

Approved Meeting Minutes
PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
 October 26, 2015

ATTENDING: Kern, Best, Beyaert, Coffey, Coomber, Ho, Godfrey, Gregory, Madsen, Mercurio, Palacios, Pellegrini, Rickard, Robinson, Sanwong, Simmons, Teixeira, Volin
 NOT ATTENDING: Thompson, Wilkins, Yee
 STAFF ATTENDING: Pfuehler, O'Connor, Waluch, Patterson, Ortiz, Bletz, Clay
 GUESTS: Director Diane Burgis
 PUBLIC: John Maunder, Paul Donovan, John Roberts, Steve Strickard, Patrick Miller

The meeting began at 7:03 p.m.

1. **Approval of September 28 Minutes:** The September minutes were approved with minor edits. PAC members Simmons and Pellegrini abstained due to being absent from the September meeting.
2. **Introductions:** PAC Chair Kern asked PAC members, staff and the public to introduce themselves. PAC member Best commended staff for an excellent field trip to the Concord Naval Weapons Station.
3. **Board Member Comments:** Director Diane Burgis thanked the PAC for inviting her to speak. Burgis touched briefly on the issues within her Ward. She stated she is pleased to serve on the Board of Directors. This is her first year as a Director. She is learning a lot about the District.

Director Burgis showed a Friends of Port Chicago video about the Concord Naval Weapons Station Port Chicago disaster and its historical impact.

On July 17, 1944, crews at the magazine were loading two Pacific-bound naval vessels with active munitions when the explosives ignited in a series of blasts that killed everyone at the waterfront. The disaster caused the greatest loss of life on the home front during World War II. 320 men died, and almost 400 others were injured. Of the 320 killed, 202 were African Americans.

After the explosion, African American survivors were sent to a nearby base to resume loading ships. Many refused to continue their work without safety training, and the U.S. Navy charged 50 of these men with "conspiring to make mutiny." They were tried, convicted and imprisoned. After the war, they were released, granted clemency, allowed to complete their military service and given honorable discharges. Only one was ever pardoned.

The Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial was created in 1994 by legislation authored by Congressman George Miller (D-Martinez) and signed by President Bill Clinton. On October 28, 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law a bill authored by Congressman Miller that made the Memorial a full and permanent unit of the National Park System.

Director Burgis commented that Rep. DeSaulnier is working to get President Obama to visit the CNWS in July, and to expunge the record of the charged navy men. Burgis stated she embraces the idea that our parks can teach us about ourselves, and about the people that have lived here.

PAC member Sanwong asked if there were other sites in the District in close proximity to a National Park. Director Burgis and Government Affairs Manager Erich Pfuehler replied, Rosie the Riveter, Playwright Eugene O'Neil's home and John Muir's house.

4. **Public Comments:**

John Maunder, Senior Range Master at Anthony Chabot Gun Club presented the PAC with copies of the Gun Club's Range Lease Updates report, and discussed their work behind the scenes with the District. Maunder said the Chabot Gun Club has been posting updates for the past year on their website. Maunder attended the September Board Operations Committee. Studies completed by District consultants indicated there is no lead in the upper strata of Chabot Lake. There is no point in testing the lower strata of the Lake because of the accumulation of lead weights from fishing. He stated fish have been tested, and no lead levels were found. Maunder explained he wanted the PAC to understand the Gun Club's position.

5. **Presentations:**

- (I) a. **Goals – PAC Chair Bruce Kern and Erich Pfuehler, Government Affairs Manager**
Chair Kern outlined the process regarding the PAC goals. The PAC adopts a work program, goals and objectives. The goals are then shared with the General Manager and Board Executive Committee members who provide a recommendation. The Goals are then considered by the full Board. It is an opportunity for the Board to understand the PAC's priorities, and an opportunity for the Board to shape the work program. Kern summarized there are six primary goal areas that don't change year-to-year. The goals reflect the PAC's role as advisors to staff and the Board of Directors. Kern explained each goal and what is expected of PAC members. He touched on the broader goal of each PAC member engaging in various District activities, i.e. Ambassadors, bike patrol, as spoke persons and assisting staff in various volunteer activities. He recommended PAC members provide periodic reports to their appointing authority. This helps with transparency and understanding the priorities of the appointing authorities.

