

AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Tuesday, April 6, 2010

C. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

6. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Executive (3/25/10) _____ (Siden)

Present:

Board: Directors Doug Siden (Chair), Beverly Lane, Ted Radke

Staff:

Pat O'Brien, Ted Radosevich, Dave Collins, Mike Anderson, Brian Wiese, Ken Blonski, John Swanson, Raphael Breines, Nancy Brownfield, Bill Nichols, Carol Victor, John Escobar, Brad Gallup, Jessica Sheppard, Shelly Lewis, Rosemary Cameron, Allen Pulido

Public:

Ellen Agustine (Storytelling Association Board of Directors), Kristin Vorderbrueggen (Local 2428), Judith Malamut (LSA Associates), Cheryl Miller (HEF), Ciara Wood (Kensington Fuel Reduction Group), Peter Rausch (CNPA & Sierra Club)

The meeting was called to order at 12:45 p.m.

I. **Request for Board Contingency Funding for the Bay Area Storytelling Festival at Kennedy Grove Regional Recreation Area**

Nancy Kaiser, Interpretive Services Manager, gave a presentation on this item, stating that the District has supported this 3-day event since 1991 when it relocated to Kennedy Grove Regional Recreation Area. It has always been a very well attended event which features educational trips for school children, recognition honors for storytellers and public presentations and festival activities.

Staff is requesting a one-time contribution from Board Contingency funds in the amount of \$2,000 to the Storytelling Association of California to help with expenditures associated with the 2010 Storytelling Festival.

Ellen Agustin, Vice Chair of the Storytelling Association Board of Directors, addressed the Committee to express their gratitude for the District's past support, and requested favorable consideration for this item.

Director Lane expressed her support of the Storytelling Festival, while Director Siden stated that he was pleased that the Park District is involved with the Festival.

By motion of Director Radke and seconded by Director Lane, the Executive Committee voted unanimously to approve a one-time contribution of \$2,000 from Board Contingency Funds to help support the 2010 Storytelling Festival.

2. Approval of Land Use Plan (LUP) Amendment for Garin Regional Park

Raphael Breines, Senior Park Planner gave a presentation on this item, which involves Walpert Ridge and Garin Regional Park. He stated that in the last two decades, development has been proposed in the area and the District has had a high priority to add more parklands. As a result of development in the surrounding areas, the District is poised to receive more than 1,300 acres of land. He reviewed via Powerpoint a map of the area, including the North Garin Land Bank – a 300 acre property that sits below Five Canyons.

He noted that although the park is not yet officially open to the public, many people regularly trespass on the area, and the Park Supervisor cleans and maintains the park as if it were open because of this. He reviewed the LUP Checklist for opening, all of which Garin Regional Park meets.

Mr. Brienes shared staff's intention to present the LUP to the PAC in April, and then for full Board review in May.

Director Lane wanted to know if there was an LUP for the Five Canyons area. Mr. Brienes indicated that there was no such plan. Brian Wiese, Chief of Planning and Stewardship, clarified that Five Canyons was an open space and trail system that does not have a LUP.

Peter Rauch, representing California Native Plant Society and the Sierra Club, addressed the Committee regarding the groups' issues of an old LUP (30+ years old) with one additional amendment as being an acceptable method to evaluate whether or not to open the park. They do not think that the amendment itself is much of an analysis. The groups would like to review the Garin LUP as well as the Garin to Chabot Trail plan in order to better understand whether or not issues now exist that did not when the original LUP was written 30 years ago. Mr. Rauch also noted that the grazing issue should have been included in the LUP.

Director Lane stated that she was in favor of the checklist for monitoring and asked about grazing. Mr. Breines answered that the area is being grazed, and that a grazing management plan is part of the LUP amendment that is planned to be released this year.

Director Siden commended staff for their work in listening to public interest in getting the park opened on a timely manner.

By motion of Director Radke and seconded by Director Lane, the Executive Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the full Board approve the proposed Land Use Plan Amendment for Garin Regional Park.

3. Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan, EIR and Response to Comments

Brian Wiese, Chief of Planning and Stewardship, began the presentation by reviewing project goals and introducing team members Judith Malamut of LSA Associates and Cheryl Miller, Outreach Consultant, Landscape Architect, and staff of the Hills Emergency Forum (HEF).

From District staff, Mr. Wiese introduced Fire Chief Ken Blonksi and Assistant Fire Chief John Swanson, who both came to the District from the US Forest Service, and Stewardship staffmembers Nancy Brownfield and Jessica Sheppard.

Mr. Wiese gave a brief overview of the plan, which was essentially a result of the 1991 Tunnel Fire. The District's Acting GM at the time, Jerry Kent, spoke to surrounding areas about putting together a plan to protect public resource areas. A map was reviewed of the East Bay Hills and areas affected by fire. Mr. Wiese stated that the main goal of the plan is to reduce wildfire risks by maintaining ground fuels and access to areas of fire and includes taking out young eucalyptus, not all eucalyptus nor raptor habitats. The plan also addresses sixteen different vegetative communities, and how they should be treated with fuels management.

