

Approved Meeting Minutes
PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
 3-28-11

ATTENDING: Kirby, Vann, Simmons, Beyaert, Coomber, Bank, Pellegrini, Madsen, Godfrey, Madison, Mercurio, Weiss
 NOT ATTENDING: Walters, Volin, Shalaby, Soderstrom, Johnson, Palacios, Hudson, Walkling, Southworth
 STAFF ATTENDING: Barial, Pfuehler, Escobar, Johnson
 GUESTS: Carol Severin
 PUBLIC: None

The meeting began at 7:08 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: The February 28, 2011 meeting minutes were approved with one amendment. PAC member Mercurio moved and PAC member Beyaert seconded approval of the minutes. PAC members Madsen and Pellegrini abstained as they were not at the last meeting.

1. **Introductions:** PAC Chair Kirby dispensed with introductions as there were not any new PAC members or any member of the public present at the meeting.
2. **Board Member Comments:** Director Carol Severin reported about her participation in the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Legislative Forum in Washington, D.C. She displayed and passed around the packet prepared by staff for Board Members to take to their meetings with legislators and/or their staff. She also commented on the new Yards Park along the Anacostia River in D.C. and the short loop trails she saw at Mt. Vernon along the Potomac River. She added the District is working on a brochure to highlight short loop trails. Beyaert wondered how long a short loop trail could be and still considered short. Kirby stated short loop trails are a good concept and asked if there were any Segways on the Mt. Vernon Trail. Director Severin said she did not see any Segways. PAC member Coomber added his support for short loop trails. Kirby added loop trails help keep more people near the parking lot and staging areas where most crime occurs, so they can actually help as a deterrent. He added loop trails for hikers can also better separate hikers from bicyclists who want to go deeper into the parks. Beyaert expressed his support for loop trails. Mercurio added he hoped there would be multiple loop trails in the new Concord regional park. Kirby acknowledged Legislative Affairs Manager Erich Pfuehler is responsible for assembling the materials for the D.C. packet. PAC member Weiss shared he is impressed with the D.C. talking points and the agenda.
3. **Public Comments:** None.
4. **Presentations:**
 - a. **Healthy Parks/Healthy People – Carol Johnson, Assistant General Manager, Public Affairs**
AGM Carol Johnson provided an overview about this international initiative started in Australia by Parks Victoria. In Australia, it is not just about parks, but rather Australia's philosophy for planning, housing and transportation. The District will be among the first to highlight this concept in North America. The First Lady's Let's Move Initiative is an example linking outdoor spaces with health and wellness. The Healthy Parks/Healthy People (HPHP) Initiative will showcase the crucial role parks play in both individual and community health. The HPHP Initiative will seek to prompt legislative action and develop new relationships with non-traditional partners, community leaders and ethnic media. The District already has pursued partnerships with health and nutrition organizations and foundations, including Kaiser and Chez Panisse Foundation. The District is also partnering with PetFood Express from San Leandro, which is an organic home grown pet food company.

Programming elements of HPHP include the trails challenge and kids challenge, as well as volunteer program opportunities, green technology, energy efficiency, stewardship and research restoration. The District will be using the following spokespeople: Wendy Tokuda of CBS 5; Lorrie Sullenberger, a Fitness expert; Miranda Wilson, a radio host who has spent time in our parks since she was a kid; Doug McConnell, environmental documentary filmmaker; Mike Levy, CEO PetFood Express as HPHP fits the vision of his company. Beyaert asked if they are volunteering. Johnson said yes. The goal is to use real people with real stories. PAC members are encouraged to suggest additional spokespeople of this caliber. The District will create public service announcements and links on the website. Lorrie Sullenberger will be the keynote speaker at the Bay Area Open Space Council on May 12. The

