

**Approved Meeting Minutes**  
PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
February 24, 2014

ATTENDING: Kirby, Madsen, Madison, Godfrey, Kern, Coffey, Vann, Mercurio, Bank, Palacios, Simmons, Beyaert, Volin, Coomber, Shalaby, Gregory  
NOTATTENDING: Best, Pellegrini, DeMarcus, Yee  
STAFF ATTENDING: Barial, Pfuehler, Scheer, Johnson  
GUESTS: Director John Sutter  
PUBLIC: None.

The meeting began at 7:05 p.m.

**1. Approval of Minutes:** PAC member Beyaert moved and PAC member Coomber seconded approval of the January 27, 2014 minutes with one correction. The motion passed unanimously. PAC members Madison and Madsen abstained due to absence from the meeting.

**2. Introductions:** PAC Chair Kirby asked PAC members, staff and the public to introduce themselves.

**3. Board Member Comments:** Director Sutter spoke briefly about a few parcels that have been acquired by the District; namely a 200 acre addition to Wildcat Canyon and the Castleridge Property on the west side of Pleasanton Ridge. Sutter explained the different external committees and agencies with whom the Board interfaces. As a member of the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (Authority) Sutter stated the Authority is planning a nine county parcel tax, \$10 per parcel to raise about \$14 million to restore Bay wetlands and address the impacts of sea level rise on Bay shoreline communities. Beyaert asked if this was an annual tax. Sutter replied yes annually with a 20 year sunset. PAC member Vann asked about his service on the Gateway Park Working Group (Gateway). Sutter responded the Gateway working group is staffed by Chief of Design and Construction Diane Althoff. PAC member Kern extended appreciation to Sutter and the Board for being engaged in this type of intergovernmental relationship building. Sutter added the Mayors Conferences are helpful for networking as well and staff is also involved. PAC member Volin asked for an update on Crab Cove. Sutter updated committee about the finished sand project at the beach, as well as the addition of the endangered snowy plovers to the beach.

**4. Public Comments:** None.

**5. Presentations:**

**a. 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Plan – Carol Johnson, AGM Public Affairs**

Carol Johnson, AGM Public Affairs and Executive Director of the Regional Parks Foundation discussed the planning for the District's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Johnson gave a presentation focusing on the history of the District and referred to distributed materials. Johnson noted this year is also the 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Regional Parks Foundation.

Johnson highlighted a few signature programs, events and fundraising opportunities.

- 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Trails Challenge,
- Healthy Parks Healthy People (HPHP),

- Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner,
- Mayors Challenge, and
- Month-long Healthy Park activities to support Get Outdoors Month.

Through the District's HPHP work a relationship has developed with Oakland's Children's Hospital (The Hospital). The District is partnering with them in their retrofit of the North Oakland Clinic/Pediatrics Facility. The Hospital has agreed to endorse and fully implement Parks Prescriptions (Rx). The District is providing busses monthly for patients and doctors to visit parks. The Hospital asked the District to retrofit the interior of the clinic with images of the Regional Parks. Every patient room will be named after a Regional Park. It is hoped patients and their families will begin to feel the parks are welcoming and not so foreign.

The Anniversary Gala will be a public event and include participation by stakeholders. To be affordable, the ticket prices will be low and the location is yet to be determined. The Gala is expected to draw 350 people. Johnson continued describing a new three month concert series at Antioch's Contra Loma, which will be similar to the successful and ongoing Crab Cove Concert Series. To correspond with HPHP events that naturalists will be facilitating on first Saturdays, the District is considering offering "free park days."

The District is planning to update the design of informational panels and improve entrance kiosks. There will also be a new District flag. At select land bank areas, staff is unveiling signage to inform the public that the land is preserved forever.

Johnson highlighted a few communication tools:

- Freshly updated website,
- Mobile Web App,
- Malcolm Margolin is writing a book called the *Wonderments of the East Bay*,
- Anniversary brochure, and
- Regional Parks Foundation Annual Report.

PAC member Coomber mentioned the impression some park entrances have on people – cattle grates, warnings about snakes and lions, list of things people can't do in the parks, etc. – and he is pleased to hear the District is making an effort to make them more welcoming. Johnson agreed and the District is taking a proactive approach to try to use District panels to reduce the perceptions of fear. Vann asked if the Kids Challenge is still active. Johnson said the Kids Healthy Outdoors Challenge is up and running in a number of schools for its second year. Funding has been provided by Kaiser and the Contra Costa Fish and Wildlife Committee thanks to PAC member Pellegrini. About 1,000 students are expected to participate again this year. Teachers like the program because when students return to the classroom from outside, they tend to pay better attention.

