

AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Tuesday, December 1, 2015

C. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

5. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

d. Operations (Thursday, June 18, 2015) _____ (Sutter)

Present

Board: Directors John Sutter (Chair), Diane Burgis, Doug Siden

Staff: Jim O'Connor, Mimi Waluch, Mark Ragatz, Anne Kassebaum, Dania Stoneham, Warren Schultz, Nancy Krebs, Dan Sykes, Renee Patterson, Noah Dort, Mona Koh, Mark Pearson, Dave Zuckermann, Jeff Crowle, Tonya Corravubius

Guests: John Maunder, Doug Scott, Michelle Robles, Steven Spickard, Jane Miller, Patrick Miller

I. Update Convenience Camping Pilot Program Study

Assistant General Manager Jim O'Connor recalled a meeting took place with staff and the consultant to provide an update on the project and to determine the location, cost, and program details for future pilot programs in one of the District parks. Today we are seeking input from the Committee on the cost and location of the pilot program.

Mr. Patrick Miller, consultant from 2M Associates, began by providing an update on the progress made since the last meeting. He reiterated that one site is to be selected and to characterize the site in terms of market analysis, costs of operation and maintenance of the site. Detailed steps of the process were provided by Mr. Miller through a PowerPoint presentation. Steps include what would be considered reasonable for a pilot project and the family residential opportunities. It was decided to focus on Anthony Chabot or Del Valle, due to existing 24-hour service, existing camps, and utilities. An explanation was given on the network of researched existing and future trails. Sites between Del Valle and Sunol being are being reviewed for overnight Progressive Camping. A recommendation was made to view Big Break and the Carquinez Straight at Eckley for convenience camping sites for water trails. The challenges presented at these sites are jurisdiction review and retrofitting the existing pier for accessibility.

Mr. Steven Spickard stated the idea of Convenience Camping is to have an option that offers visitors a way to camp, without a large investment in equipment; and with more comfort. Optional units offered would be soft-sided canvas tents, yurts, or a hard-sided cabins that are pre-fabricated or a kit. He indicated for a pilot program, a small investment is ideal with funding going into the unit itself. This prevents spending a large amount of funds into site preparation, infrastructure and extending utility lines.

Mr. Miller shared details of trips made to Del Valle and Anthony Chabot. At Del Valle, certain sites would not work due to partial closures during the year. Director Sutter inquired if the closures were due to flooding. AGM O'Connor replied yes.

The challenges with walk-in sites at Anthony Chabot are topography in regards to accessibility. The nearest restroom is approximately 450 feet away and up 75 feet. Mr. Miller explained there are infrastructure limitations with the sewer system. The recommendation is to move forward with Del Valle with the next steps determining the right type of unit, creating detailed layouts, and looking at associated engineering costs used in the development.

Director Siden questioned what consideration was given to install a toilet and not showers within each cabin. Mr. Spickard replied it is due to the selected type camps and amenities that can be accommodated. Director Siden commented that some consideration should be given to having a toilet in the unit.

Director Sutter questioned the choice of a pilot program and not appropriate our funds into a new location opportunity. AGM O'Connor stated two options were given. A TXI site at Carquinez as a new development and one at Sunol in the developed area. Part of the plan at Sunol is to relocate the existing family campground. At Del Valle, if we chose to use a basic type of cabin, an upgrade can be completed at a later time, as feedback is received from the users.

Director Sutter suggested we would not be serving additional users. AGM O'Connor explained it is offering a different option to park users and following a newer trend of convenience camping. Director Sutter questioned how it would be funded. AGM O'Connor replied it would be part of the budget process and through the General Fund. He indicated one grant opportunity is being reviewed through the Regional Parks Foundation. Director Sutter inquired on the cost of each unit. Mr. Miller responded it depends on the amenities included and costs can vary by the options and select location.

Director Sutter inquired if tent cabins were considered. Mr. Spickard replied yes and are not being eliminated as a consideration. He shared that tent cabins are less desired, viewed as not secure, and are more costly to maintain. Director Sutter mentioned while in Detroit, some agencies were displaying sites with log type cabins, no utilities, small bedrooms and one living room space. They measured approximately 500 square feet and were built for \$50,000. Mr. Spickard stated most of these are pre-fabricated units that are transported in. AGM O'Connor mentioned another potential option is a trend of permanent RV trailers being installed into sites that are rented. Director Sutter inquired on the cost of electricity in the units. Mr. Spickard stated they will review the range of those options and include that information in the recommendation. AGM O'Connor indicated the intent was to move forward with the least amount of resistance, starting at a lower level of permitting and SEQA compliance.

2. Update Drought and Water Efficiency Strategy Plan

Recreation Unit Manager Dania Stoneham provided a presentation on the current status of the drought. She advised that as of June 2, 2015, almost 100 percent of the state is in some type of drought condition. Current statistics indicate for us to obtain normal water levels, we would have to have 200 percent of normal rainfall. She informed the Committee, a review of all parks was completed to determine which lawn areas provide significant recreation opportunities and which ones can be abandoned.

