

AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Tuesday, September 2, 2014

C. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

6. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

e. Operations (Thursday, May 15, 2014) (Lane)

Present

Board: Directors Ayn Wieskamp, Carol Severin, Beverly Lane (Chair)

Staff: Jim O'Connor, Mimi Waluch, Mark Ragatz, Renee Patterson, Denise Valentine, Nancy Kaiser, Gavin Wilgus (Intern), Nancy Krebs, Ilana Peterson, Tiffany Margulici, Mona Koh, Richard Winn and thirty-five staff guests

Guests: Mike Nelson, David Lunn, Linda Sailors

I. **Update: Interpretive Services Intern Project - Concessionaire's Manual for Ardenwood Historic Farm**

Interpretive Services Manager Nancy Kaiser recounted the history of Ardenwood Historic Farm (Ardenwood) beginning with its 25th anniversary as a Regional Park in partnership with the City of Fremont (City). The 25th anniversary brought forth the update of the District's Master Agreement and concession operations. The goal is to strengthen communication with concession operations and partnerships with vendors. Intern Gavin Wilgus started this project by reading material, interviewing Ardenwood staff as well as staff at other parks with concessionaires. The District and Ardenwood's mission statements, physical and special event maps, as well as a personnel organizational chart are included in this report.

- Partnership Vision includes mutual respect, shared goals, and communal responsibility for the environmental, history, and quality of service.
- Partnership Understanding is the terms of use and good practice derived from the contracts. This allows workers, such as docents and volunteers, to view pertinent information included in the contracts that they currently don't have access to. It is the partners' responsibility to report unsafe conditions or incidents in the park to staff.
- Sanitation is the cleanliness and well-being of all areas at Ardenwood. The emphasis was placed in the food service area.
- Partners Property is related to the physical property and items in the park such as non-historic items being kept in historical areas. A reminder has been placed in the manual under the historic day procedures and communication with staff.

- Ordinance 38 - Director Beverly Lane asked if the entire ordinance was given to the partners. Mr. Wilgus confirmed that is the procedure. Ms. Kaiser explained that staff hired by the vendor may not necessarily be a part of the discussion, and this manual is a tool for the vendors, management, and the concessionaire to share with their staff. Director Ayn Wieskamp commented that you can make the partners' read the manual, but not necessarily make them understand it. Mr. Wilgus stated there is a page where the partner signs that they have read, understand, and will abide by the provisions of Ordinance 38. Director Lane asked if there have been a number of Ordinance 38 violations by vendors, and is this the reason for including all of Ordinance 38 in the manual. She stated some of the provisions are applicable to Ardenwood setting, but the rest might not be. The concern is that there might be too much information given in this large document. Director Wieskamp Ordinance 38 violations by vendors and following the format of the Daily Useful Reminders. Ms. Kaiser stated the manual could be flagged. AGM Jim O'Connor stated that this manual is taking dense contract language and filtering out and highlighting the elements they need to know as the vendor themselves, or employees of the vendor.

Mr. Wilgus stated the first half of the manual can be applicable to many parks. The second half of the manual deals with the vendors of Ardenwood. The following are included in their own sections in the manual: Railroad, Blacksmith, Docents, Special Events and Perry Farm's. Each section has an introduction, agreement compliance, a notice of Daily Useful Reminders and Allowances. The stipulations come from the partnership agreement. Director Lane asked when the compliance page would be used. Mr. Wilgus replied that the compliance page would be used at the start of any issue/problem, when a violation is seen. Director Lane commented that the compliance page would not be received well. AGM O'Connor mentioned that one of the conversations staff had recently is the issue of documenting challenges with concessionaires. This would give staff a specific form to use. Near the end of a concession's term, this information can be used as a part of the concessionaires' performance evaluation. Director Wieskamp indicated that there needs to be guidelines for responding to the compliance page and there should be staff documented follow up that verifies the vendor is now in compliance.

Director Wieskamp suggested providing the manual to a couple of vendors to get feedback. AGM O'Connor stated that it is a part of Revenue and Administration Manager Mimi Waluch's efforts to improve the concession program. Director Lane stated that the Useful Daily Reminders are really important because vendors are often mistaken for District employees, and, if they're not appropriately dressed or rude, it's a terrible credit on the District.

