

Approved Meeting Minutes
PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
November 25, 2019

ATTENDING: Andrade, Best, Bueren, Burke, Brubaker, Corkin, Dieter, Godfrey, Gregory, Ho, Nason, Obringer, Rickard, Robinson, Skaredoff, Tsutsui, Williams
ABSENT: Deschambault, Lacy, Sanwong, Yee
STAFF: Aufer, Brown, Ciaburro, Gilfillan, Johnson, O'Connor, Pfuehler, Spaulding, Reiff
BOARD: Dee Rosario
PUBLIC: Kelly Abreu, Bruce 'Ollie' Ohlson, Richard Bangert

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

1. **Approval of the September 23, 2019 Minutes:** The September minutes were approved at the November 25, 2019 meeting with edits. Motion made by PAC member Andrade, seconded by PAC member Obringer. Passed unanimously. PAC members Ho, Bueren, Best and Robinson abstained due to being absent.
2. **Introductions:** PAC chair Bueren asked PAC members, staff and the public to introduce themselves.
3. **Board Member Comments:** Board Director Dee Rosario gave an update about Ward 2. Director Rosario commented he is looking forward to projects that will begin in 2020. Projects will include 2,400 linear feet of restoration of McCosker Creek; pool rehabilitation at Roberts; the dredging of Lake Temescal; staff will start conceptual ideas for the Crowley property off of the Embarcadero in Oakland to extend the Bay Trail; and the opening of Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline. Director Rosario thanked the PAC members for their work on the committee.
4. **Foundation Update:** Carol Johnson, Assistant General Manager Public Affairs provided a Regional Parks Foundation (RPF) update. Johnson announced RPF held a successful planning workshop for a three-year strategic plan. A result of the workshop was RPF would like to create a new task force committee on diversity and inclusion. They would partner with the District and the Multicultural group led by Mona Koh. A goal would be to ensure Foundation dollars are being wisely invested and spent in ways which benefit Multicultural communities. Johnson announced the new incoming Foundation president will be Jess Brown from PG&E. Johnson stated the District Board of Directors approved the Foundation's interest in raising money for the Tilden Environmental Education Center.
5. **Public Comments:**
Kelly Abreu stated the City of Fremont has temporary parking restrictions that will expire in July. The city wants the District to continue enforcing parking on city streets to restrict access to Mission Peak after July.
6. **Presentations:**
(R) a. **2020 Proposed Budget – Debra Aufer, AGM/CFO Finance and Management Services**

Debra Auker, AGM/CFO Finance and Management Services presented an overview and highlights about the 2020 proposed budget.

Auker reported the District is working on three new regional parks. Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline will be expanded. The Bridge Yard is open, the bike trail and the observation pier will open in 2020. Dumbarton Quarry Campground's long-awaited opening is anticipated in Fall of 2020. The acquisition of Concord Hills Regional Park will be complete, and planning will continue. There are over 16 major capital projects in the works worth over \$57 million. These projects are 88% funded with outside, non-general fund money.

Auker explained the budget process begins with Board Workshops during the year to obtain feedback on what is important to the Board. The performance plan is developed from these workshops. District revenues are projected. Budget requests are created based on revenue projections. The base budget begins with the current level of service. Added to that are all newly authorized positions and salary agreements with bargaining units. This process determines if there is room for growth. All requests are reviewed to develop a draft proposed budget. It is reviewed by the Board Finance Committee, the Park Advisory Committee and two public hearings before the Board of Directors for adoption.

Auker explained the performance indicators provide a base and they are developed from the Vision in the Master plan. There are eight major performance goals. From those a list of objectives is determined about how to accomplish these goals. The performance goals include: improve access to public parklands and outreach to underrepresented groups; attract and retain a workforce of excellence; balance environmental considerations with outdoor recreation opportunities; restore preserve, protect and maintain scenic, natural and cultural resources; foster a safe visitor experience; enhance visitor's relationship to nature; ensure fiscal health of the Park District; and plan for climate change resilience.

Auker reported the District-wide proposed budget for 2020 is \$ 275.9 million, up \$7 million from 2019 about a 2.6% overall increase. The District's largest revenue source, 83%, is property tax from Contra Costa and Alameda counties which drive the District's budget.

PAC member Dieter asked about tree replacement funding. Auker replied tree planting would be included in specific park program budgets. Dieter expressed her support for tree planting as a priority.

Andrade asked about addressing pension liability. Auker replied the District joined CalPERS later than a lot of agencies. Because of this, the District doesn't have as large of a PERS pension obligation. Actuaries helped determined the long-term liabilities and staff have developed a three-pronged strategy. The District set up a pension trust to smooth rates, create and grow some interest, and exert control over the funds. There is about \$7 million in the trust. Another part of pension management is working with PERS to analyze ways to reduce cost.

PAC member Nason inquired about funding for the Bay Trail at McLaughlin Eastshore State Park.

She wondered if it was not completed by the end of December, would it cost more. If so, will it be included in the 2020 budget. Auker replied project budgets are multi-year. New funding does not need to be included in the 2020 budget. The Board has already acted to fund the project. There are also contingency funds approved for projects of this magnitude.

