

Approved Meeting Minutes
PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
 February 27, 2017

ATTENDING: Bueren, Gregory, Godfrey, Ho, Kern, Madsen, Mercurio, Palacios, Rickard, Robinson, Sanwong, Skaredoff, Thompson, Wilkins, Volin, Yee

NOT ATTENDING: Best, Trotter

STAFF ATTENDING: Doyle, Johnson, Pfuehler, O'Connor, Schirmer, Clay

GUESTS: Board Member Dee Rosario, Teifion Rice-Evans, Economic & Planning Services, Benjamin Sigman, Economic & Planning Services

PUBLIC: Kelly Abreu

The meeting began at 7:07 p.m.

1. **Approval of the January 23, 2017 Minutes:** The motion to approve the January 23, 2017 minutes was moved by PAC member Skaredoff. PAC member Volin seconded approval of the minutes. The motion was approved.

PAC Chair Kern announced he will report about some of the topics discussed by the Executive Committee.

2. **Introductions:** Kern asked PAC members, staff, and the public to introduce themselves.
3. **Board Member Comments:** Director Rosario thanked the PAC members for taking time to serve on the Committee. Rosario stated some of his goals are to continue to close the gaps in the Bay Trail, open up new parklands, expand the District's outreach in Oakland to get children into the parks, and increase the District's base in the community.
4. **Public Comments:** Kelly Abreu commented about the amount of tickets given out at Mission Peak. The District's parking signage is difficult for the public to understand. Abreu mentioned the park hours, and how they've been adjusted so park users are unable to reach the peak to watch the sunrise.

Julianna Schirmer, Development Director of the Parks Foundation gave an update about the Foundation. Schirmer talked about the member surveys they have conducted, including the responses from Foundation members about what is important to them. Issues which emerged relate to dogs and mountain biking. Schirmer mentioned one event they plan to host is, "What's Brewing in Our Parks." Schirmer invited the PAC members to attend.

5. **Presentations:**

- (I) **a. State of the District – Robert E. Doyle, General Manager**
GM Doyle presented a PowerPoint reviewing highlights for the East Bay Regional Park District in 2016. Doyle reported staff is currently working with the Board members through five Board Workshops to re-establish and re-engage the commitments for 2017.

Doyle explained at the executive level, the number one issue for the Board is the District's financial security. The District has a balanced budget with an AAA bond rating. The District also has received certificates of Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards and Certificates of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting.

Doyle reported there were 54 new hires in 2016, 25 promotions of regular staff, 34 temporary staff and 329 seasonal workers. The District is one the largest employees of seasonal youth with about 400 hired by the District each year. The District continues the effort to diversify the agency, and has 35% minority new hires, 41% females and 22% minorities overall.

The District has done a tremendous amount of work using Measure CC funding in urban shoreline areas. In total, the District has 500 capital projects including Measure CC projects.

Doyle stated the District successfully partnered with the NPS to host a Centennial event on the Concord Naval Weapons Station property — including the opportunity to discuss with the Secretary of Interior Sally Jewell about the need for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to move forward with their biological opinion so the property can be transferred to the District.

Doyle touched on conservation partnerships. The District acquired or has options over 1,040 acres of land, leveraging approximately 67% in grants and matching funds, representing roughly \$7.5 million of \$11.3 million in acquisition expenditures. Most of the funding is from the Eastern Contra Costa County Conservancy.

Land Acquisitions included:

- Hayward Shoreline property
- Dotson Family Marsh – Point Pinole
- Patterson Ranch – Coyote Hills
- Nunn Property – Delta Access
- Hanson Ranch – Save Mt. Diablo
- Coehlo Machado Property – Vasco
- Albany Bulb – MESP
- Coyote Hills – ACFCD
- Former Oakland Army Base – Bay Bridge
- Tidewater – MLK Jr. Shoreline
- San Pablo Bay Shoreline Easements
- Suncrest Homes – BD Mines
- Burton Ridge – Calaveras Ridge Trail
- Caltrans – Ardenwood

Major upgrades:

- Upgrades to public access, restrooms and picnic area at Huckleberry Regional Preserve.
- Upgrades at Miller-Knox Regional Shoreline, including new picnic areas, paths and restroom renovations.
- Retrofit of the Doolittle Drive boat launch facilities at Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline.