Ms. Stoneham detailed the steps taken to implement drip irrigation systems, replace turf with wildflowers; and replace water-loving turf with drought tolerant varieties. Director Burgis shared that in East County more drip irrigation is being utilized with noticeable benefits. Director Sutter inquired if the emitters could be moved around to accommodate different kind of crops. Ms. Stoneham stated they can be adjusted into any configuration.

Ms. Stoneham continued by relaying a Water Efficiency Plan has been created and a Drought Committee was formed last year to begin work on the plan. Ms. Stoneham reviewed the Turf Elimination and Pilot projects; and the Turf Replacement Pilots. Director Sutter asked if we have any opportunities to use reclaimed water. Ms. Stoneham replied that reclaimed water is difficult, in that it cannot touch any eating surfaces throughout the parks. The practicality of trying to implement it into the lawn areas does not seem feasible, due to a lack of control on the environment. Director Sutter inquired if plans were in place to save money and water on the golf courses. Ms. Stoneham responded the golf courses were not part of the new Committees' review. Chief of Park Operations Mark Ragatz advised that staff at Tilden have adjusted the irrigation heads to concentrate on the fairways; and are reducing the water schedule as required. Water from Lake Chabot is being used at Redwood Canyon, and are not under the same water restrictions. Watering schedules have been voluntarily reduced to watering only the fairways, greens and tees. AGM O'Connor explained a future project at Redwood Canyon will be the renovation of the irrigation system. Director Sutter inquired if the reason that East Bay Municipal Utility District is not putting restrictions on Redwood Canyon, is due to the lake water belonging to them. Mr. Ragatz replied the reason is that the lake is not drinking water and is not treated.

Ms. Stoneham concluded by sharing the Recommended Experimental Plantings and equipment needed to reinstall the grasses. Director Burgis asked if preparation is needed for landslides. AGM O'Connor indicated at this time the biggest concern is fire.

Director Sutter noted the equipment looked costly and inquired if it should be rented for a period of time before investing. AGM O'Connor recounted the equipment is part of the \$500,000 the Board put aside in the current years' budget for drought recovery. The equipment will be used frequently once we reach that phase in the project; and to rent would end up being more costly.

3. Review Redwood Bowmen Special Use Agreement

AGM O'Connor recounted the item being tabled from the last Committee meeting, in order to address concerns regarding safety of the range and obtaining input from the Park Supervisor and Club representatives.

Business Services Manager Mimi Waluch introduced Redwood Bowmen Club Treasurer Michele Robles and President Doug Scott. Ms. Waluch's PowerPoint presentation provided a detailed overview of the archery range, programs, lessons the club offers, and explained the instruction offered to outside groups.

Ms. Robles began by providing a detailed review on the sources of income of the club. She indicated the income received from members assists with funding supplies, repairs and maintenance, tournament fees, telephone and insurance. Annual operating costs to maintain the clubhouse and grounds is approximately \$25,000. The donation pipe is another source of income received, where

the public is requested to give \$5 each time they come to shoot. In addition to donations from the public, the club partners with the District to organize classes through offered programs. For these programs, the club requests donations instead of payment from participating groups.

With the club's agreement up for renewal and fees increasing from \$100 to \$1,200, we are requesting consideration to have more time before such a large increase is implemented; and to see if the club's attendance and donation condition is temporary or a turn and forthcoming of the future.

Director Burgis inquired on the building's condition and if it is being inspected. Mr. Scott replied the condition is decent. Club members are trades people and maintain the building to good standards. Ms. Waluch advised there is also an annual inventory inspection completed. Director Burgis commented that it was said that the public was not welcome and noticed a sign that said member's only. Ms. Robles responded the entire range is open to the public and the only part for member's only is the clubhouse.

Director Siden commended the organization for their service to the community. He inquired if the membership were all adults. Ms. Robles replied that half are families and the other half individuals. In response to Mr. Siden's inquiry on the club's record of safety, Ms. Robles responded the safety record is excellent.

Director Sutter asked if there is signage that explains the rules and information regarding the request for donations. Ms. Robles replied yes, and that new signs were posted last year. Director Sutter suggested for those who have not been to the range, it should be communicated that the public is welcome.

Director Sutter inquired if there are schools or Universities that have archery clubs that come to the range. Mr. Scott indicated the club has not been contacted by any school groups and is not aware of school groups who have archery clubs. Mr. Scott replied he is aware that Stanford University has a group of archers and some Universities have groups, but not necessarily clubs.

Director Burgis inquired if there are any environmental impacts; such as chemicals in the carpets or runoff. Mr. Scott indicated it can be looked into, but relayed it is not a large concern due to everything being local.