PAC member Godfrey asked how the District plans to advertise the free park days. Johnson said through the Regional In Nature (700,000 distribution), the website, direct mail pieces and some small advertising buys. The hope is to pump up the participation in events the naturalists are already doing on the first Saturdays of the month.

PAC member Simmons asked about the possibility of purchasing District ranger shirts using Café Press. Johnson said some products are already available via Café Press on the District's website. Volin asked about offering free parking on a regular basis and not just as a pilot. Johnson stated the District would need to evaluate the impact of the trial first. Beyaert mentioned people who visit on a free Saturday park day may be surprised if they return and the District charges them for parking. Johnson remarked that clarity is very important in District communication. Kern mentioned the budget request from Public Affairs which referred to the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. He was pleased to learn about the other activities Johnson mentioned and feels assured the funding is not just for the Anniversary Gala. Johnson agreed and explained the majority of the funds will be coming from the Public Affairs budget. The Anniversary Gala will be fundraised with the goal to have it underwritten by corporate donors.

**b. 2014 Legislative Priorities – Erich Pfuehler, Government Relations & Legislative Affairs Manager**

Erich Pfuehler, Government Relations & Legislative Affairs Manager presented a Powerpoint entitled the 2014 Legislative Priorities. Pfuehler highlighted key committee assignments for our Congressional Committee members:

- Senior leaders of the delegation are Senators Boxer, Feinstein and Representative Lee; as well as the soon to be retired George Miller who has been in congress for 40 years,
- Senators Mark DeSaulnier will probably be the next congressman for the East Bay,
- Senators Wolk (writing a water bond), Corbett (majority leader), and
- Assemblymember Skinner, former board member (Chair of the Budget Committee) and Buchanan (Chair of the Education Committee).

The District will be tracking developments on a park and/or water bond for the November ballot. Kern wondered if any of the water bond and/or drought relief proposals would help the District. Pfuehler thinks there is some possibility for restoration projects in either the Delta or the Bay as it relates to the drought. Another issue related to the drought is the need to be vigilant in the Districts wildfire fuels management work. With regard to the park bond, Parks Forward is an effort by people in the philanthropic community to look at how the state parks system could be run more efficiently. The Parks Forward Commission has been holding hearings throughout the state. The District is tracking Parks Forward, the Carbon Auction Fund, the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority ballot measure and a Green Sticker idea for bicycles. The latter would allow special districts, counties and cities to enact a surcharge at point of sale for bicycles which would raise revenue for maintenance of trails; it exempts children's bikes. The District will advocate for a category in the High Growth Job Training Sector within the Department of Labor which could apply to the District and other park agencies. There is going to be a high staff turnover for the District and similar agencies. These are jobs that cannot be outsourced and do not necessarily require a four year degree. The District is in contact with the Tri-Valley Mayors (San Ramon) to look at funding for overcrossing of the Iron Horse Trail in the new federal transportation bill. Vann asked again about the Kids Healthy Outdoors Challenge. Pfuehler said the program is a good vehicle for conversations with Representative Miller, State Superintendent Torlakson and others about how to incorporate outdoor academic activity into school curriculum standards. The hope is outdoor academic activity could be eligible for funding within the menu of education requirements under federal and state law. The Senate version of the Water Resources

Development Act (WRDA) contains language which would allow the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to transfer management responsibility of the Oakland Inner Harbor Canal to the District. Transfer of the management of this corridor would help facilitate Bay Trail work from Tidewater to under the High Street Bridge. The House version of WRDA includes a de-authorization of the lower Walnut Creek Channel. This could help facilitate Iron Horse Trail work going north. All of the agencies within the Department of Interior have been directed to support more development of green energy. In an effort to support wind energy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has issued a new rule to allow a 30-year permit. The permits allow for the “taking” of eagles and other raptors. Vann asked for a definition of “take” in this instance. Pfuehler responded this is basically the number of birds that can be killed by the wind turbines. Pfuehler believes the new permits, which allow for a review every five years, provide an opportunity for the District – particularly given how much research District staff have done on the turbines effect of raptors in the Altamont. Beyaert and Simmons asked about the status of WRDA. Pfuehler replied that it is in conference between the House and Senate. There are some concerns about NEPA requirements that are holding it up. Kern mentioned the lower thresholds on revenue ballot measures and regulatory streamlining. Pfuehler added polling has not been particularly good on lowering the voter threshold to 55% - particularly when Prop. 13 is invoked. Pressure for regulatory streamlining at the state level has diminished. PAC member Godfrey mentioned the surcharge on the cost of bicycles. He suggested this would actually be a disincentive for people to buy bikes. He is not sure this sends the right message in such an auto dependent society. Pfuehler expressed the tremendous paving needs on the trails. PAC member Mercurio added that if the trails were better maintained more people might use them.

