

**Approved Meeting Minutes**  
**PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
 2-28-11

ATTENDING: Mercurio, Soderstrom, Johnson, Kirby, Southworth, Simmons, Walkling, Beyaert, Hudson, Coomber, Palacios, Bank, Vann, Weiss,  
 NOT ATTENDING: Walters, Madison, Volin, Shalaby, Pellegrini, Madsen, Godfrey  
 STAFF ATTENDING: Barial, Pfuehler, Wilson, Johnson, Weise, McCarthy, Doyle  
 GUESTS: John Sutter  
 PUBLIC: Norm Kidder, Elizabeth Ames, David Lunn, Dolores Bengston, Jackie worked at Dry Creek cottage

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** The January 24, 2011 meeting minutes were approved with one amendment. PAC member Beyaert moved and PAC member Vann seconded approval of the minutes. PAC member Southworth abstained as she was not at the last meeting.

1. **Introductions:** Chair Kirby asked PAC Members and District staff to introduce themselves, as well as members of the public.
2. **Board Member Comments:** Director John Sutter spoke about the new Tidewater boathouse dedication, the upcoming trip to Washington DC, recent acquisitions and the proposed gateway park near the Bay Bridge. The Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline boathouse provides direct access to the Bay. It was built, in part, with Measure CC funds. The tenants of the boathouse are the Oakland Strokes, a high school rowing organization. There is a gap in the Bay Trail just north of this location and south of the High Street Bridge. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers controls the Oakland Estuary in this vicinity. The District will be meeting with Corps officials in Washington DC to discuss acquiring an easement for the Bay Trail between the boathouse and the bridge. The District has acquired 7,500 acres of land in the past year. Once the new Bay Bridge is completed, the District may acquire 60 acres of land near the touchdown of the bridge. Caltrans, the District and about seven other agencies are developing a plan for a "Gateway Park" at this location. There are a lot of different ideas and many are viewing this as a tourist attraction. PAC member Vann asked about the current status of Gateway Park. Sutter stated the stakeholders are looking for new consultants and financing the plan is a challenge. PAC member Palacios asked about connecting Middle Harbor to the gateway area. Sutter explained the challenges with the management of Middle Harbor and connectivity to the gateway area. PAC member Weiss expressed his support for the District's participating in the NRPA conference in Washington DC. PAC chair Kirby also expressed his support for the District's work in DC.
3. **Public Comments:** Elizabeth Ames, Chair of Save our Hills, discussed the Land Use Plan (LUP) amendment for Garin and Dry Creek Park. The park has great access and they are hoping to connect it to Pleasanton Ridge and Sunol Wilderness. A lot of people are interested in the historic cottage within the park. The current Interim Land Use Plan (ILUP) calls for the cottage to become a park residence. Ms. Ames expressed her interest in seeing the cottage preserved because it is on the list of national historic sites. She added one of the largest horse ranches in the South Bay is located near Dry Creek. Union City's general plan has the area zoned as agricultural land which is protected. Save our Hills is fighting to keep it preserved.

Jackie, a former employee at Dry Creek Cottage, spoke about the ILUP. She noted the public wanted the garden to receive national historic recognition as well. She also expressed her support for protecting the cottage for the public and not converting it into a residence.

4. **Presentations:**
  - a. **State of the District – Robert Doyle, General Manager**  
General Manager Robert Doyle gave an overview of his resume and his philosophy. The District is going through a tremendous transition and has not filled 35 positions since the recession hit. Staff is doing more with less and keeping District parks safe and maintained. District staff work very hard and professional park management is critical in challenging times. Doyle began his powerpoint and touched upon many accomplishments even with a reduced budget. The District maintains 108,000 acres with the addition of Pleasanton Ridge which will be considered by the board tomorrow (March 1). Last year, the District was awarded the largest grant in its history - \$10.2 million. This year, District staff are working to protect it as the new House majority has sought to eliminate the entire \$600 million Department of Transportation TIGER II program. Rep. John Garamendi is no longer on the Transportation Committee and there is no one else from the region on the Committee. The District received accreditation from the internationally-recognized Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA), making it one of only 12 agencies in California to achieve such recognition. Highway signs directing vehicles to District parks are up. The East Bay Hills wildfire hazard reduction and resource management plan has been approved after ten years of effort. The District has support for a public benefit conveyance of about 2,500 acres of the former Concord Naval Weapons Station. The District has approved 53 local grant projects as part of Measure WW

