

Unapproved Meeting Minutes
PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
September 23, 2019

ATTENDING: Andrade, Burke, Brubaker, Corkin, Dieter, Nason, Obringer, Rickard, Skaredoff, Tsutsui
ABSENT: Best, Bueren, Deschambault, Godfrey, Gregory, Ho, Lacy, Robinson, Sanwong, Yee, Williams
STAFF: Alatorre, Johnson, Kassebaum, Kelchner, Lavallo, O'Connor, Pfuehler, Shelton Thai, Willis, Clay
BOARD: Beverly Lane
PUBLIC: Jeff Fagundes, Ken Sheets, Kelly Abreu, Kevin Donovan

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

1. **Approval of the July 22, 2019 Minutes:** The July minutes were approved at the September 23, 2019 meeting. Motion made by PAC member Andrade, seconded by PAC member Tsutsui. Passed unanimously. PAC members Obringer and Burke abstained due to being absent.
2. **Introductions:** PAC Vice chair Rickard asked PAC members, staff and the public to introduce themselves.
3. **Board Member Comments:** Board Director Beverly Lane gave an update about Ward 6. Board Member Lane reported in the last month, the County Planning Commission approved a development at Ball Estates in Alamo, which will include a staging area for the regional trail that goes East/West to Las Trampas and Mt. Diablo Regional Trail, and North/South via the Iron Horse Trail. After nine years of discussions regarding this development and staging area, there will be a meeting to confirm it with the Board of Supervisors.

Director Lane invited the PAC members to attend the FAM Fest at Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline on Saturday, September 28. She also invited the committee to attend the Trails Workshop on October 29.

Director Lane announced Director Whitney Dotson had submitted a letter of resignation to the Board which will be effective December 31, 2019. In January 2020, the Board will announce the appointee for Ward 1.

4. **Foundation Update:** Carol Johnson, Assistant General Manager Public Affairs gave the Regional Parks Foundation (RPF) update. Johnson stated RPF is expected to exceed revenue up to \$5 million in 2019, a significant increase since last year.

At the August meeting, the Board of Directors approved the MOU between the Park District and the Foundation. At the September 17 meeting, the Board extended their approval to the Foundation to raise private funds to replace the Tilden Environmental Education Center.

Tsutsui inquired about the timeline for the visitor center. Johnson replied it will be announced formally soon, but the project start depends on when funds are raised. It is expected to be a several year project, and will also include the restoration of Jewel Lake.

5. Public Comments:

Kelly Abreu discussed parking tickets at the Mission Peak staging area. He stated the parking lot needs to be repainted and wheel stops installed.

6. Presentations:

(I) a. Redwood Regional Park Renaming – Eddie Willis, Acting Planner

Neoma Lavallo, Principal Planner, provided a brief history of Dr. Aurelia Isabel Henry Reinhardt who was a founding District Board Member. Lavallo introduced Acting Planner Eddie Willis who gave the presentation about the renaming of Redwood Regional Park.

Willis stated Redwood Regional Park opened in 1940 as the fourth established Regional Park. Redwood Park encompasses 1,833 acres. At the heart of the park there is a 500-acre Redwood grove. It is the third most visited park in the District's system and one of the oldest.

Willis reported a grove was named in Dr. Reinhardt's honor in the 1950's, but over the years her name was dropped from park maps. An attempt to correct this error came in 2004, during the Park District's 70th anniversary, when the Park District and the Mills College Alumni Association rededicated the redwood grove with a sign that displays, "Aurelia Henry Reinhardt Redwood Grove." In recent years, staff has heard from members of the District's Board of Directors and the public to formally name the entire park after Dr. Reinhardt.

PAC member Obringer asked what percentage of the District's parks are named after a person. Willis responded there are five parks named after former directors. Obringer asked how often parks are named after a person. Lavallo replied it doesn't happen very often and gave examples of two parks that have recently been renamed: Breuner Marsh was renamed Dotson Family Marsh and Martinez Regional Shoreline was renamed Ted and Kathy Radke Martinez Shoreline. PAC member Nason encouraged staff to learn more about Aurelia Reinhardt's history before the naming occurred. PAC member Dieter stated she is against naming nature after people. In her opinion, naming an entire park after Dr. Reinhardt is doing her a disservice. Dieter continued in her opinion dedicating one grove draws more attention to the honoree's name. PAC member Burke said she endorses the idea to have the park named after Dr. Reinhardt, as the number of parks named after men outweigh those named after women. PAC member Corkin stated it is a great idea. She pointed out Dr. Reinhardt wasn't just a Director, but a founding Board Member.