District will also promote HPHP on National Outdoors Day at Quarry Lakes with the U.S. Forest Service on June 11. If PAC members are interested in participating, they should let staff know. Johnson has made HPHP presentations at several conferences. District GIS staff are working on a program which will allow people to view maps of parks nearby by entering a zip code. The download will be detailed enough to specify what type of hike you are looking for or might need as a 'park prescription.' Mercurio wondered if providing the program to Google might spread the word more. Johnson mentioned that would have to be discussed with Kaiser as they are the District's exclusive partner in this endeavor. PAC member Godfrey stated, as a physician, he thought this idea was brilliant and could be a tool for doctors to print out information for patients who do not have regular access to computers. Weiss asked if the District has considered partnering with insurance companies on this initiative. Johnson stated AAA recently signed on to be a member of the District's Foundation. Weiss wondered if there was a way to measure success and outcomes. Johnson responded the District will continue to do survey assessments. The District knows the trails challenge has up to 9900 people signed up which is a measureable assessment. Weiss wondered if indicators such as blood pressure and weight loss could be measured, particularly with regard to proximity to District facilities. Johnson responded that Kaiser has already analyzed the two East Bay counties and have identified the highest areas of diabetes and heart diseases and, in fact, those areas are not near regional parks. Weiss added this data should be communicated to legislators and the media.

To promote the HPHP initiative, Johnson discussed the Regional Park Foundation which raises money to promote District programs, particularly those which help financially-challenged children get outdoors. The Foundation also sponsors donor recognition events, creates endowments and provides a method for those who want to donate to specific parks through estate planning. It will be one tool to communicate the HPHP initiative. Johnson also highlighted the ethnic media briefing sponsored by New America Media in 2010 and other outreach efforts underway with local community and political leaders.

PAC member Beyaert commented this is a great program which should highlight the health value of so-called "passive" activities such as hiking and biking in open space lands as well as active recreation. PAC member Madsen wondered if different ethnic groups use the parks differently and would the District be tailoring their HPHP presentation(s) to its audience. Johnson said from observing park users we know there are differences in use patterns, but clearly more can be learned. Madsen suggested changes in demographics should be considered as the District seeks to communicate to new users. Johnson added the District's general brochure will be coming out in five languages. She also added seniors need to be communicated with in a unique way. PAC member Simmons said this is an excellent program, he suggested the District should consider releasing the 'park prescription' GIS information to other entities since public money is being used to develop the program. Johnson stated the information will be publically available on the District's website. Simmons added he will be attending the upcoming Contra Costa County Mayors Conference where General Manager Robert E. Doyle is the featured speaker. He wondered if Doyle would be able to make some general comments on HPHP. Johnson said yes. Within the context of HPHP, Coomber talked about his article on the District's website about his five favorite wildflower hikes. He added once people see a guy in a wheelchair going for a hike it can inspire them to be more active. Kirby remarked about keeping the flow of communication to different cultures moving forward. It is good the District has found issues which resonate in diverse communities. Director Severin asked if the District planned on doing podcasting. Johnson responded not yet. Mercurio mentioned the HPHP Initiative would probably resonate with the new Superintendent of Public Education, Tom Torlakson. Johnson stated she and Pfuehler have a meeting with Superintendent Torlakson very soon. Godfrey commented about the 'park prescription' GIS program and the exclusive arrangement with Kaiser. He would like the District to engage the broader medical community, particularly for those serving at-risk individuals.

b. SFPUC Calaveras Dam Project/Sunol Park Update – John Escobar, AGM Operations

John Escobar, AGM Operations discussed the heavy threat of litigation, but reported the District and San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) have signed and approved a settlement. Escobar provided an historical overview about the SFPUC and their seismic upgrades of their Hetch Hetchy water distribution system. To upgrade/replace the Calaveras Dam, SFPUC needs 300,000 cubic yards of rock and gravel. District staff assume the gravel will come from the quarries near I-680 and Alameda Creek. There will be 20-30 dump truckloads of gravel traversing Calaveras Road on a daily basis during construction. Two major concerns for the District are: 1. The asbestos fibers in the rock of the current dam, which creates an air quality issue for Sunol Regional Wilderness; 2.

The traffic on Calaveras Road for the two year construction period. SFPUC has been monitoring air quality in the area for over three years to provide a baseline on asbestos exposure. This will be an extremely, closely monitored project with regard to asbestos fiber and air quality issues. For about two years SFPUC has been meeting with the District to discuss the impacts of this project. Brad Olson, Jack Kenny and Escobar worked with the SFPUC to understand the project. Olson read the entire EIR and sent a rather lengthy response letter of about 28 pages on behalf of the District.

