest is protected.

Mr. Robertson - Article 5 in Charter Section 26 how do you interpret? Response from Mr. Aguirre will respond in writing in a timely way. Refer questions to Alex Sachs.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jerome Bierman – Discussed relationship of tax money and Open Space benefits.

Mary Coakley – Discussed how most major cities have a Park and Recreation Department; discussed role of shoreline parks in BPR; and discussed history of why Park Planning and Development Division was created.

Bill Diehl – Discussed the role of community in parks, removal of Park Planning and Development Division, and impact on community.

Tershia d'Elgin – Discussed role of Open Space in maintaining the environment, in addition to tourism and recreation.

Wayne Bamford – Discussed insufficient park staffing at Linda Vista parks.

John Borja – Discussed response time to repairs and maintenance of community parks, and the role of General Services.

Joe Frichtel – Discussed the importance of maintenance and the role of Park and Recreation Department.

Roberta Froome – Discussed Tierrasanta Maintenance Assessment District and the possibility of a decline in quality in park maintenance, especially in Open Space.

Scott Gellerman – Discussed concerns regarding response time from General Services Department to repair local City parks so as to avoid impacting children's activities.

Daniel Greenstadt – Discussed importance of transparency and to encourage Park and Recreation Board to communicate with Mayor's Office on needs in Open Space.

Ron Hutsel – Discussed the resource of volunteers and importance of coordination between the Planning Department and the Park and Recreation Department.

Dorothy Jensen – Discussed reduction of maintenance in Clairemont area and whether volunteers will want to participate if maintenance is moved to General Services Department.

Jack Keasovicit – Discussed reorganization, volunteers, Open Space integrated team, communication between park maintenance and community, and the impacts of breaking up Park and Recreation Department.

Mike Kelly – asked where the park rangers would go under a proposed reorganization and discussed how volunteers contribute not just maintenance but also planning, GIS, and specialized support.

Dean Rollins – Encouraged continuation of this item and asked the Board to proceed with due deliberation and consideration.

Jon Lotta – Did not speak.

Steve Lucas – Discussed team approach to maintaining open space and invited decision makers to visit work sites.

Don Steele – Discussed previous organizational structure where Park Planners and Engineers were located in different departments and the lack of accountability and fiscal responsibility.

Carrie Schneider – Discussed the formation of Open Space Division due to the City's obligation to protect endangered and rare species in accordance with the federal Endangered Species Act.

Geoffrey Smith – Discussed the importance of keeping Park and Recreation Department intact and protect San Diego dream of open space.

Dee Wylie – Discussed the insufficient number of parks in Point Loma and the need for funding and planning for future parks.

Mel Hinton – Discussed team work of cleaning Mission Bay and San Diego River with Park and Recreation Department; expressed his concerns regarding a possible break up of structure, volunteers, and established relationships.

Eloise Battle – Discussed concerns of future customer service; collaboration and communication with Park and Recreation Department, and who to contact if Park and Recreation Department is changed.

Bob Dingeman – Discussed concerns regarding maintenance assessment districts, outsourcing, perception of over-management, quality of life, and the need to consult with communities and volunteers before making changes to a system that does not appear broken.

Damian Tryon – Discussed benefits of Park and Recreation Department maintaining parks to ensure safety, customer service and coordination between recreation and maintenance. Discussed concerns with a public trust running Balboa Park, managed competition, and contracting out services.

Deborah Knight – Discussed problems of contracting services out, preservation of open space, role of Engineering and Capital Projects, habitat protection, and potential of making Park and Recreation into its own entity.

Kay Stewart – Discussed the incompatibility of placing landscape architects and engineers into the same department.

Jim Varnadore – Requested full participation in all aspects of Park Master Plan and the City Council Policy regarding the role of recreation councils and boards.

Judy Swink – Discussed loss of institutional memory and knowledge, maintenance of Mission Bay Park, and the need for additional information on restructure.

Laura Burnett – Opposed to any cuts of City staff and services without political leadership to raise taxes and to properly afford great parks in San Diego.

