

Approved Meeting Minutes
PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
 March 27, 2017

ATTENDING: Best, Bueren, Kern, Mercurio, Madsen, Palacios, Rickard, Robinson, Sanwong, Skaredoff, Thompson, Trotter, Wilkins, Yee

NOT ATTENDING: Gregory, Ho, Volin, Godfrey

STAFF ATTENDING: Johnson, Koh, Margulici, O'Connor, Pfuehler, Rasmussen, Clay

GUESTS: Board Member Ellen Corbett

PUBLIC: Kelly Abreu, William Yragui

The meeting began at 7:07 p.m.

1. **Approval of the February 27, 2017 Minutes:** The February 27, 2017 minutes were approved with edits. The motion to approve was moved by PAC member Robinson. PAC member Rickard seconded approval of the minutes. The motion was approved.
2. **Introductions:** PAC Chair Kern asked PAC members, staff and the public to introduce themselves.
3. **Board Member Comments:** Director Corbett commented she grew up in the Bay Area and some of her earliest lessons about the environment occurred while playing in East Bay Regional Parks. Corbett explained the Park District has been a great influence in her life, including her political life. Corbett said she is very supportive of finding additional funding for transportation to the parks and to support District programs. Corbett stated she would like to see more young people in the parks to experience the District's many programs, and perhaps be inspired to have a career in the parks. Corbett mentioned she hopes the Richmond Ranger program can be expanded to other parts of the District.

Acquiring and preserving open space is a passion of Corbett's and she looks forward to continuing her work. Corbett noted AB 18 (Garcia) *California Clean Water, Climate and Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018* has passed the Assembly floor. Another bill, AB 898 (Frazier) is being watched carefully by the District. This bill seeks to take money from the Park District in order to fund East Contra Costa Fire Protection Districts.

Corbett expressed her concern about a potential series of projects being done at the San Leandro Marina. She is concerned about projects that might impact the San Francisco Bay Trail, and access to the Bay shoreline.

Corbett was pleased to note there are so many volunteers wishing to serve on the Park Advisory Committee.

4. **Foundation Update:** None

5. **Public Comments:** None

6. **Presentations:**

(I) **a. Community Relations Plan – Mona Koh, Community Relations Manager**

Koh reported on March 15, 2017 the Park District released an Economic Impact report. The District provides \$500 million annually in benefits to the community. This includes recreation, healthcare, property values and other ecosystem service benefits. Every year the District hosts approximately 25 million visits to its parks.

The Park District continues to educate the public about District projects accomplished with Measure CC funding such as wildfire fuels mitigation, parks restoration, and restoration of buildings and picnic sites. Koh said now with the storm damage, the District will need more funding.

The Park District's Healthy Parks Healthy People initiative includes Parks RX, the Kids Healthy Outdoors Challenge and the SHINE program. Parks RX is a partnership with health providers. The Park District also partners with other agencies including the Institute of the Golden Gate, National Park Service, and the National Recreation and Park Association. Koh reported the Kids Healthy Outdoors Challenge is in its fifth year. Over 10,000 students have participated in the program. Koh said the SHINE (Stay Healthy in Nature Everyday) program, in conjunction with Children's Hospital, takes patients and clinicians to East Bay Regional Parks. Patients take the SHINE shuttle to the parks where they are welcomed by naturalists. Over 800 patients have participated in the SHINE program to date.

The Park District has developed Parks RX with Children's Hospital Oakland (CHO) Center for Nature and Health, and has also partnered with CHO on the SHINE study. The District continues to deepen its connections with East Bay health and community organizations, as well as the Alameda County and Contra Costa Health Services Departments. The Park District has also made connections with the Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center in Union City, and faith-based organizations such as Stewart Memorial Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh, and Philips Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in Berkeley.

Environmental leadership is a continual opportunity. The District works on key messaging about critical environmental and climate issues. Topics include fuels management, blue-green algae, and *Leave no Trace* – a push to encourage dog owners to pick up after their dogs. The District is recording videos and interviews in an effort to educate. The District continues to educate the public with signage, *Brown is the New Green*, *Blue-Green Algae*, and *Leave no Trace*.

The Park District is reaching out through multicultural media, and is also working with University partners for research – San Francisco State University, U.C. Berkeley and Samuel Merritt. This engagement seeks to spread the word about the health benefits of walking in the parks.

The Park District uses social media, newsletters and press releases to get the message out. There are about 1.6 million unique visitors to the District website every year. The District has 18,000 followers on Facebook and 10,000 followers on Twitter. Approximately, 30 District staff work to monitor and post on these social media sites. In 2016, over 600 articles,

interviews and promotions were conducted using various media groups. The District is creating uniform signage with messages in a variety of languages. Interactive signage is also being created.

PAC member Madsen inquired about the next steps for the Economic Impact Report. Carol Johnson, AGM of Public Affairs explained the Economic Forum was the kick off. It will also be sent out to a large stakeholder list. The District plans to introduce the presentation at the Mayors' Conferences, to the media, and Board members will give presentations to local groups, etc. Madsen asked how much the business media has been contacted. Johnson replied there has been localized media coverage, but Public Affairs is also submitting articles to regional business periodicals.