implementation. The District is updating the master plan and has received over 2,000 responses to the on-line survey. The East Contra Costa Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) has benefitted land acquisition tremendously as cities mitigate the impacts of Highway 4, and Oakley, Brentwood and Pittsburg development. Lands protected by the HCP actually act as a form of stimulus for development in the region as they provide a mitigation green light for the eastern part of Contra Costa County. The District acquired some property with wind turbines already present. They are the larger turbines which don't kill as many birds. The turbines generate \$250,000 per year and provide funding for Operations to hire staff to manage the area. Current administrations in Sacramento and Washington are strongly supporting non-petroleum energy resources, so wind turbines may be more prominent. It is a challenging time because land is available and with WW the District has resources for acquisition. With 35 positions unfilled, however, operation of more land is difficult. Despite that, there have been several park dedications: Dublin Hills, Big Break and the Tidewater Boathouse Dedication. Doyle spoke briefly about the Port of Oakland's taking back of Middle Harbor. Doyle complimented Public Safety and Fire on their high level of staff and how efficiently they perform their jobs. PAC member Vann asked about Urban Shields. Doyle explained it is a coordinated effort for police training. Providing better access to parklands and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act is a priority for the District. Over 400 youth participated in the District's day camp program. Parks Express served 20,000. District staff conducted a lot of outreach, recreation and education. District Visitor Centers served over 6,500 participants, the mobile fish exhibit served 10 new events and the mobile visitor center began last year. Pfuehler has been doing a great job with legislative affairs and first lady Michelle Obama mentioned the District's Kids Challenge as one of the best programs for getting children moving in the U.S. in her remarks to the NRPA convention last year in Minneapolis. This recognition helps the District in Washington. Doyle mentioned the external relations with Chinese and Korean news media. He would like the Regional Parks Foundation to be more visible to the rest of the District and the PAC. The District has a long history with volunteers. The District's budget was \$17 million less than the year before because of decreases in property values and interest. The District is currently down a number of positions, in addition to some key retirements. The District received numerous awards and recognitions. PAC member Hudson asked if the District had looked into grants for electronic charging stations. Doyle has talked with other agencies and mentioned the solar panels on the roof of the District's headquarters. Hudson suggested additional TIGER funding could be used for bike borrowing or maybe even the mobile visitor center. Hudson mentioned the wind fair at Memorial Day and AGM for Public Affairs Carol Johnson responded. PAC member Simmons had questions about the District's participation in communication interoperability. Doyle stated interoperability works great for flat areas, but not so well in the hills and valleys. PAC member Vann would like a copy of the presentation. District staff will provide. PAC member Palacios asked if the Tidewater boathouse would eventually serve Lake Merritt. Doyle said there is a long range plan is to physically connect them.

**b. Shadow Cliffs LUP – Celia McCarthy, Park Planner, Planning and Stewardship and Brian Wiese, Chief of Planning, Stewardship and GIS**