Pfuehler reported the PAC has accomplished about 90% of work program for 2015. Items to be carried over to 2016 are the Climate Change Adaptation and Cap and Trade discussion and completion of Chief of Stewardship Matt Graul's presentation on Natural Resources. Pfuehler stated that Ordinance 38 is reviewed every two years, and will be covered in 2016.

Kern opened the floor for discussion about the 2016 Goals.

PAC member Texiera asked if it would be possible for ABAG or MTC to give an overview about the status of Plan Bay Area, Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) and Priority Development Areas (PDAs). Texiera would like the discussion to be about the big picture, their processes and how it all fits together. She would like the PAC to continue working on Plan Bay Area and on Climate Change Adaptation.

Kern replied it is an excellent idea. He suggested the idea of having outside speakers address the group to provide a broader understanding of issues and better inform the PAC. Kern explained there would be a limited amount of time, and many issues to cover, so the PAC will have to be judicious regarding content and time management of these meetings.

PAC member Beyaert suggested a possible outside speaker could give a presentation about the parcel tax to fund the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority.

Kern stated there were a number of items to cover in 2016. Public safety in the parks is a growing issue that should be on the agenda. Kern expressed the need for more police officers, and perhaps the application of modern technology to aid public safety particularly in parking areas. O'Connor said the District is currently implementing the use of more cameras in the parking areas.

Kern touched on other issues for the PAC to address; review the policy of dogs in the parks; reviewing the Economics Report; Climate Change; ballot measure review that the District, regional authorities or state might propose; capital project review; UC Berkeley's study of Healthy Parks Healthy People; bike users in the parks; and possible use of drones in parks.

Beyaert suggested the dog/cat issue not be on the work plan unless the Board wishes. Sanwong commented she is interested in the safety of dogs in parks, particularly Mission Peak. She suggested dogs' interaction with equestrians could be part of the safety in the parks presentation as a bulleted item. Sanwong also suggested the PAC consider how the District communicates with the broader public in general, using social media tools to educate and engage park users.

PAC member Coomber recommended accessibility into parks be considered.

PAC member Volin recommended the PAC review the District's policy regarding employee salaries. Volin stated Jamie Perkins, Senior Office Assistant, Recreation Areas Unit suggested at the September 28th PAC meeting that a scientific salary survey study comparing District pay with other agencies should be considered.

PAC member Gregory suggested the PAC should discuss water-related issues and the bodies of water the District manages such as McLaughlin Eastshore State Park.

One of the protocols Kern would like institute is to communicate with presenters ahead of time to better inform the presentations. He encouraged the PAC members to think about what they could do to improve dialog with staff.

Kern stated he will work with the Executive Committee to prioritize the suggestions and present the goals to the Board. In December, the PAC Executive Committee will make a presentation to the Board Executive Committee. In early January, the goals will be considered by the full Board.

(I) b. Cultural Services Update – Beverly Ortiz, Cultural Resources Coordinator

Jim O'Connor, AGM of Operations introduced Beverly Ortiz, Cultural Resources Coordinator. Ortiz explained cultural resources / cultural sites encompass District history, as well as the relationship between Native Peoples and the land. Ortiz said her initial duties have been primarily to compile and review existing District policies and procedures, and develop best practice models. Part of her work has been to visit tangible sites in the parks and to review their condition. She works closely with Park Supervisors to identify the sites.

Ortiz explained educating District staff is a very important part of Cultural Resource management. The focus is on field finds, small objects found in the parks related to history, as well as monitoring of sites.

A few examples of projects where Cultural Resources are considered are: permits with potential site impacts, new acquisition evaluation of cultural resources, and new site and field find documentation.

One primary issue of concern is “bootleg/social” trails going through culturally sensitive areas. Vandalism is also a key issue. There are serial taggers marking metal, historic features in the parks, making drawings on native sites, and graffiti on structures that remain.

