

AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Tuesday, February 2, 2016

C. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

6. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

c. Operations (Thursday, November 19, 2015) _____ (Siden)

Present

Board: Directors Doug Siden (Chair), Diane Burgis

Absent: Director John Sutter

Staff: Jim O'Connor, Mimi Waluch, Michael McNally, Debra Aufer, Deborah Spaulding, Linda Wu, Renee Patterson, Mark Ragatz, Alicia Gonzales, Dave Zuckermann, Ira Bletz, Dan Cunning, Denise Valentine, Kelly Barrington

Guests: Jack Burgess, Kelly Abreu, John Maunder

I. Review Park and Recreation Lease with East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD): Lake Chabot Regional Park

Business Services Manager Mimi Waluch provided a brief history of the lease to the Committee through a PowerPoint presentation. She indicated that Land Acquisition Specialist Linda Wu has been in negotiations for the past few years with EBMUD staff regarding the lease. The current lease began in 1964. The lease was a 25 year park and recreation lease, with a 25 year option to renew. In 1989 the option to renew the lease was exercised. The intent of the District and EBMUD is to enter into the next 25 year term and maintain the same rules and responsibilities of the original lease and amendments, which have occurred throughout the years. Ms. Waluch then reviewed the changes and options for the new lease. She informed the Committee that once the item is brought before the full Board, the item would go before the EBMUD Board on December 8, 2015.

Director Burgis sought clarification on if the base rent cost would be \$12.00 per acre. Ms. Waluch replied, yes.

Director Siden inquired if the Operator responsibilities include tree care and how do we know if it has been fulfilled. AGM O'Connor responded it is the District's responsibility for tree care service and is a part of our normal Hazard Tree Management Program.

Director Burgis moved to approve and recommend to the full Board entering into a Park and Recreation Lease with EBMUD for operation and maintenance of Lake Chabot Regional Park for a 25-year term. Director Siden seconded, which passed unanimously.

2. Review Mission Peak Stanford Avenue Curfew Hours Pilot Program: Mission Peak Regional Preserve

Management Analyst Alicia Gonzales provided an update to the Committee through a PowerPoint presentation on the first year of the Mission Peak Regional Preserve Modified Park Hours Program. The pilot program was initiated in September 2014 and is showing lowered illegal after hour usage, which has had a positive impact in reducing neighborhood congestion. For the first pilot, the hours chosen for illegal after-hours use were 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.; prior to the modified program, the counters captured approximately 9,000 people. After the curfew was implemented, the counters captured approximately 1,000 people. Director Siden inquired on the timeline that captured the 9,000 visitors. Ms. Gonzales responded that it was from December 2013 through August 2014.

AGM O'Connor clarified that the reason the hours of 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. were chosen, is due to this timeframe being the critical hours.

Ms. Gonzales indicated some data was lost due to counter mechanical difficulties. Changes have been implemented to ensure this does not occur again. An estimation was made to account for the loss data by removing the months with lost data and statistically defining the difference. Between 2014 and 2015, the Stanford Avenue entrance usage has decreased by 19 percent and the Ohlone College Peak Trail has increased by 36 percent. As the final goal of the program was to reduce impacts to the neighborhood, a survey of residents was conducted using Survey Monkey. We received 86 responses with 100 percent in favor of continuing the program.

Director Burgis sought clarification on the yellow highlighted counts on the report. Ms. Gonzales stated that the counts highlighted represents the months where data was lost.

Public Speaker on item #2

Kelly Abreu provided the Committee with an overview of graphs he created for the year-over-year comparisons of the hourly visitor counts. Mr. Abreu explained the data in the graphs, which addressed missing data due to broken counters; spoke to the hour shift change that affects the sunrise viewers; and commented on the illegal nighttime visitor counts. Mr. Abreu stated that the District needs to get ahead of the curve in terms of measurement and the regular maintenance of the counters. In removing parking spaces in the neighborhood, it will benefit a small number of people at a cost to the general public. The people looking for parking will pay the price and the local interest group and property owners will benefit.

AGM O'Connor stated some data was missed on the counts. When Ms. Gonzales went back and eliminated those months, you still have a similar trend in change.

Director Burgis moved to approve the staff recommendation of an extension of the Modified Hours Pilot Program for an additional year. The pilot program will be reviewed again at the November 2016 Board Operations Committee meeting. Director Siden seconded, which passed unanimously.