2. Update: ReserveAmerica Inc. Software Agreement

Reservations Supervisor Tiffany Margulici began by presenting a gold card to retiring Reservations staff member, Richard Winn. Mr. Winn shared that his time with the District has been great, and he was able to work his dream jobs as a Ranger and in Reservations. He expressed his appreciation to Ms. Margulici, Karen McClendon, Mark Ragatz and Paul Miller. Director Lane expressed thanks on behalf of the Board for his role. She stated the voice that comes through to the public through the Reservations Department is very important to the Board, and it makes a big difference in people knowing what kind of park district we want to be.

Ms. Margulici began by informing the committee that the ongoing contract for the ReserveAmerica software will be placed on one of the upcoming Board agendas. She stated we currently use ReserveAmerica for all the District camping reservations.

- In 2013, approximately 12,000 reservations and approximately \$620,000 in revenue was processed through the system. Family campsites can be reserved online, 81% of family campsites reserved online. In 2007, online reservations were introduced, with 50% the first year, and now up to 80% in 2014.
- Group and backpack reservations are phone only. Director Lane questioned why that is. Ms. Margulici stated there are two reasons. First, the sites are more unique, and staff likes to have point of contact to ensure people understand what the access rules are, how to get there, and what the features are. Second, some features of our fee structure are not handled easily by the software.
- ReserveAmerica was formerly named Info 2000, and in 2006 they changed their name to ReserveAmerica. At that time the District renewed the contract. In 2009, Info 2000 was purchased by Active Network, the market leader for all types of recreation software. The District had an initial 3 year term, and now a month-to-month contract. Fee structure - there is a \$20,000 annual maintenance fee, a \$2.00 per call center transaction fee and a \$4.25 per internet transaction fee. In 2013, approximately \$45,000 in transaction fees.

Due to the contract being over \$25,000, full Board approval is required. The rates have not changed, but as reservation volume has increased, the transactions fees have increased.

Ms. Margulici demonstrated the ReserveAmerica website, its features, how to view/find information, check availability, and how to make reservations online. She noted we've received good feedback from customers. One of the challenges of customers booking online reservations is that some arrive to the park without their hard copy confirmation. The email confirmation states that a paper copy is required for every check in, and to please read the reservation information carefully.

Park Supervisor, Shelly Miller has encountered customers who arrive to the site, try to pull up their reservation via cell phone and, due to limited cell service, are unable to retrieve their confirmation information. This causes delays in checking in, and slows vehicle access into the park. AGM O'Connor asked about Point of Sale (POS) at Del Valle. Ms. Margulici stated Del Valle currently does not have POS. Director Severin inquired about the online reservation confirmation process. Ms. Margulici explained the email confirmation process and how the customers are instructed to print a copy. Director Wieskamp asked if a phrase can be added to the confirmation page about the limited cell phone service at Del Valle. Ms. Margulici replied yes. Director Lane asked how many pages is the confirmation. Ms. Margulici stated two pages or more for multiple reservations. She stated at Del Valle, we now have a carbon copy, abbreviated campground rules page. Staff reminds customers of the key items that Public Safety would cite for. This has proved to be a useful tool in reinforcing the rules in an objective way. Director Wieskamp asked if customers outside of the country book reservations from their home country. Ms. Margulici replied yes. Director Wieskamp stated they would have to understand what the rules and conditions are. AGM O'Connor asked if the reservation information translates to their language. Ms. Margulici replied that the language is in English. She stated there was an issue of some European customers showing up to the administration building due to the address appearing on the letterhead confirmation, so have an address, as people tend to put it in their GPS. Ms. Margulici stated both Anthony Chabot and Del Valle have addresses. She explained that for picnic areas like Tilden, there are

GPS coordinates on the website and reservations online with a notice to not use the address listed and to enter the coordinates instead.

5. Public Comments

David Lunn expressed his appreciation to the committee for looking into the kayak concession at Del Valle. He stated the committee asked good questions and focused on the facts. Mr. Lunn expressed his interest in the presentation of the Concessionaire manual for Ardenwood and liked the idea of documenting and meeting with the vendors. He mentioned that prior to retirement, he held annual meetings about flood releases. He mentioned that many of the current tours at Del Valle focus on the park and not the operation of the dam.