Director Sutter asked Park Supervisor Jeff Crowle what percentage of time is spent on upkeep by staff on the area. Mr. Crowle indicated staff comes to the range each morning to clean the restrooms and empty the trash cans. The practice range is mowed by staff once every two weeks, which takes approximately one and a half to two hours.

Director Burgis inquired how many events are held that do not allow public access. Mr. Scott stated the club events are held once a month, except for two months where the public is invited to attend fundraising events being held.

AGM O'Connor advised in order to make clear the range is open to the public, we can address the member's only issue by posting signage that reads "Public Range This Direction".

Director Siden commented we should consider increasing the agreement fees in thirds, instead of \$100 to \$1,200. Ms. Waluch recalled the staff process is to recommend the current standard set by

the Legal Department, come before the Committee and listen to updates from the Lease on the expenditures and maintenance at the site. Following the review, there is the option of amending the terms.

Director Sutter relayed the importance of reviewing these concessions as they arise, since historically the parties will want a reduction. He stated increases will not occur, unless we have the policy in place. There is a benefit that the club is receiving from the District in regards to staff maintenance, and indicated that the staff recommendation is a reasonable one.

Director Burgis moved to approve the staff recommendation of a term of seven years beginning January 1, 2016 and terminating on December 31, 2022. The District may grant Licensee an extension of the Agreement for one three-year term ending on December 31, 2025. Licensee agrees to pay on or before the first day of the term of this Agreement and each annual anniversary thereof during the term of this Agreement a License Fee of \$600. The License Fee will increase an additional \$100 each year of the term up to \$1,200. The License Fee shall remain at \$1,200, should an extension be granted. Director Siden seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4. Update Partnership – Ash Street Program with the City of Newark Recreation and Community Services: Coyote Hills Visitor Center

Supervising Naturalist Nancy Krebs provided an update through a PowerPoint presentation on the Ash Street Collaborative, a partnership between the City of Newark Recreation and Community Services, Regional Parks Foundation and the East Bay Regional Park Districts' Coyote Hills Visitor Center. The program is designed to serve families facing economic hardships. Beginning in 2012 the program has provided over six hundred youth trips. The City of Newark registers the youth and trains leaders for the trips, the Regional Parks Foundation provides transportation costs, food and funds for supplies; and the Coyote Hills Naturalist staff coordinates the logistics, provides the program, staff, and materials. Newark's Ash Street Camp has been in existence for over 20 years. Currently youth receive four weeks of free programs. Free lunch is offered weekdays.

Ms. Krebs explained historically, field trips were offered by age groups to local amusement such as a bowling. With the economic downturn of 2007, the funding was no longer available for the field trips. The program now provided connects youth with positive outdoor experiences. We provide four age specific field trips with each group having a theme. Ages 5 to 6 care for plants and animals, ages 7 to 9 visit Quarry Lakes or Don Castro and tend to watersheds, ages 10 to 12 participate in the Peoples Connections to Healthy Habits, including caring for plants, animals and water. Often students who attend are repeat attendees and can return for up to 10 years depending on the age.

Ash Street Youth become interested in jobs as Recreational Leaders and end up becoming leaders for the program. Guillermo Navarro participated in the program as a youth, went on to attend UCSF obtaining a Master's Degree and is now the Director of the Ash Street Camp.

The partnership expanded in December 2014. A group of Newark Seniors visited Crab Cove and were provided with a naturalist led program. Transportation was funded by the Regional Parks Foundation. In offering this opportunity for the seniors, it took only 48 hours for the trip to fill with all 24 seniors who signed up, attending the trip.

In 2015 the Regional Parks Foundation funded the original concept of the Family Campfire, which is scheduled for July 9. The program was a first for Newark and had 70 spaces available, which filled in two weeks with a 20 person waiting list. Participants ranged in ages from 1 to 86.

Director Sutter inquired if we have similar programs with other cities. Ms. Krebs stated we do, but not in the same fashion. AGM O'Connor commented the concept used was to not have a one-off program with the child, but a longer term engagement. We believe that long term engagement is more critical in changing the perspective of the outdoors.

Director Sutter inquired if bus transportation is used and if this it's the biggest issue to deal with. Ms. Krebs replied bus transportation is used, with funding provided by the Regional Parks Foundation, but the large issue is logistics. Director Sutter requested staff to look into whether it would make sense for us to provide the transportation or contract with an outside company. AGM O'Connor commented most recreation programs in municipal systems have their staff driving participants to various locations and is pretty common. We explored this option two years ago when conducting van tours and Risk felt it wasn't insurmountable in terms of insurance and risk. AGM O'Connor believes it would add a level of flexibility, especially for our own programs we manage. Staff will look in to it and bring back to the Committee for a discussion.

5. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

6. AGM Comments

AGM O'Connor stated he attended the Special Districts Forum in Michigan and was impressed with the parks and the ability to compare our system to others; and how more outdoor recreation is being done in the parks in Michigan.

7. Board Comments

Director Siden expressed his appreciation for moving the Camping Task Force forward.

Meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.