Willis commented a person must rise to a very outstanding level of public service and recognition for an entire park to be named after them. Otherwise, a smaller feature of a park such as a trail, or features within a park might be named after a person. Willis said according to positive feedback from members of the public and the Board, Dr. Reinhardt meets that threshold.

Recommendation: This was an informational item only.

(I) b. Southern Las Trampas Land Use Plan Amendment – Kim Thai, Senior Planner

Neoma Lavalley, Principal Planner, introduced Kim Thai, Senior Planner. Thai presented an overview of the Las Trampas Land Use Plan Amendment.

Thai oriented the committee to the project location and outlined the project area. In 1983, the Park District acquired a portion of Peter's Ranch. In 1993, when the LUP was initiated, Peter's Ranch was considered the southern portion of the park. In 2007, the 220-acre Chen property was acquired, in 2015, the 182-acre Elworthy property was acquired, in 2019, the 96-acre Podva property was acquired, and in 2020, the 141-acre Faria property was acquired. Thai explained this LUP will open up landbanked properties within the 756-acre project area to the public. It will connect San Ramon and Danville to Las Trampas Wilderness Regional Preserve, provide five miles of new multi-use trails, close gaps in the Calaveras Ridge Trail and provide three park access points.

Currently, the draft LUPA and EIR are expected to be completed by Fall/Winter of 2019. The Board adoption and CEQA certification permitting process is expected to be completed by Spring 2020. Construction of the Chen staging area and trails are scheduled for Summer of 2020-2021.

Andrade asked if a short loop trail will be included in the plans. Thai replied a short one to two-mile loop trail is proposed on the Chen property. The proposed trail which comes in from the Podva property will also include a short loop trail using portions of the Calaveras Ridge Trail.

Dieter asked if the five miles of multi-use trails will be wide and accommodate all user groups. Thai replied not all of them will be wide. The Calaveras Ridge Trail will continue at the same width. On the Chen property, the trail will be wide enough for emergency and service vehicles to drive. The Podva property contains sensitive habitat, so the trail width will depend on the habitat area. Dieter stated she wanted to make sure there isn't conflict between hikers and bicyclists. Thai replied currently the Calaveras Ridge Trail is a bicycle trail. Any extension of the Calaveras Ridge Trail onto the Peter's Ranch property will allow continued bike use. Lavalley said planners follow the 2013 Master Plan which has an overall philosophy of trails for all. Based on the topography, alignment and adjustments for the sensitive species, staff feels the site lines are enough to address user conflict. Staff make their recommendation, but the final use determination happens after the LUP is adopted. Dieter suggested that it would be better for staff to bring up controversial or difficult items that the District Boardmembers are grappling with rather than just a general overview.

Corkin asked if there will be any additions to the Operations staff. Thai answered there will be long term funding for properties such as, Faria and Podva, which will include funding for maintenance, safety, security and staff time.

Public Comments

Jeff Fagundes, resident of Bollinger Canyon, asked the Board consider Option B for the staging area. The current staging area impacts the rural aspect and the residences in the

area. He asked that staff consider the comments from the public regarding the placement of the staging area.

Ken Sheets, resident of Bollinger Canyon, recognized the District has the right to develop their property and create a staging area. Sheets commented the current plans are to create a staging area lot with zero setback. He suggested the District consider including two or three concerned canyon residents as participants in the planning process.

Obringer inquired about public engagement in the process. Director Lane replied the public came to the meeting in 2017, their comments were taken, and staff looked at other areas within the staging area entry. Thai reported there will be a public community hearing as part of the EIR process. Kristina Kelchner, Assistant General Manager Acquisition, Stewardship and Development, added there have been several individual meetings with concerned residents and their counsel. There has been much interaction and discussion regarding options for screening and setbacks. As a result of comments received from the residents, staff have done an extensive review of alternate options.

Recommendation: This was an informational item only.

(I) c. Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve Land Use Plan Amendment – Chantal Alatorre, Planner

Neoma Lavallo, Principal Planner, introduced Chantal Alatorre, Acting Senior Planner who provided a PowerPoint presentation. Alatorre oriented the PAC members with a map of the project. She commented the land has a rich history of Native Americans, ranching and coal mining. Alatorre explained this LUPA will update an existing 1977 Land Use Plan. Plans include opening 5,000 acres of landbanked property. It would establish a 5,444-acre Northern Planning Area, known as Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, and the 4,199-acre Southern Planning Area, known as Clayton Ranch Regional Preserve, as separate park units.