Wiese provided a timeline and background for the Shadow Cliffs Land Use Plan (LUP). McCarthy began with a powerpoint presentation of the Shadow Cliffs LUP. The last LUP was approved by the Board in 2002 which added about 111 acres to the western end of the park to accommodate an expansion of the waterslide. The bicycle motor cross (BMX) park is currently operating and managed by the City of Pleasanton. The purpose amending the 2002 LUP is to guide the future development and management of the park in the absence of the waterslides. Improvements are planned along the shoreline and phasing out the waterslides presents an opportunity to move the corporation yard. The LUP recommends improving the aquatics office, and redesigning, remodeling and constructing a new corporation yard. There are plans to install a water splash pad in a family play area away from the beach. There is limited shade at Shadow Cliffs for picnicking, so shade shelters and a reservable all-weather pavilion is planned to accommodate large groups. The trail system needs to be improved with appropriate signage and re-grading of existing levee trails. Re-grading the western end of the park could allow native plant restoration. Remillard Marsh would be rehabilitated with supplementary water and redesigned to create a new seasonal wetland. PAC member Mercurio asked why the waterslides were being eliminated and wondered why the operator could not make any capital improvements. McCarthy responded the waterslides have aged and operating waterslides in an activity outside of the District's mission. Wiese stated none of these proposed changes are funded and Shadow Cliffs was not included in Measure WW. The waterslide concessionaires' contract ends this year. The District could put renewal out to bid. If a concessionaire were able to demonstrate they have the funds to operate the waterslide safely and upgrade the equipment, the District would consider keeping them open. Mercurio expressed concern about the public's reaction to eliminating the waterslides. He believes the District should make the reasons for eliminating the waterslides clear to the public. He added if the waterslides are eliminated, the splash pad should be ready to go right away. Mercurio asked about connections to regional trails through Shadow Cliffs. Wiese responded that he would need to check with Trails Manager Jim Townsend. PAC member Weiss said he supports the process and feels the waterslides are out of place. He asked if there was any discussion about expanding the BMX portion of the park. He also asked about Zone 7's efforts to percolate rainwater through the soil. Wiese responded the District spoke with Pleasanton parks staff and were told they did not have an interest in expanding the BMX portion of the park. With regard to Zone 7, they depend on percolating or injecting water into the ground water supply for drinking water. The District's concern is ensuring they do not use too much water from Shadow Cliffs Lake for percolation because it could lead to low water levels and decreased recreational opportunities. PAC

member Beyaert said he supports the recommendation. PAC member Soderstrom asked since the park is designated as a “regional recreation area” does that change the communities view about the importance of the waterslides. Wiese said the community was split. The District is very concerned about the safety of the waterslides and unless they can be improved and updated, the liability and sustainability concerns would prompt the District to eliminate them.

David Lunn from Friends of Shadow Cliffs spoke about the LUP. He shared his 20 year interest and work on the trails near Shadow Cliffs. He thinks the District should have the trails outside the park boundaries included in the plan if at all possible. He added the District should have a placeholder for a visitor center and, at a minimum, for a building which does not have to be staffed. It should be noted that a bus stop is directly outside of the park, it is very accessible for families with modest incomes. Dolores Bengston, also from Friends of Shadow Cliffs, stated she thought the Board’s Executive Committee recommended approval of the LUP changes to the full Board and then providing for public review. Wiese said the Executive Committee recommended both. Bengston expressed her concern about the recommendation prior to public review. She believes interpretative panels should be present at the park, and thinks they should be in a cluster which would not require children and elderly to walk 6.8 miles as has been proposed. While the LUP makes some wonderful improvements, it does not seem to focus on year-round use. Currently, the main focus of the park is the beach. The LUP should reflect a broader array of uses, such as: a children’s play area, a pavilion, an exhibit, a trail hub which is adjacent to the parking lot and restrooms. In the 40 years of the park’s history there have been no interpretive programs and no panels. The plans for Remillard Marsh are not a restoration, but rather the human-made creation of a marsh.

Chair Kirby began by saying Director Sutter mentioned some of the District’s recent acquisitions for Pleasanton Ridge will eventually lead to a connection to Garin. Typically, connections which link parks across public roads are not in LUPs. During discussions about the Garin LUP, Kirby advocated for a connectivity reference even though the District had not identified a specific trail location to link it to Pleasanton Ridge. He believes there is a long range benefit in having a connectivity placeholder in the LUP, as Mr. Lunn expressed. McCarthy stated there is a recommendation to pursue right of ways and some land acquisition, but specific recommendations would be procedurally difficult. PAC member Beyaert asked if the District’s Master Plan allows for regional trail connections between parks to be referenced in LUPs. Wiese pointed out the District always looks for future opportunities to provide new access or trail connections and that is consistent with the Master Plan. McCarthy pointed out the District has a policy to not discuss specific acquisition matters because that could interfere with good faith negotiations.

PAC member Vann pointed out the members of the public in attendance raised some important questions and they should receive a thoughtful response. He wondered if staff could address their concerns. PAC member Beyaert discussed the idea of clustering interpretive panels and exhibits rather than having them spread throughout 6.8 miles. Wiese responded walking is a major focus of our parks. He added staff shares a consensus that Shadow Cliffs is not the appropriate place for a visitor center. The District intends for there to be panels, shade pavilions and a splash pad near the current location of the waterslides. PAC member Southworth asked for an explanation of the rationale which led the staff to conclude Shadow Cliffs is not an appropriate place for a visitor center. Wiese responded the District studied the need for regional visitor centers as part of the Measure WW process. While Measure WW includes funds for three new visitor centers, the Pleasanton area seems well served by the new Alviso Adobe Park and a planned visitor center by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission in Sunol which will interpret the Water Temple.