6. **PAC Member Comments** – Beyaert mentioned the need to connect the Bay Bridge Trail to the Bay Trail. He also stated that Caltrans allowed bicyclists and pedestrians to use the breakdown lane on the San Rafael Bridge. Mercurio mentioned the California Trails and Greenways (CTG) Conference is in Palm Springs this April. The CTG Foundation will have a session about the possibility of a permanent trails maintenance fund for California. Beyaert mentioned it is the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the San Francisco Bay Trail. Beyaert, Kurt Schwabe (walkingthebaytrail.com) and Sam Schuchat (Coastal Conservancy Executive Director) will be speaking on what went into building the trail in Richmond. Coomber announced the Inaugural Livermore Half Marathon on March 29<sup>th</sup>.

Kern reported out about the Plan Bay Area ad hoc Subcommittee meeting. He stated it was a great conversation about the Plan Bay Area effort which will be reauthorized and revisited beginning in 2015. Focused areas for the Subcommittee will be advocacy, demonstration, building the case and advising staff. This is a real opportunity for PAC members to help the District play a leading role, along with other Bay Area conservation and open space interests. The Subcommittee will formalize goals and outcomes as it moves forward. PAC member Madsen added he was excited the PAC is engaging and noted the last round of Plan Bay Area was contentious. This is an opportunity for the District to be productive and make a contribution. He thanked Kern for his leadership. PAC member Gregory added the District is poised to take this leadership role and the timing is now. Gregory remarked about the talent at the table and looked forward to working on this subcommittee.

Simmons challenged all members of the PAC to participate in the Trails Challenge with the prize being a bottle of wine pressed by him. The winner will have visited the most resources and facilities in the District. The deadline is November. The prize will be awarded at the holiday dinner.

Gregory went to visit the rifle range and wanted to know the status of the lease. The noise level was high. Gregory asked for status. See below.

7. **Report from the Chair** – Kirby announced the Marksmanship Range (Range) update is on the work plan for the March meeting. Kirby gave an update from the Operations Committee meeting that Bank and Volin also attended. AGM O'Connor reported the Range agreement will be extended another six months through June of 2015. The extension is largely due to the drought and difficulty of collecting samples to check for lead contamination. The Chair added there are existing documents O'Connor said he would make available to the PAC. Kern added the Range is behind in paying some of its fees to the District. He wondered about the continuation of their lease given their fiscal obligations. Volin expressed frustration because this committee has asked for information and has not received anything. Volin noted that Chief of Stewardship, Matt Graul did say there are records on the degree of lead leaching into the Lake since 2008. Volin added obtaining this kind of information is what should be received by the PAC. He wonders if there is more than acceptable levels for lead leaching into the Lake. To maintain acceptable levels, financially significant repairs are needed to the drainage system. Kirby added in 2007 or 2008, the county required the District to have a state permit that it never had before which brings in new regulatory requirements. Kern asked if the District prohibits lead bullets. Volin stated lead bullets were outlawed for hunting and East Bay MUD has prohibited using lead bullets at Pardee. Gregory stated Quarry Lakes has banned lead fishing weights. Kirby asked PAC members to continue to provide him additional comments. PAC member Bank added a number of people spoke to the noise pollution; suggesting the Board should be taken on a weekend tour.
8. **Board Committee Reports** – Bank reported from the Operations Committee meeting. She talked about the Tilden merry-go-round concessionaire's agreement. Staff is recommending a new concessionaire and the Committee voted to support staff's recommendation.
9. **Status of Recommendations** – Updated.
10. **Old Business** – None.
11. **New Business** – None.
12. **Adjournment** - The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Summary of Actions:

1. The January 27, 2014 meeting minutes were approved.
2. The next PAC meeting is March 24, 2014.

Respectfully submitted,  
Yolande Barial, PAC Secretary