Mr. Lunn stated that he understands the parking issues at Castleridge. He indicated that his group could shuttle or walk in. Ms. Wieskamp stated the District and the City of Pleasanton could work on ideas for getting it open in reasonable manner. Mr. Lunn offered another suggestion for parking and Director Lane replied that it would be up to the City of Pleasanton.

6. AGM Comments

AGM O'Connor provided the following updates:

- Mission Peak - the bottle filler has been installed at the trailhead. New signage has been installed on the bulletin board in the restroom with information on dog safety, hiker safety and water. He stated he'll forward signage information to the Committee members. AGM O'Connor relayed a different approach is being taken when it comes to trailheads, with a larger format of signage to catch peoples' attention. The signs are now installed and provide information about the neighborhood and about being good neighbors. Stanford Avenue directional signs were removed from Mission Blvd. Part of the process is to emphasize the signage at Pine Street at Ohlone College. Director Lane asked if Stanford Avenue comes down to the boulevard. AGM O'Connor replied yes. He stated these are the interim steps that are being taken to try and relieve the pressure and noted that the District is receiving positive feedback from the neighbors. He is working with Community Services Director Annabell Holland with the City of Fremont on interim solutions to the situation. Director Wieskamp stated the City of Fremont has some ideas that are hard for us to implement.
- Del Valle – Drought Conditions - a conference call is scheduled for next week with the water contract agencies. The District will receive another update in terms of Del Valle and whether to extend/not extend the reservation period. AGM O'Connor received a request from the media to speak with him next Tuesday to do a story on Del Valle and the drought situation. The Reservations deadline is July 6th, however, it might be extended next week. Director Lane instructed to let them know of that decision. He stated he's trying to push the date out until Labor Day.
- Recruitment for Chief of Park Operations process has begun. Mark Ragatz is doing a great job in the "Acting" Chief of Park Operations role.
- AGM O'Connor shared that Commissioner Elva Yanez with California State Parks asked

Community Services Coordinator Elizabeth Carmody to give a presentation on the District's best practices at the State Parks Commission meeting being held tomorrow in Los Angeles. The theme of the meeting is Improving Access to Under-served Communities. Senator Kevin DeLeon will be the key note speaker. AGM O'Connor will also be attending.

- June Board Operations Committee meeting agenda – items Ordinance 38 Update and the Camping Program Update. Director Lane asked if the camping update would come as a recommendation or update. AGM O'Connor stated it would be an approval request to the full Board. Director Lane asked if the camping information is coming along. AGM O'Connor replied yes. He stated the consultant has done an excellent job. Director Lane asked if the issue of how much technology we provide will be addressed. AGM O'Connor replied the consultant will address that as an extended service, but it is an idea we could look in to. Director Lane asked if the consultant is doing any outreach to campers. AGM O'Connor replied he is through the focus groups and internet.

7. Board Comments

- Director Wieskamp stated at the Special Districts meeting held yesterday, the issue of water came up and Dublin San Ramon Services District has been using recycled water. They have a contract with the Pleasanton Golf Course to provide recycled water to keep their course green. She stated that if we needed recycled water that could be used, especially to save trees. AGM O'Connor stated that the District does tree planting in the fall and have the winter for the trees to get established. He expressed concern regarding the fall and with insufficient recovery rains, the District will begin to have a problem with the trees. Director Wieskamp stated that the District should look into the recycled water as it's a very innovative idea. AGM O'Connor stated it will be a topic of discussion during the budget process.
- Director Lane requested AGM O'Connor to obtain the Ordinance 38 updates from Lieutenant Jon King, so they can review prior to the next meeting. Director Wieskamp asked if there are any big changes in the update. AGM O'Connor replied the biggest issue is involving South Park Drive.
- Director Lane stated that they had discussed having the committee look at the RFP process before they are issued. AGM O'Connor stated the District is currently looking at the process generically, and have started the conversation with legal and other staff internally. Director Wieskamp stated it might be wise to check with some of our current people to see if they have some ideas on how they think we could improve the RFP process.
- Director Lane stated she is very impressed with Concessionaire Manual for Ardenwood.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 p.m. The next Board Operations Committee meeting is scheduled for 12:45 p.m. on **Thursday, June 19, 2014**, in the Board Room, Peralta Oaks.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Valentine
"Acting" Executive Secretary, Operations Division