Chair Kirby remarked the waterslides are very prominent from a roadside view and perhaps this is not an ideal location for a corporation yard. He agreed with Mercurio that the splash pad should be functional before the waterslide is shut down. McCarthy agreed and that scenario is recommended in the plan. PAC member Vann expressed concern with the interpretive panels being spread over 6.8 miles and expressed support for a covered/enclosed facility for inclement weather use. Wiese stated the pavilion can be used as a rain shelter and the panels are part of a conceptual plan. PAC member Simmons added conceptually providing multiple tracks / excursions may actually enhance the experience for visitors. He commented the need to maintain the Remillard Marsh signifies it is different than something that would naturally be there. Kirby suggested a consistent source of water is needed to keep the lake from dropping five feet. McCarthy responded hydrological consultants say it will drop five feet and stabilize. Shadow Cliffs lake exists because there is a steady stream of water from Arroyo Del Valle. Kirby asked if Remillard Marsh was historically part of the Arroyo or was it quarried prior to becoming a marsh. Wiese said both. He suspects it was quarried to a lower level than the Arroyo. Water originally probably seeped through and nourished vegetation in the marsh. In recent years, low water levels have reduced the growth of vegetation in the marsh. He continued that perhaps the area should be considered a vernal pool and not a marsh. Kirby said he shares Simmons’ concern about “maintaining” the marsh with augmentation. Wiese added the District specifically hired a hydrologist to test the depth of the ground water and what would normally naturally occur in the area. PAC member Southworth commented the widespread distribution of interpretive panels will provide maintenance challenges. They will get vandalized, marred or scratched and will be an eyesore if not maintained regularly. She wondered if the funds which would be needed to maintain

the panels might be better put to use for a small structure which could be reserved and used by educators, but not necessarily a staffed visitor center.

PAC member Beyaert recommended the PAC support the LUP with the proviso the PAC is concerned about the desirability of designing a restoration project at Remillard Marsh and the District should re-examine interpretive opportunities at Shadow Cliffs. He also added the PAC had questions about trails linking Shadow Cliffs to other parks.

PAC member Vann thought perhaps it would be appropriate to amend the motion or adopt a substitute motion. He added he would be more comfortable with the PAC expressing support for the concept, but not necessarily the LUP in its current form.

Weiss restated Beyaert's motion. Kirby added the PAC will ask the Board to consider the minutes of this discussion prior to approval of the LUP.

Chair Kirby clarified the recommendation. The PAC recommends to the Board the LUP be approved, and imbedded in this motion is the PAC's concerns that the District should take a look at the interpretive center/system with regards to signage and proximity of the signs, as well as concerns with the capital costs of maintaining operations of the Remillard Marsh. Beyaert motioned approval of Kirby's recommendation and Weiss seconded. The PAC approved Kirby's recommendation. PAC members Vann and Southworth opposed. The total was 10 for and 2 opposed.

Wiese stated staff will take all of the comments from this discussion and either make amendments to the proposal or otherwise respond to the comments. Public comments are open until March 21<sup>st</sup>.

c. **Healthy Parks/Healthy People – Carol Johnson, AGM Public Affairs** tabled until next month due to the lateness of the hour.

5. **PAC Member Comments** - None.
6. **Report from the Chair** – Chair Kirby noted that while the PAC work plan indicates the next meeting is March 21, it should be March 28 and asked unanimous consent to make the change. The PAC unanimously agreed.
7. **Board Committee Reports** – PAC member Bank will report on the meetings she attended at the next PAC meeting.
8. **Status of Recommendations** – None.
9. **Old Business** – None.
10. **New Business** – None.
11. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Summary of Actions:

1. The January 24, 2011 meeting minutes were unanimously approved with one edit.
2. The PAC voted 10-2 to approve the Shadow Cliffs LUP with concerns.
3. The PAC moved the March meeting date from March 21<sup>st</sup> to March 28<sup>th</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,  
Yolande Barial, PAC Secretary