PAC member Yee asked about the Parks RX prescriptions. He wondered how many providers were participating. Koh replied at Children's Hospital there are over 100 physicians actively prescribing Parks RX to their patients. At Contra Costa County Health Services, there are about 5-10 physicians participating in the program. PAC Member Skaredoff inquired about Parks Rx and if the information is accessible on the District's website.

Kern thanked Johnson for her leadership on the Economic Forum. PAC member Wilkins commented that it was a great event. The panelists were particularly good and the moderator was stunning. It was one of the best panels he'd experienced.

Kern stated the Park Advisory Committee has scheduled the dog issue to be reviewed in a three-tiered program. Public Affairs has the last tier which deals with communicating and working with dog advocates, and messaging for safe dog use in the parks.

Kern mentioned concerns from citizens in Marin County about the damage done to local trails by the rain. He wondered how the District can keep ahead of trail damage in the regional parks. Johnson said the General Manager has made it clear the District needs to manage expectations about re-opening closed trails or improving the conditions on the trails. In many cases it will take months to recover and in some cases, years. The Grants Department has been working on assessing the economic damage, and has been updating the website with photos of the damage. Koh mentioned that on April 5th Whole Foods will give 5% of their total sales to the Park District for storm damage.

Jim O'Connor, AGM Operations said they are still assessing the storm damage. There are a lot of places in more remote portions of parks that staff have yet to evaluate. Much of the work cannot begin until it dries out. The website is a great place to see photos of the damage. A number of projects will take years to fix because they will need extensive permitting, funding, design and engineering. Acquisition, Stewardship and Development already had a full plate of development work, and the storm damage will impact those projects and workload.

Kelly Abreu commented about pre-existing issues with the Park District. Vargas Plateau opened in May and promptly closed in July. Vargas is still shut down and is in litigation. Abreu commented property owners near Mission Peak filed a lawsuit in early November. These citizens have shut down the parking lot project. Abreu discussed ticketing at Mission Peak. It started slowly, but has increased over the months and it affects the weekend park users. William Yragui explained the Mission Peak Conservancy was formed to represent park users.

Between April 16 and October 31, the City of Fremont gave out 52 parking tickets. Since November they've given out 781 tickets: \$48,000 in fines at an average of \$62.00 per ticket.

(I) b. Grants Department Processes – Tiffany Margulici, Grants Manager

Tiffany Margulici, Grants Manager explained the mission of the Grants Department is to assist in project development, grant applications, stakeholder engagement, and oversight of grant contracts, accounting and invoicing. The grants team places emphasis on quality relationships with granting organizations and the distribution of grants from the District to other local agencies.

In over 27 years, the Grants Department has raised a total of \$468,180,000 in funding. In 2015, the Grants Department received \$9.1 million and processed 81 payment requests to granting agencies. At present, the department is administering about 116 grants valued at \$78 million dollars. Grant funds by source include: 40% Federal, 33% state, 15% local and 12% from private funding.

The Grants Department works closely with the Regional Parks Foundation. Primarily, the Grants Department works with public agency grants and larger infrastructure projects. The Foundation works more with private funding and program related grants.

The Grants Department manages the local grant program of Measure WW – \$125 million. To date, funds have been allocated to 46 local cities and agencies. 95% of funds have been appropriated, with 55% spent to date. The program expires December 2018.

PAC Member Thompson thanked the Grants Department for being such great grantees, and for administering them very well. PAC Member Trotter inquired about how much of the Measure WW local grant program is still unappropriated. Margulici stated about 10% or less is unappropriated, and about 50% spent. For the Measure WW local grant program, there is about \$15 million left in funding.

(I) c. Legislative Priorities – Erich Pfuehler, Government Affairs Manager

Erich Pfuehler, Government Affairs Manager said Government Relations is about relationships. Pfuehler stated his primary audiences are the Park Advisory Committee members, the District's Elected Board of Directors, the internal executive team and external electeds. Pfuehler explained his work is mainly external, which is somewhat unique for the District. External advocacy helps the District take advantage of emerging opportunities, such as grants or other important issues.

Pfuehler stated part of his job it to figure out who will be influential with decisions. Legislation plays a big part in the Park District's history. The Park District was started by legislation, and former Board Member Ted Radke founded the Board Legislative Committee. He and past Board Members, and General Managers really made advocacy at the local, state and Federal levels, a high priority and high commitment of the District.

Pfuehler spoke about Measure AA, and the District's successful work on obtaining the \$10.2 million TIGER II grant. Pfuehler was involved in submitting comments about the Cap and Trade Investment Plan. The District sought to raise the importance of land management agencies in terms of sequestering carbon, providing adaptive wetlands that store carbon and provide shoreline

protection. The Dotson Family Marsh is a good example of that activity. It's a wetlands project which stores carbon, provides access to water and is right next to a disadvantaged community.