Marti Kranzberg – not present; however wrote for the record that it is “important Balboa Park remains as a City park.”

Ali Darvishi – Discussed transfer of Park Planning and Development Division work force and added that to transfer these functions to another department and to make that department bigger is neither efficient nor effective. Indicated that connection between park employees and planning/engineering staff may be lost under reorganization.

Robin Shifflet – Discussed the role of the Park Planning and Development Division, including the collection of fees; planning of parks within the City; oversight of the construction and design of parks; development of list of projects that are not funded; interaction with City Council; interaction with the community; problems when planners, engineers, and park staff were in different departments several years ago, and the priority of new division that was requested by a City Council working group in 2002.

Martha Durazo – Discussed safety issues and requested citizen and employee input into decisions that are made about the Park and Recreation Department.

Camilla Ingram – Discussed the partnership of Park Planning and Development Division with the community and the benefits of integrating functions within the Park and Recreation Department.

Eric Bowlby – Discussed Open Spaces and species conservation; complex ecological systems that require focused management; neighborhood canyons; development of volunteer groups and the need to build up the Park and Recreation Department.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Ms. Barnes has been a Recreation Council for 17 years. Meeting with City Staff yesterday (1/30/07) and learned of re-engineering four days prior to January 18, 2007 meeting. Had an opportunity to talk about BPR because it was on our agenda. Will continue Item 101 A and B for Thursday, February 15, 2007 meeting at 202 C Street, San Diego. Ms. Barnes encouraged all to submit comments. Ms. Froman needs an opportunity to digest what you said. The Park and Recreation Board here does not

think the process was done well at all. We are trying to make sure you are being heard. If there are any task force, steering committees and so on, I will personally make sure the public is part of that process.

MOTION: MOVED/SECONDED Mr. Smith/Mr. Green

A motion was made by Mr. Smith and seconded by Mr. Green to draft a letter to Mayor, Councilmembers and City Attorney, to include the following points:

Paragraph 1 Process:

- Inclusion in Process
- Transparency
- Disclosure of what is being considered in terms on how to deal and on how to restructure transparency

Paragraph 2 Maintenance:

- Length of time coordinate issues
- Maintenance provided by volunteers
- Where are rangers going?
- Where is Open Space Going?
- Read into institutional memory
- Integration between Park and Recreation Department services
- Full disclosure
- Maintain local pride...maintenance and programs should not be separated
- Control of contracting services

Paragraph 3 Planning:

- Coordination with community on Park and Recreation Department planning issues (that was key) and Communication with community (key.) Come from two separate disciplines, two separate points of view so there isn't a nexus.
- Collection of fees to make sure monies is there for our Park and Recreation Department to be built.

Paragraph 4 Closing:

- What specific assumption was being used to drive this idea? If these are temporary changes why are we doing such draconian measures if it needs to wait for City Council to vote on it for permanent changes? Why are we imposing such draconian measures if in fact these are only temporary measures?
- Not just a Park and Recreation Department but a department that engaged the volunteerism with decades of participation of community members (1 out of 50 people within the City of San Diego are volunteering in Park and Recreation Department.) By dismantling Park and Recreation Department, we are going to be endangering that.
- Include Public

CLARIFICATION OF THE MOTION:

Letter from the Park and Recreation Board reporting on what the Park and Recreation Board heard from the community today in this open forum. It is important for the Park and Recreation Board to support what has been brought to them because they are here as Park and Recreation Department. Representing the community as a strong voice of the community.

Ms. Puentes-Reynolds and Mr. Smith to work on letter.

Voting in favor of the motion: Ms. Barnes, Ms. Davies, Mr. Greene, Mr. Mazzella, Mrs. Puentes-Reynolds, Mr. Robinson, and Mr. Smith. Opposed: Mr. Otilie The motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

Next Regular Meeting: **Thursday, February 15, 2:00 P.M.**

City Administration Building
Committee Room, 12th Floor
202 C Street, San Diego, CA 92101

Submitted by,

Andrew Field
Assistant to the Director

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