3. Review 2016 Consolidated Fee Schedule: District-wide

Business Services Manager Mimi Waluch recounted in prior years, staff has reviewed the process and worked towards the simplest format on presenting the Consolidate Fee information to the Committee. Administrative Analyst Noah Dort is to be commended for spending numerous months compiling the information being reviewed today. Ms. Waluch began by pointing to some clerical errors made in the printed report then proceeded to review the requested changes to the Operations fees and charges for 2016.

In response to the Concessionaire Fee Requests:

I. Anthony Chabot – Chabot Gun Club

Director Burgis inquired if the fees listed are what the gun club charges or is it the District's part of the fee that the club charges. Ms. Waluch replied it is the fee that the gun club charges.

AGM O'Connor recounted that one of the strategies used for fee increases is to spread them out over time. The Chabot Gun Club had requested a large increase and during the Committee meeting the gun club decided to cut the amount in half. A small increase was done in 2014 and another increase in 2015.

18. Ohlone Trail Head Parking

Director Burgis sought confirmation that the parking is free on Sundays. Mr. Abreu replied the fee doubled from \$2.00 to \$4.00 and is free on Saturday's after 5:00 p.m. and free on Sunday's.

16. Martin Luther King Jr. Overflow Parking

Director Siden questioned how the fee range of \$10-\$30 is determined. Ms. Waluch replied it is based on what the Coliseum is charging. In the interest of cost analysis regarding staff, Director Siden requested information on the revenue that is generated at the site. Chief of Park Operations Mark Ragatz responded that the parking lot receives approximately 50 to 60 at \$30 per vehicle, which generates far more income than what it costs the District in staff hours.

20. Point Isabel – Mudpuppy's Tub & Scrub

Director Burgis inquired if the concessionaire is using the District's water. Ms. Waluch responded under the concessionaire contract, the District pays for the water and sewage. The waste water does not drain into the bay, but through the City's sewage system.

All other fees and charges not reviewed today are not affected. In 2015, it is anticipated that Concessionaire operations will generate \$952,200 in revenue and Public Use Fees will generate approximately \$6,455,550. If approved, the requested Consolidated Fee Schedule changes for 2016 should result in an increase of \$9,490 in Concessionaire revenue and an increase of \$2,980 in Public Use Fee revenue to the District.

Director Burgis moved to approve and recommend to the full Board the staff recommendation of the changes to the 2016 Consolidated Fee Schedule. Director Siden seconded, which passed unanimously.

4. Review Society for the Preservation of the Carter Railroad (SPCRR) Agreement: Ardenwood Historic Farm

Interpretive & Recreation Regional Services Manager Ira Bletz began by providing the Committee with an overview of the SPCRR. The SPCRR is a railroad facility which collects, restores and operates full range of antique narrow-gauge rail cars built by the Carter Brothers in Newark, California. As the lease agreement is ending its term, SPCRR is requesting to replace the horse-drawn railway train rides program with a locomotive program, two to three employees, and improve the responsibilities and customer service satisfaction.

The initial term of the 2010 Special Use Agreement was five years with two additional five-year options. The 2010 agreement required the District to compensate SPCRR at a rate not to exceed \$48,000 in the first year, to be increased annually by 2% through the initial term, and by mutual agreement during the option terms.

Mr. Bletz indicated the payments from the District to SPCRR for this agreement are based on what SPCRR requested, which is a reduction in the payments the District would have made if the contract had stayed the same with the automatic 2% increase. These funds assist SPCRR with continuing operation.

At the request of Director Siden, AGM O'Connor indicated we could arrange for a field Board Tour to take place on the Friday of Labor Day weekend to the car barn at Ardenwood.

SPCRR Board Member Jack Burgess commented that trains typically arrive on a Friday and that the train rides would not be available.

Director Burgis inquired on the types of engines used. Mr. Burgess replied a small 1969 gasoline engine. The two steam engines are privately owned and from the 1920's.

Mr. Burgess recounted that one of the issues SPCRR faced was the decline of satisfactory employees with the horse operation. The current employees will not go beyond this season. SPCRR is seeking to hire staff that are safe, conscience, enthusiastic, have good customer service skills, and provide interpretation. This new agreement will allow them to do that.

Director Burgis moved to approve the staff recommendation that the Board Operations Committee approve and endorse to the full Board the change in operation from a horse-drawn railway ride to a locomotive-drawn ride and that the fee structure be changed to reflect the change in operation. Director Siden seconded, which passed unanimously.