The District will not be closing the park. Some benefits the District will incur are a new potable water system for Sunol Regional Wilderness valued at about \$2 million, replacement of the Geary Road bridge valued at about \$4 million and \$2 million to mitigate unspecified areas of the park. All toilets at Sunol will be replaced. The District will have use of a corporation yard in the town of Sunol during construction at the expense of the SFPUC. District staff will move out of the park until the air quality is safe. The construction site is ringed with monitors and work will be halted when the wind is over 15 miles-per-hour. No hauling will occur on the weekend or during the four summer holidays. It does appear that the District will relocate weekday environmental education programming to other parks during the 18 months of rock and gravel hauling on Calaveras Road. Most of Sunol Regional Wilderness is actually leased from the SFPUC and the District does not own much of it. The District is renegotiating its lease as part of this settlement. Included in the agreement, the District will no longer pay property taxes on this leased property. The SFPUC will pay the approximate \$80,000 in property tax. The San Francisco Board of Supervisors approved our settlement agreement on Tuesday March 15, 2011. Staff will continue to work with SFPUC to preserve access to the park throughout the four-year construction project. All planning and the California Environmental Quality Act compliance processes has been managed by the SFPUC.

Kirby wondered about the best location to close the Calaveras Road. Escobar agreed the location Kirby indicated was better. Kirby asked about the asbestos exposure and the amount of material that may be on the ground disturbed by cattle or people. Escobar indicated SFPUC staff have been wearing monitors for over a year. If employees are not digging, they have not been subject to additional exposure. SFPUC is going to work with the District and develop guidelines on possible exposure. Coomber wondered how they would keep the dust down given how dry Sunol is in the summer. Escobar says wetting will take place at the construction site. Asbestos fibers have the properties of water and don't go over ridge tops. Once on the ground they are not a problem. As part of the agreement, District buildings will be deep cleaned before staff are allowed to move back in.

c. Trails and Greenways Conference – Erich Pfuehler, Government Relations and Legislative Affairs Manager

Pfuehler extended an invitation to the PAC to the April 12th trail mixer which the District is sponsoring. He asked PAC members to send an email if they planned to attend. Mercurio spoke briefly about the conference which will be held at the San Ramon Marriott April 11 – 13, 2011. Kirby expressed his excitement about the networking opportunities and the fact the event would be in the East Bay. Escobar added the District is hosting three pre-conference events and have about seven staff involved in breakout sessions. One event is a bike ride along Ironhorse Trail on Monday the 11th.

5. **PAC Member Comments** - Beyaert commented Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty and Assembly Member Mary Hayashi are spearheading a program to rename the San Francisco Bay Trail to the Bill Lockyer Bay Trail. He asked other interested PAC members to work with him in an effort to oppose the renaming effort. Kirby stated he would contact his assembly member. Vann added he would suggest the Legislative Committee of the Board take a look at the naming proposal. Vann talked about his attendance at the Tidewater Boat House dedication which was great and beautiful. Kirby noted Vann was recognized by the East Bay Housing Organizations. Director Severin asked Pfuehler to distribute materials from the NRPA packet to PAC members who want them. Pfuehler said no problem. PAC member Pellegrini asked a question about the Martinez staging area which could be in middle of the park to get to the ferry building. Escobar noted it is very conceptual.
6. **Report from the Chair** – Kirby commented that Finance Subcommittee members should pick up the two volumes of the budget.

7. **Board Committee Reports** – PAC member Bank handed out typed reports on the meetings she attended from December 2010 to March 2011. These meeting were the Board Operations and Board Executive Committees.

Escobar gave a very brief report about the fire at Tilden Corp Yard where the District lost nine vehicles and damage to 17 others, as wells as two shifts of mechanics being without a work site. There was smoke damage to adjacent office space and district central stores. The District is looking for temporary facilities. Vann asked if the cause of the fire was known. Escobar said not yet. He noted this was a \$3 to \$4 million dollar loss.

8. **Status of Recommendations** – None.

9. **Old Business** – None.

10. **New Business** – Vann asked if the District has a get out to the parks day. He would like to see this as a discussion item. Kirby referred this back to staff to see how this could be integrated into the workplan.

11. **Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 p.m.

Summary of Actions:

1. The February 28, 2011 meeting minutes were unanimously approved with one edit.
2. Consider a discussion about the San Francisco Bay Trail renaming.
3. The next PAC meeting is on April 25, 2011, PAC vice chair Mercurio will chair the meeting.

Director Severin added her thanks for the contributions of the PAC and remarked the board really appreciates them.

Respectfully submitted,
Yolande Barial, PAC Secretary