PAC member Tsutsui asked if the District has projected and developed contingency plans for a potential downturn in revenue. Auker replied property tax is the main driver of the budget. Staff plan long term for the future, but don't want to take any kind of budget cutting action early. With government, an assessed evaluation is made. There is a delay of a year before it impacts the budget.

PAC member Godfrey cited a report from Corporate Knights investment firm which stated CalPERS lost approximately \$19 billion due to investments in fossil fuels. Godfrey asked if the District, as a voice for the environment, would consider not investing in fossil fuel portfolios. Auker replied the Park District and different agencies are looking at the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy in investing.

PAC member Skaredoff asked if there were budget expenditures for diversity, such as the Native Americans knowledge of managing land. Auker replied there is funding in the Human Resources portion of the budget to expand diversity in hiring, as well as to provide education in diversity, equity, inclusion and leadership.

PAC member Williams asked about the annual volatility of the District's revenue and expenses. He wondered why the District didn't prepare multi-year budgets, particularly since long term planning is being done. Auker replied there has been discussion about doing two-year budgets. She agreed it would be a good way to keep ahead of things. The District's revenue sources such as property taxes do go down, but with close monitoring they can be forecast. Williams asked about the District's forecast for climate change. Auker replied the District approved policy framework on the effects of climate change. The framework calls on staff to consider climate in all projects. In addition, new standards are being used to accommodate sea level rise.

Ho commented about the performance measure to balance environmental considerations and outdoor recreational opportunities. She had suggestions about key performance indicators. Miles of new trails opened, percentage of residents who indicated they view the Park District as a valuable resource, average rating of the facility and pavement conditions, etc. The PAC also suggested another performance indicator could be the number of environmental education programs and meetings supported by the District, as well as recreational opportunities. A future performance measure might be monitoring environmental sensitive areas. Best commented the budget and budget message should include an explanation of what the unfunded liabilities are and how they are being addressed.

Recommendation: Motion made by PAC member Best to recommend the Board of Directors adopt the 2020 Proposed Operating, Project and Program Budget.

Seconded by PAC member Rickard. The recommendation was approved unanimously.

(I) b. Trail Safety Patrol Update – Heather Gilfillan, Volunteer Coordinator, Public Safety

Anthony Ciaburro, AGM, Public Safety introduced Heather Gilfillan, Volunteer Coordinator, Public Safety. Gilfillan presented the committee with an overview of the Volunteer Safety Patrol.

Gilfillan explained the Volunteer Trail Safety Patrol (VTSP) monitors trails and parklands, but do not enforce Ordinance 38 policies. They observe, report and educate. They assist with events, including directing traffic and parking, information and education tables. If a park has issues such as auto burglaries, volunteers will provide education at that park. Outreach can include proper etiquette for dog owners, bike safety, distribution of bike helmets, and bell giveaways throughout the year.

Gilfillan reported current active patrollers include: 67 hiking, 36 biking, 27 mounted and 17 companion dogs patrollers. As of October, VTSP has contributed over 19,332 hours for 2019. There are 20 trained search and rescue members in VTSP. Nine are active members of the VTSP Marine patrol. For each volunteer group there are trainings throughout the year. Certification is required for the mounted and companion dog groups. Volunteers use low-band radios, the same as the rangers use.

Nason asked if the companion dog program extends to Point Isabel. Gilfillan replied yes.

Godfrey asked if there is an age limit for volunteers. Gilfillan replied no. The oldest volunteer is 90. Williams asked if volunteers are under Worker's Compensation if injured. Gilfillan replied yes.

Public Comment

Kelly Abreu stated the number one safety problem at Mission Peak is dehydration. He commented the District needs to install signage.

Recommendation: This was an informational item only.

(I) c. Concord Hills Land Use Plan – Devan Reiff, Principal Planner

Devan Reiff, Principal Planner, provided an overview about the project. Reiff stated the Land Use Plan is a vision for what the park can be. It is the culmination of fourteen years' worth of collaboration between the Park District, the City of Concord, the United States Navy, the National Park Service and other agencies.

Over the years, the Concord Hills LUP was developed with community input through multiple public meetings, presentations to the Concord Reuse Project Community Advisory Committee, and suggestions from a project stakeholder group consisting of City of Concord residents and representatives from numerous interested organizations. Additionally, staff has provided the Park District Board of Directors, Park Advisory Committee and Executive Committee regular updates at key points in the development of the LUP.

The LUP includes an extensive trail network, picnic facilities, backcountry and group camping sites, environmental and historic interpretation, and a potential visitor center highlighting the history of the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial and Diablo Valley. Additionally, the plan incorporates conditions placed on the property by the National Historic Preservation Act and Endangered Species Act. These conditions are part of the City's Concord Reuse Project, which includes designating a substantial portion of the future park area as conservation land for mitigation purposes. The Visitor Center Complex will be a joint operation between the District and the National Park Service. The trails will cover over 22 miles. There will be reservable group and backcountry campsites. The plan will take decades to complete.