Pfuehler outlined the efforts to bring Sally Jewell to Concord Hills as part of the celebration the National Park Service's 100 year anniversary. The District's goal was to have Jewell hear the story of Port Chicago and the importance of transferring the Concord Naval Weapons Station land during the last Administration. The District is on track to have the land transferred this fall.

Pfuehler explained how he views the Park District in legislative districts. He discussed the District's relationship with the congressional members, and how the subcommittees they sit on relate to the District. He commented about Rep. Swalwell's role in D.C. and how he is gaining influence.

Pfuehler outlined the State Senators roles on subcommittees and how the District will approach them for support. He also touched on the Assembly Member's roles, and the committees that could help the District.

Pfuehler discussed the District's Federal Priorities.

- The Oakland Army Base Clean Up: The Army has committed to starting cleanup in the spring/early summer. The District anticipates the Army will transfer the property to the National Park Service probably by August, and the transfer to the Park District could occur in the fall.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund: The District has received over 15 million dollars. This is money that comes from oil and gas royalties that go into an account off budget. It is not intended to be used for other purposes, but Congress almost always moves the money around to other sources.
- Wildfire Fuels Management – FEMA: The President's "skinny" budget recommends the elimination of almost all pre-disaster mitigation funding – which means fuels management money is on the chopping block. The money the District has received is being spent, and the District is hoping for more if it is available.
- Infrastructure Package – Include Parks, Active Transportation: The District is trying to make the case that if any big infrastructure package moves through, Special Districts, particularly Special Park Districts, need to be eligible to apply. Because Special Districts are somewhat unique to California, Federal legislation can get written in a manner where counties and cities may apply, but Special Districts are not necessarily included. The Park District made a strong case while in D.C. that Special Districts should be eligible to apply individually – and not through a city, county or other regional agency.

State Governmental Priorities

- AB 898 – (Frazier D-Discovery Bay): Assembly Member Jim Frazier has proposed legislation to take \$10.5 million dollars from the Park District's base annual budget to help pay for the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District. That District has been grossly underfunded since its inception in 2002, and funding has not kept up with the population growth. The Park District has been working to gather letters in opposition. Pfuehler explained it is unlikely the bill will get through the legislature because the Park District doesn't collect proportional property taxes from that part of the county. The Park District's East County services are mostly funded by a Landscape and Lighting District.
- The statewide park bond passed in the Assembly.
- Gun range cleanup funding and possible field hearing at Lake Chabot.

- Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Program Reauthorization. The OHV program gets reauthorized every seven or eight years. Senator Allen is putting forth legislation that will allow funding for transportation services at parks other than off-road uses.
- Endowments are being required for internal projects when the District needs to set aside land to mitigate for endangered species. Over time, it could require the District to set aside \$5 million in general fund monies which cannot be used for staff or management of the property. Senator Wieckowski put forth legislation to exempt the Park District. There is now a two-year safe harbor agreement in place to work out a compromise.
- Shoreline Resiliency Permitting. Since Measure AA passed, there is a group that would like restoration projects done quickly. They are looking at ways to streamline the permitting processes. The District is engaged in these efforts.
- State Park Transformation Process. The District is monitoring.
- California State Parks Support Entity – Potrero Group Study. The General Manager is participating.
- Water-related Opportunities. Possible Prop. I grants.
- Cap and Trade/Climate-related Funding. Looking for opportunities in the budget process.
- Disadvantaged Communities Definition. Some in the Bay Area would like it to be more flexible.

Local Governmental Priorities

- Measure CC Education
- Oakland Bay Trail Summit
- SF Bay Restoration Authority
- Bay Area Toll Authority Toll Increase
- Measure BB implementation
- Possible Contra Costa County Transportation Measure
- Social Media Engagement with City Councils
- Economic Report Forum

PAC member Mercurio asked if the Iron Horse is one of the potential projects for the Regional Measure 3 funding. Pfuehler said yes. PAC member Sanwong commented Pfuehler's PowerPoint presentation is helpful for PAC members to work with their legislators.

5. **PAC Member Comments**

Trotter reported he spent the weekend looking at wildflowers.

Rickard reported he was one of four PAC members who toured the Byron Hot Springs on the Board Field trip. He stated it was very worthwhile.

Sanwong announced she attended the Economic Forum and the “What’s Brewing in the Parks” event at Shadow Cliffs.

Skaredoff enjoyed attending the Economic Forum, and thought the building was beautiful. He mentioned Martinez is finalizing their general plan and are discussing including trails.

6. **Report from Chair** – Kern reported next month the PAC will discuss electric bikes. On April 18 there will be a meeting with staff about mountain bikes. Kern will bring information to

the PAC about this issue. He will also be meeting with some dog groups as well.

7. **Board Committee Reports** – None.
8. **Status of Recommendations** – None.
9. **Old Business** – None.
10. **New Business** – None
11. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Summary of Actions:

- I. The PAC approved the February 27, 2017 minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Clay
Confidential Secretary