Declining structures are being documented and evaluated for historical significance. The establishment of building evaluation protocols for historic buildings is being developed. It will address stabilization needs, concerns about hazards and possibly removal.

Looting and object removal is a huge issue. It is magnified by the advent of the internet. Private persons using Google Earth and GPS technology have shared specific locales of isolated unprotected cultural sites in the District. They have posted their own videos, which are essentially a roadmap to find these places and potentially loot them.

Cultural site monitoring, checking for vandalism and reviewing conditions is quite important. In the coming years, Ortiz expects to expand this program.

Ortiz added documentation of heritage trees is important. They are sometimes the only way to identify a culturally significant locale or former dwellings.

Ortiz stated she works with GIS staff to input confidential data into the District Cultural Atlas. Ortiz is working with management to ensure the District’s cultural resource policies are up-to-date and consistent with existing laws.

Beyaert asked if Ortiz is working with Interpretive Services to educate the public about the cultural resources in the parks. Ortiz replied her role is more in the review and offering of input. The District as a whole, through the Interpretive and Recreation Services Department, has a priority list for panels, publications, etc. in the parks. There are many ways to get the information to the public including the website, park maps, etc. Ortiz said she also posts information about the history of parklands and interpretive materials on the District employee shared drive.

PAC member Palacios asked how many archeological sites there are in the District. Ortiz said she can’t give an exact number, but there are easily hundreds of places throughout the District.

PAC member Robinson asked if all staff have access to the cultural atlas. Ortiz replied there are restrictions under the law about who can access this information. Ortiz elaborated she provides information to supervisors about the parks they supervise. Ortiz said staff have the ability to add data by direct input of information through GIS units.

Kern asked if Ortiz has conversations with the Native American Community. Ortiz said she conducts tribal outreach. Ortiz continued it isn’t just about tribal people, but it’s also about the historic stakeholders such as ranching families. Ortiz said she founded the Gathering of Ohlone Peoples twenty-two years ago. Another example is the Ohlone Intern Program where the District brings communities in to share their history and cultures with the public.

PAC member Godfrey stated he works with people in Africa. Data experts from Switzerland and Germany have helped create detailed maps that document individual African Native Peoples and their connection to the land. Godfrey said he is certain the ranching families must also have an extraordinary memory of the land, roads, flora and fauna. He hopes this is being captured through oral history.

Ortiz replied under Regional Interpretive and Recreation Services Manager Ira Bletz, there has been a very robust oral history program for many years. Ortiz continued she has worked with an intern to catalog the content of the oral histories. They are making the digital files searchable by staff.

O'Connor said they have doubled the budget for the last few years to expedite the oral history process as many of the ranchers are elderly.

(I) c. Convenience Camping Pilot Program – Jim O'Connor, AGM of Operations

O'Connor reported in 2014 the Camping Program Update was completed. As a follow up, the Board requested a 2015 a feasibility study about implementing convenience camping in the District.

O'Connor introduced two consultants Patrick Miller and Steve Spickard of 2M Associates. Miller said they were asked to develop a pilot project to build some convenience camp units. The pilot would help staff evaluate for the next fiscal year. Many sites were considered, but parks with existing campgrounds, Del Valle and Anthony Chabot, were chosen.

Three different camp types were evaluated: Yurts, kit cabins and mobile units. Yurts are logical on hillsides. Kit cabins and mobile units work best on level land.

After further analysis, it was determined Del Valle was the best choice, primarily due to 24-hour park management, fairly level land and the proposed site is near the concessionaire's food building.

The mobile unit model, which sleeps up to six people, was selected as the best option. Miller explained they are considering converting six different campsites, two of which are ADA accessible. There is also new accessible restroom being planned. A site plan was completed; costs were determined and evaluated against revenue projections.

Options for heating and air conditioning were considered, but they require more electricity and could require different permitting from Alameda County.