Alatorre stated the site includes high ridgelines, canyons covered with grasses, shrubs, chaparral and oak woodlands. It is rich in natural, cultural and geologic resources. This area was designated a high priority preservation area by the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (ECCCHC). There are two conservation easements in the Northern Planning area which consist of 290 acres. There are also two conservation easements within the Southern Planning Area which consist of about 188 acres.

Alatorre explained the LUPA recommendations for the Northern Planning Area of 5,444 acres will establish the Arata Ranch Recreation/Staging Unit as a destination facility. Some of the amenities will include parking, public and staff facilities. The Southern Planning area of 4,199 acres will establish a staging area which will serve as a main vehicle access to the new preserve. There will be one new area for off-street parking and two trailhead multi-use entry points. A pedestrian crossing of Marsh Creek Road connecting to Mount Diablo State Park and an “Over the Rainbow Backpack Camp” will be developed. The LUPA will open 25 miles of trails. Most trails are proposed for multi-use and will allow horse and bike access.

PAC member Andrade asked about inholdings. Alatorre replied it is privately owned land. PAC member Skaredoff asked about the difference between the two areas. Alatorre replied most of the mines are in the Northern Planning Area. The Southern Planning Area has more grasslands and was purchased with ECCCHC funds. Lavalle said there will be a stronger emphasis on interpretation of the multiple histories in the Northern Planning Area. The Southern Planning Area will be more passive recreation with open space. PAC member Brubaker asked what endangered species are on the project site. Alatorre replied Western pond turtle, Alameda whip snake, Red-legged frog and the Tiger salamander.

Public Comment

Abreu asked about the total acreage to be opened to the public. Alatorre replied 4,400 acres are currently opened. In total, 9,600 acres will be opened to the public.

Recommendation: This was an informational item only.

(I) d. Measure FF Interpretive and Recreation Programming – Anne Kassebaum, Chief of Interpretive and Recreation Services

Anne Kassebaum, Chief of Interpretive and Recreation Services, gave a presentation about this item. Kassebaum explained Measure FF was an extension of Measure CC, a parcel tax in the cities of Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, El Cerrito, El Sobrante, Emeryville, Kensington, Oakland, Piedmont, Richmond and San Pablo. Measure FF includes environmental education projects and opportunities for communities to experience nature nearby.

Group programs in Measure FF focus on low income communities, non-profit organizations and schools with at least 50% of students who participate in the National School Lunch Program.

Kassebaum introduced Precious Shelton, Acting Community Outreach Coordinator who provided information on the Radical Monarchs. Shelton reported Radical Monarchs is an organization based out of Oakland. It was established for young girls to create a sisterhood, embrace their color, and be radical in the community. In 2018, they formed a partnership with the District. During that year, 122 participants were served.

Kassebaum explained the community outreach outdoor program has evolved to include a three-year partnership with a local non-profit organization, one two-night camping trip, three annual day trips, multiple planning sessions with partners, coaching opportunities for participants and staff, and end of year-round table with all partners.

Kassebaum stated one of the programs, Park'n It Day Camp, runs Monday through Friday and serves ages 5-12. In 2018, the program served 667 children, provided 94 scholarships, 92 camperships and two Leaders-In-Training programs. The Leaders-In-Training Program for ages 13-17 provides hands on experiences throughout the District and can culminate in hiring students into seasonal positions.

PAC member Tsutsui said he was pleased to see EBRPD offers transportation services because it is one of the biggest hurdles to get youth into the parks. Tsutsui asked which of the programs is most successful in creating lifelong users of the parks. Kassebaum replied that the Adventure Crew program is a positive experience for students. Kassebaum

explained that students have reported they have taken their families out to the parks through the program. Jim O'Connor, Assistant General Manager Operations said the Adventure Crew program started a unique collaboration with San Francisco State University to do a long-term study of the students. The goal is to understand how these experiences impact their future livelihood and if they continue them as part of their lifestyle.

Johnson said the Foundation funds a variety of programs in the hope that students will have multi park experiences year over year in many of the parks, enjoy the in-depth programs, and become acquainted with the connection to nature.

Recommendation: This was an informational item only.

7. PAC Member Comments

Tsutsui attended the last Concert at the Cove of the year with his family. He encouraged PAC members to attend future EBRPD concerts.

Rickard encouraged the PAC members to attend the FAM Fest event at Judge John Sutter Regional Shoreline.

Skaredoff reported that he enjoyed the Niles Canyon Stroll and Roll event. Rickard commented that Sean Dougan, Trails Development Manager, and his staff were at the event promoting the future bicycle/pedestrian trail through Niles Canyon.

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 9:00 p.m.

Summary of Actions:

1. The PAC approved the July 22, 2019 minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Clay
Confidential Secretary