5. Update Kids Healthy Outdoor Challenge Program

Interpretive & Recreation Regional Services Manager Ira Bletz provided an overview to the Committee of the Kids Healthy Outdoor Challenge (KHOC) program through a PowerPoint presentation. The program is designed to bring third grade students into the park to experience nature and a self-guided program led by their teachers and chaperones. Mr. Bletz reviewed the KHOC program booklet that is provided to the teachers. He commented that funding for the program is provided by grants through the Regional Parks Foundation, Kaiser Foundation, Contra Costa Fish and Wildlife Committee and the San Francisco Foundation.

Mr. Bletz explained that teachers interested in the program submit an application, attend a one-day orientation, are provided information on the bus program through Parks Express, and issued KHOC booklets to distribute to the students. The teachers are required to provide three in-class lessons out of the booklet, which then qualifies them for a Parks Express bus.

At the end of the school year, a consultant is contracted and assists with the recruitment of teachers and the extensive evaluation process. Information is collected on what did and did not work for the teachers. Through this process changes have been made each year to the program based on the teacher's feedback.

During the 2013-2014 school year, 32 classrooms from 18 East Bay schools participated. In the 2014-2015 school year, 63 teachers from 22 elementary schools in 11 school districts joined the program.

Mr. Bletz shared the outcome of the program, which is based on the comfort levels of the teachers providing the lessons and activities. In an effort to improve the program, a staff committee was created to focus solely on the program. Part of the improvements also include updates to the KHOC webpage, creation of an on-line application, additional teacher orientation opportunities and an expansion of the KHOC booklet to better align with the Common Core Standards.

Mr. Bletz reported for the 2015-2016 school year, 125 teachers are participating in the program. District Naturalists have developed a series of park specific activities for 4 Regional Parks (Redwood Regional Park, Garin Regional Park, Martinez Regional Shoreline and Shadow Cliffs Regional Recreation Area). These activities will augment the existing KHOC lessons and provide teachers with resources for self-guided activities focused on both cultural and natural history. The idea for this school year is to see if having the additional materials make it easier for the teacher to want to go on their own to provide lessons at other District parks.

Director Burgis commented that it is a good program and appreciates staff working towards meeting the Common Core Standards.

Director Siden commended Mr. Bletz and the District for the evaluation and improvement upon the program; and for incorporating the transportation component. He inquired how the program is made available to others who might not know about it. Mr. Bletz responded that through the consultant, contact is made to other third grade classes within Alameda and Contra Costa County.

Director Siden questioned how many of the participating teachers return the following year. Mr. Bletz replied a third of the teachers have returned. Many of the teachers use KHOC the first year to enter into one of the District parks, then proceed to figure out how to apply for a naturalist program. The teachers that don't reapply are the ones completing the program on their own.

AGM O'Connor indicated that in the future, additional staff capacity will need to be added to keep up with the demand of the program.

6. Public Comments

Director Siden recounted each guest has three minutes to speak and requested a two and a half minute warning.

Kelly Abreu commented that the funds for the Stanford Avenue Curfew Hours Pilot Program should come from the Park District Maintenance budget. Mr. Abreu suggested that the City of Fremont police would probably raise their headcount and have enough funds to staff and provide 24 hours coverage to issue parking tickets at the site. He commented it alleviates a cost from the local property owners to the taxpayers of the District and when expanding the cost basis and narrowing the benefit group, that equals the definition of client politics. Mr. Abreu commented the reason why the Stanford Avenue residents are well organized, is due to the funds they will receive from the District to cover the costs of the parking restrictions. Visitors and tax payers not as organized will pay the price. He indicated there is a possibility for savings. When fewer visitors visit the park after the program is implemented, the expansion for headcount does not need to be done. The potential future excess staff at Mission Peak can be sent to Vargas Plateau, or a potential neighborhood Mission Peak Steering Committee could be created to improve the patron politics. Mr. Abreu suggested to consider realigning and reevaluating the core mission to de-emphasize parks. The core mission should not be to expand access if we're restricting access.

7. AGM Comments

AGM O'Connor provided the following updates:

- The Request for Proposal for Redwood Canyon Golf Course has been issued and is posted on the District website. The deadline for submission is on December 20, 2015. Results and recommendations will be presented to the Committee.

8. Board Comments

Director Siden expressed his appreciation to Director Burgis for serving on the Committee this year. Director Sutter will remain Chair of the Committee for 2016 with Director Wieskamp returning and Director Waespi remaining the alternate member.

The meeting was adjourned by Director Sutter at 2:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

/s/ Denise Valentine
Executive Secretary