Steve Spickard discussed the pros and cons of the cost. He stated cabins can easily last for 20 years. Installation would be easy using contractors, and it should take 5-6 years to pay off the investment. Spickard provided a breakdown of costs:

- 6 Park style camp cabins
- \$557,000 in total capital cost for work being contracted out (work not done by District staff)
- Time to pay back investment given:
 - Baseline assumptions = 10.0 years
 - Pessimistic scenario = 14.5 years
 - Optimistic scenario = 5.8 years

Miller continued a similar evaluation was done for Anthony Chabot. The campground reviewed was the area overlooking the lake. The challenges were restraints with the topography and the water supply system.

Miller stated an accessible restroom would need to be installed. Because of the lack of expansion capabilities for water, sewer and electricity, the recommendation is to not have exterior lights.

Miller gave a breakdown of costs for Anthony Chabot:

- 4 Park style camp cabins
- \$526,000 in total capital cost
- Time to pay back investment given:
 - Baseline assumptions = 14.2 years
 - Pessimistic scenario = 20.6 years
 - Optimistic scenario = 8.5 years

Kern said he was pleased Anthony Chabot was studied as well. Kern commented the report was logical and consistent and it tested financial feasibility and type. Kern continued the pilot should also provide enough information to determine the challenges of convenience camping in other parks, using different structures for different topology, maintenance issues of the different cabins, and which sites might have other attractive features.

Spickard replied they are very interested in using other structures, and there are other places where other types of cabins can fit into parks.

O'Connor said the Anthony Chabot pilot was not being put forward this year because there are too many constraints that need to be explored first. O'Connor explained the need to test not just the operational constraints, what it takes for staff to maintain, but also what the public demand is for this new type of camping.

O'Connor said in addition to the outside contractor cost, he is going to work with Maintenance and Skilled Trades to determine the cost for District staff to install the cabins at Del Valle.

Kern questioned the study's use of an Arizona contractor versus a California contractor. Spickard replied there are a number of different producers of these cabins. The Arizona Company cited in the report is the most experienced and has been the dominant producer of these cabins. Spickard commented that California State Parks is also buying their cabins from this company.

Spickard discussed the regulatory hurdles to build the kit cabins versus the mobile units. The mobile unit is like an RV so the regulatory hurdles are much lower. The kit cabin requires more stringent regulations.

Simmons asked why the focus for the pilot is just in Alameda and not in Contra Costa County. O'Connor replied they wanted to test the idea out first to see if it will be popular. O'Connor continued he can see it spreading throughout the District.

Simmons remarked he would have difficulty supporting any camp structures in the Ohlone Wilderness, as it should be a wilderness experience. Simmons stated it's also good to have one area where hikers can go for twenty miles and not see any structures.

PAC member Mercurio asked for clarification about the economic viability of convenience camping. He wondered if it was assumed that there would be 0% vacancy rate after the first year. Spickard answered they assumed a 55% occupancy rate, very similar to an RV site. O'Connor said if the electrical system is designed properly for expansion, heating could eventually be added to extend the camping season.

Volin asked if there is a timetable to install campsites at Anthony Chabot. O'Connor replied he would like to see how the program does at Del Valle, do some further investigations on the Anthony Chabot site, and go forward in 2017.

Coomber inquired about the anticipated staff cost for cleanup after every use, cost for damage occurrences and the estimated cost for nightly rental. Miller responded they built-in fifteen minutes more clean up time than what it currently takes to clean a tent site. An option to reduce cost is to rent only on weekends and/or require a two to three-night stay.

Beyaert said the District does not have the resources to complete projects already planned, such as those included in Measure CC. Beyaert indicated he would much rather see the money going into opening up land banked areas, completing Measure CC projects, improving deteriorated trails and facilities in existing parks. This is a discretionary pilot project and not a priority. Beyaert questioned if there is any way to ensure only East Bay residents can rent these campsites. Currently, there are people flying in from other areas, renting RVs and using District parks as a low cost way to tour the Bay Area. O'Connor replied there is not a current Board policy to be exclusive to Bay Area residents.