Obringer asked when the work on south of Bailey Road will be complete. Reiff replied the intention is to begin converting former railroad lines into trails on the property south of Bailey Road. The project may take up to five years to complete. Obringer asked about the Diablo Center and community orchard. Reiff replied they will part of Phase 2 or 3 of the plan. The Center is located near the ridge of the park. The idea is to have an event space available for rent by the community. It would be distinct from the Visitor Center. The community orchard could happen sooner since it's south of Bailey Road. It's in the location where there are currently several old orchard trees. The District would like to find a community partner to start planting the orchard. Obringer asked if park names are proposed in the draft EIR. Reiff replied the naming is not in the EIR report or LUP. There have been suggestions for Concord Hills Regional Park. Other names suggested have had to do with native Miwok people; a name that refers to the connection of Mt. Diablo; or a name that refers to the naval military history.

Robinson suggested engaging with Pittsburg is important as the city borders the park as well. They would like to provide input. She stated Pittsburg was not noted as a stakeholder in the park. She would like to see more engagement.

PAC member Corkin asked if contamination is found down the road would the Park District or the Navy be liable. Reiff answered the Navy did its own separate environmental impact statement before they were able to close the space and begin conveyance. The current oversight is not just with the Navy, but also California Fish and Wildlife. Due to endangered species, there are limits on recreation and protection of habitat is required by Fish and Wildlife's biological opinion.

PAC member Godfrey asked if cattle are grazing the land. Reiff replied it is one of the main fire suppression techniques. Daily patrols are also used to monitor for brush fires.

PAC member Brubaker asked if the EIR found any significant resources which require mitigation. Reiff replied the only historic resource on the California Register is the Contra Costa Canal which is part of the Central Valley Water Project. Reiff continued there were no known cultural resources. The buildings were not found to be historically significant even though the area has very significant military history.

Williams asked how prominent a role the history of the Port Chicago explosion will play at the park. Reiff replied the National Park Service has a national memorial at the site of the explosion, but is it on an active army base. It is not accessible for such an important place.

The Park Service sees the future Visitor Center as a place to tell the story. Obringer stated the explosion was a significant moment in history and led to desegregation across the nation.

Recommendation: This was an informational item only.

(R) d. 2020 PAC Goals – Julie Bueren, PAC Chair, Erich Pfuehler, Government Affairs Manager

Nason asked for this item be presented at the January meeting. Dieter agreed review of the 2020 goals be moved to the next meeting for a more in-depth discussion. Dieter would like the Board of Directors to express what they want from the Park Advisory Committee.

Pfuehler replied most of goals are continuations every year. A number of goals were unmet in 2019 and should be considered for 2020. The purpose of this discussion is for the Park Advisory Committee to weigh in and make suggestions now, but there are two more steps before they can be adopted. They will go to the Executive Committee of the Board and they typically do make recommendations. It then goes to the full Board for their recommendations. Input from the Park Advisory Committee can be taken anytime, but for the purposes of meeting the Board timeline, staff need something to work with and plan around by January when this body will convene again. This is also a very flexible document, and the work plan changes often. Additions come and the PAC needs to be flexible. There are a number of these goals related to trails because of the trails workshop the Board requested. There are at least four separate trail issues that are new. This is a direct result of Board input and the need to assess the District's trail policies.

Pfuehler discussed the review of the PAC mission statement and operating guidelines. There is a lack of clarity regarding goals, timing of votes and the impact of the PAC vote. The PAC Executive Committee will look at the mission statement and operating guidelines, have an input session with the full PAC, and make recommendations to the Executive Committee of the Board about the role of the PAC.

Recommendation: Motion made by PAC member Ho to recommend the 2020 PAC Goals be brought before the Executive Committee of the Board. PAC member Best seconded the motion. The PAC will review the goals, the mission statement and operating guidelines, and hold a discussion at a future meeting. The recommendation passed unanimously.

7. PAC Member Comments

Robinson announced there will be a Contra Costa County Creek and Watershed Symposium on December 5. She invited the PAC members to attend.

AGM Carol Johnson announced there will be a holiday gathering in conjunction with the Regional Parks Foundation and the Park Advisory Committee membership on December 9.

Ho announced bike/pedestrian lane is now open across the Richmond/San Rafael bridge.

Jim O'Connor, Assistant General Manager for Operations announced a District program has been approved by the state for a Parks Focused two-year certificate program at Merritt College.

Bueren announced she will step down as Chair at the end of 2019. She asked members to contact her about being Chair or sitting on a subcommittee.

Pfuehler announced this is PAC member Richard Godfrey's last meeting.

8. **Report from Chair** – none.
9. **Board Committee Reports** – none.
10. **Old Business** – none.
11. **New Business** – none.
12. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 p.m.

Summary of Actions:

1. The PAC approved the September 23, 2019 minutes with edits.
2. The PAC approved the recommendation the Board of Directors adopt the 2020 Proposed Operating, Project and Program Budget.