

AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Tuesday, December 2, 2014

C. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

7. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Executive Committee (11/13/2014) _____ (Wieskamp)

Present

Board: Ayn Wieskamp (Chair), John Sutter, Whitney Dotson

Staff: Jim O'Connor (Acting GM), Susan Schinnerer, Bob Nisbet, Audrey Som, Diane Althoff, Ren Bates, Michelle Julene, Raphael Breines, Kelly Barrington, Debra Aufer, Mimi Waluch

Public: Shirley Dean, Ellen Barth, Toni Mester, Ed Bennett

The meeting was called to order at 12:55 p.m.

I. Planning Department Work Plan Update

AGM Bob Nisbet introduced this item as a follow up to the workshop item from last winter. Director Sutter asked for clarification on the term in the staff report regarding the project schedule "slipping" due to staff vacancies – and wanted to know the status on filling the vacancies in the division. AGM Nisbet responded that two divisions merging (Land and PSD) had something to do with it, and the vacancies were in the process of being filled. Director Sutter emphasized his stance that positions should be filled when staff members are out for extended leave, etc.

Senior Park Planner Raphael Breines began the update on the work plan status update, including estimated completion dates of projects. Director Sutter asked for and received clarification on the area between Las Trampas and Moraga; Planner Breines confirmed that many options were being pursued in that area. Chief of Design and Construction Diane Althoff updated the group on access points, including the primary one on Bollinger Canyon Road. A discussion of priorities ensued, including Sunol/Las Trampas, and that Mission Peak's consultant, LSA, recently provided a geographical report that is currently in review with District engineers. Park Planner Michelle Julene advised that in spring 2015, the area should be open to the public.

Director Sutter noted, regarding Sibley, that the Camping Report was a staff document that was presented to the Board, but the way it reads in the staff report it appears to indicate that the Board set priorities based on this document, and he wanted to note that was not the case. Acting GM Jim O'Connor explained that the lower priority for Sibley in the Camping Update was based on a creek issue – and now that the issue is resolved, the item can move up. Director Wieskamp suggested that the camping item be brought to the 2015 Board Workshops, and that she would like to see more clarity on the changes at Black Diamond.

Public Comment: None.

Recommendation: None. This was an informational item.

2. Brickyard Planning Update

Landscape Architect Ren Bates reviewed a refinement of plans the Brickyard from last year, following the plan for McLaughlin Eastshore State Park. Director Dotson wanted to know where the arsenic was found in the soil; Architect Bates explained. Director Sutter asked about the dog issue; Architect Bates explained that it was state property, and he wasn't sure what Ordinance 38 laws would apply. AGM Nisbet commented that there would be phasing of the project, and Director Sutter wondered if consideration had been given to the view of the Bay from the freeway. Architect Bates responded that with the existing wetlands and the bridge, that the view from the freeway was seen as less of an issue. The Committee also had a discussion of what priorities should be taken into consideration.

Recommendation: None. This was an informational item.

3. Public Comment

Toni Mester, Vice-Chair of the City of Berkeley Parks and Waterfront Commission, invited District staff to a meeting on January 14, 2015 regarding the issues of traffic, facilities, and dogs at the Brickyard, which are a major issue off leash in certain areas. She promised a busy meeting, with very passionate folks. AGM Nisbet confirmed that staff was aware of the meeting. Director Sutter wanted to know regarding the park bond that was recently passed in the City of Berkeley – if any of these funds could be used for the Brickyard issue? Ms. Mester explained that no, the park bond only acts to fill a deficit.

Ed Bennett, CESP, wanted to know if contours were being established for the west side – the answer is no because the idea is to provide access to the bay, but there will be windbreaks elsewhere. Regarding the visitor center, he thinks that there should be a “super plan” now, and wanted more information on the location of the corp yard and traffic. Staff clarified that the plan calls for a service yard, which is not the same as a corp yard. Mr. Bennett suggested locating the service yard to the north of the playing field. He liked the detail of the plan presented.

Ellen Barth, CESP, spoke on behalf of Sylvia McLaughlin, who urged the infrastructure for a visitor center in honor of Dwight Steele be installed with the initial construction.

Shirley Dean, speaking as a representative of CESP, reiterated CESP's concern about utility planning for multiple buildings. She voiced CESP's concern about the location of the corp yard, since their belief is that it will become a symbol for the park as the staff uses the same entrance as visitors. CESP would prefer the location at the northern intersection of Gilman Street or under the freeway. Regarding the scattering of buildings around the site, CESP would like to see a single location to cut costs and in anticipation of the visitor center. She encouraged a "think big" mentality for building construction and added that CESP will work for a compromise on some issues but not the utilities, as indicated on letters sent by CESP to the District.

Acting GM O'Connor and AGM Nisbet responded that current plans for the utilities will provide later flexibilities as needed, because phasing of the projects on this site is key.

Director Sutter concluded that there are many ways to honor Dwight Steele aside from a visitor center.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan D. Schinnerer