Beyaert asked if the staffing rates cited in the report include all benefits, retirement, etc. O'Connor replied yes. Beyaert stated the 10% contingency is very low for this sort of estimate and suggested it be 20-25%. Miller replied they were following the Caltrans model. The site and existing facilities are obvious; the cost of the units is fixed, so there aren't a lot of variables. It is not a complicated project with a good baseline, so the 10% contingency is reasonable.

O'Connor replied this is a feasibility study. The next step is the design process and costs will become more specific. Beyaert questioned who will do the design. O'Connor replied Maintenance and Skilled Trades.

Mercurio said convenience camping will bring a broader group of people into the parks. He added this might provide people reticent about using the parks a way to do so comfortably. While it might cost more, it will fulfill part of the District's mission to reach more people and increase the use of parks.

Texiera commented the report was well laid out and easy to read. The only suggestion she had would be to include a map showing all the different locations of the sites initially considered for the pilot.

Palacios asked if solar was being considered. Miller replied solar panels which could create a self-contained unit for each cabin would require batteries that would increase the maintenance time considerably. O'Connor added the solar facility at Shadow Cliffs will offset 95% of the District's electricity bill.

Kern explained this is an informational item. O'Connor said the PAC comments will be included in the staff report. Kern thanked O'Connor and team for the presentation.

6. **PAC Member Comments:**

PAC member Rickard commented the Niles Canyon Stroll and Roll was a wonderful event. He saw many people he knew including Charlie Chaplin on a bike.

Godfrey said the turnout was really impressive. There were between 4,000 and 5,000 people in attendance. Everyone had a great time and there were no major problems. Godfrey suggested this event could be split into two – one event for bicyclists, and one for pedestrians, children and pets.

Coomber reported about a group of mobility challenged individuals who met with State Parks. They discussed accessibility issues related to trails, camping, fully accessible camp grounds and future plans. Coomber stated there is a whole community of people that would like to get out on the trails and see the parks close up.

Gregory announced the East Bay Greenway dedication is November 6th. Gregory encouraged folks to take BART to the Coliseum BART station and attend.

Beyaert reported that Sonoma Land Trust hosted an incredible event at Sears Point. The levee was breached and water covered a thousand acres of what once was hayfields. This milestone in San Francisco Bay restoration re-contoured and re-sculpted various levels of tide lands.

Best commented while at the PAC tour of Concord Naval Weapons Station there was talk about little railroad cars called speeder cars, and the tremendous rail network at the Weapons Station. Best suggested these cars could be a great way to traverse the site, especially for people with disabilities. Best stated they were told they have a very unique gauge at the Weapons Station, unique to the Navy and no other trains can use it. Subsequently, her research indicated the gauge is probably not that unique.

Robinson reported she attended the Niles Canyon Stroll and Roll as an Ambassador and heard many comments from participants that they would attend this event again. Robinson encouraged PAC members to attend the open house at Black Diamond Mines on November 21 from noon to 4:30 p.m.

7. **Report from Chair**

Kern thanked the PAC members for their rapid response and professionalism with regard to providing comments on the Informational Report for the Anthony Chabot Gun Range.

Kern commented there was a good turnout for the PAC field trip to Concord Hills Regional Park. There are two PAC appointees on the Concord Hills public planning process: Mercurio and Robinson. Kern asked for a periodic summary from the committee members on the status of the Concord Hills Regional Park project.

8. **Board Committee Reports** – Rickard commented he attended several Board Committee meetings. The Board Operations Committee meeting item on Convenience Camping was of particular interest.

9. **Status of Recommendations** – Current

10. **Old Business** – None

11. **New Business** – O'Connor reported the PAC comments were included in the updated Informational Report about the Anthony Chabot Gun Club. They were included in the updated presentation at the October 15 Board Operations Committee meeting.

Beyaert asked if the Committee would be willing to have the December dinner on another night other than Monday.

12. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Summary of Actions:

1. The September minutes were approved.
2. The next meeting is November 23, 2015 in the Board Room at District Headquarters.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Clay
Confidential Secretary