Mr. Wiese spoke about the District's 2004 Measure CC allocation of funds worth about \$9.5 million for fuels and wildfire management. He also spoke about cost effectiveness playing a role in the plan, adding that it did not mean that the District intends to run the program cheaply. Mr. Wiese explained that the plan itself consists of Wildfire Hazardous Assessment, Resource Assessment, and an Implementation Program. Each was reviewed in further detail.

District Fire Chief Ken Blonksi introduced various Fire personnel in attendance at the meeting. He mentioned three things that can be done to prevent fire disasters: creating a fuel break, reducing fuel accumulations, and homeowners taking on the responsibility of defensible space surrounding their homes. He emphasized the importance of homeowner involvement.

John Swanson, Assistant Fire Chief used slides and spoke about how the plan would be made to work on the ground, which he termed the "Plan Implementation Process". Steps included pretreatment site assessments, treatment prescriptions, and annual budgeting for the prescriptions. After treatments, a post-treatment monitoring and assessment will be performed which will allow staff to gather information and come up with a follow-up plan.

Bill Nichols, District Fire Lieutenant/Park Supervisor addressed the group and described his experience with the 1991 Tunnel Fire in Oakland, and asked the Committee to approve the plan as presented.

John Fitch, Fire Marshall for the City of Berkeley, addressed the group to communicate the City of Berkeley's support, stating that he believes the plan will provide the needed safety margin not only for residents but for firefighters as well.

Cheryl Miller, outreach consultant for the plan, resident of Oakland and staff of the Hills Emergency Forum, spoke about the nine-member agency of the Forum. She enumerated some members of the HEF: El Cerrito, Kensington, Orinda, Oakland, and Moraga and asked the Committee to approve the Plan to go before the full Board.

Michael Bond, Fire Marshall for El Cerrito/Kensington encouraged, on behalf of the cities and agencies he represents, the Committee to approve the plan.

Darin White, Battalion Chief for the Oakland Fire Department, provided a fire victim's traumatic experience of losing their home and their belongings during the 1991 Oakland Fire. He stated that the Oakland Fire Department supports the Plan as presented.

Mike Mentink, Moraga/Orinda Fire Marshall, noted his agreement with the previous statements presented by the fire personnel, stating that the plan provides fire protection and safety as well as preserves the vegetation that most residents would like to see kept.

Scott Hill, Watershed and Recreation Manager for EBMUD, stated that EBMUD shares many boundaries with EBRPD and have worked cooperatively before. His agency supports the plan and represents a comprehensive approach.

George Lang, Contra Costa County Fire shared his full support for plan.

Director Lane shared that she thought it was important to look at the safety of both the public and firefighters. She suggested that Mr. Wiese revise his chart recounting fire history in the area to include the more recent large fires. She asked for and received information from George Lang (who answered for his jurisdiction) and other Fire Marshals as to whether cities speak to all residents on defensible spaces education and compliance.

GM O'Brien reminded the group that funding is limited by Measure CC and General Fund availability, so that a yearly review will have to be conducted to determine what can actually be accomplished.

Public Comments

Peter Rauch noted that responses from the District to public comments have not been reviewed by the groups he represented since the summary was only distributed a few days ago and expected to have comments at a later date. He supported fire staff's values of preserving wildlands as well as safety, and stated his appreciation that the process has come a long way and looks forward to continued implementation of amicable interactions with park staff.

Ciara Wood, Kensington Fuel Reduction Group/Diablo Fire Safe Council, urged the committee to approve the item, adding that the Committee should have received several emails of support from Kensington residents.

Bob Chaner and Gilbert Bendix, Kensington homeowners, also spoke and provided their support for this item.

Director Radke stated his support for the plan.

Director Lane expressed her concern in the way the responses to the comments were presented, stating that she found it little confusing (Plan vs EIR); she suggested staff be aware of the need to have an additional explanation to clarify comments on proposed modifications to Plan versus the

EIR. In response to Director Lane's inquiry, Mr. Wiese stated that staff is forced to make a legal distinction to differentiate between EIR and the Plan.

Another suggestion from Director Lane was to clearly communicate the public hearing and correspondence deadline, to let people who want to respond know when they should send their letters to the Board members to allow ample time for review.

District Counsel Ted Radosevich clarified the Board deadlines and CEQA law process, which provides only a ten day period for comments after the response to public comments is released.

Director Lane asked Chief Swanson to put together some of the cost estimates that he had discussed with her earlier in a formal document.

Director Siden thanked the public, District and the various Fire Agency officials for coming to the meeting; he also shared a personal experience from the Tunnel Fire.

By motion of Director Radke, seconded by Director Lane, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the draft Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan and accompanying Environmental Impact Report, and recommended its submission to the full Board for favorable consideration.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.