Doyle discussed the District's legislative advocacy and reported the District moved a park bond all the way to the brink of passing on the Senate floor on the last day of session — including actively engaging with the Bay Area Open Space Council to increase grassroots support. The District ensured the San Francisco Bay Restoration's Measure AA was able to make it to the ballot. The measure passed and includes a minimum of \$90 million in shoreline projects over 20 years for the East Bay. The District worked to guarantee eligibility for cap-and-trade funds. The California cap-and-trade 2016/2017 fiscal year appropriations include:

- \$80 million for urban greening
- \$25 million for healthy forests

- \$15 million for urban forestry
- \$10 million for active transportation

Doyle reported about the 2016 legal challenges. Doyle stated the District negotiated a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Union Pacific Railroad to provide right of way at no cost, plus \$3.9 million in funding for trail crossings and bridges in six locations from Richmond to Martinez. The District also acquired an easement from Golden Gate Fields to construct the Bay Trail along the shoreline between Buchanan and Gilman Streets. The District established the first Community Facilities District to finance the operation and maintenance of parklands. After years of litigation, the Court of Appeals approved the transfer of the Borel Property to the District.

In 2016, the Board approved an \$8 million investment to zero out the District's electrical carbon footprint — including an approval of funds for a 1.2 watt solar facility at Shadow Cliffs.

Doyle reported there have been five individual floods at Del Valle this winter and about three million dollars in damage for restoration work. Staff is working to obtain FEMA funding.

Doyle pointed out, although the public doesn't advocate for it, infrastructure improvements are important to the District. The District completed maintenance projects on 1.1 million square feet of pavement, including renovation, resurfacing and replacement. The District has installed five new Measure CC funded CXT vault toilets at Anthony Chabot and one General Fund-funded unit at Las Trampas.

Doyle touched on the Healthy Park Healthy People (HPHP) program. In 2016, the District expanded multicultural outreach by hosting the 4th consecutive Multicultural Leaders Roundtable and created six HPHP multicultural wellness walks with Public Safety's active engagement. The Kids Healthy Outdoors Challenge grew by 95% with 123 third grade teachers participating.

Doyle commented the District awarded a contract to restore the interpretive ponds at the Tilden Nature Area for California red-legged frogs and provide an "outdoor classroom" experience. The District awarded a contract to restore native dune habitat, protect shoreline and improve beach access at Encinal Beach in Alameda. The District also partnered with Urban Tilth to reduce erosion along Wildcat Creek.

Doyle reported in 2016 the District continued fuels management work over 1,050 acres, including utilizing goats. Police and fire received over 8,300 calls for service and responded to over 6,300 incidents. Doyle announced Public Safety received a second re-accreditation with excellence from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Public Safety has increased community outreach using patrol operations attendance at three "coffee with a cop" safety and youth job fairs, as well as participation in the multicultural wellness walks. The District's police were selected as an honoree for 2016's civic pride event in Oakland.

Doyle announced volunteerism is robust, many people want to volunteer. The challenge for the District is to manage and keep volunteers safe. 21,166 volunteers contributed a total of 150,782 hours of service in 2016.

Doyle stated it was a banner year for the Foundation. The Foundation raised \$2.16 million in 2016 which represents the sixth continuous year of sustained financial growth. The Foundation has funded over 8,990 youth camperships. Foundation memberships increased by 10% for a total of

9,992. 706 life jackets were given away through a donation from the Regional Parks Foundation, California Department of Water Resources and California State Parks.

Kern inquired about key open positions. Doyle replied, Human Resources, Fire Chief, Chief of Design are open. All are currently filled by acting staff.

(I) b. Economic Impact study Overview – Carol Johnson, AGM Public Affairs

Carol Johnson, AGM Public Affairs introduced Teifion Rice-Evans and Benjamin Sigman from Economic & Planning Services (EPS). EPS is a land-use economics consulting firm. EPS was hired by the District in 2000 to conduct the first analysis of the District's economic impact. EPS did a follow-up study of their original analysis and presented it to the PAC. Other park agencies have conducted economic analyses including the Trust for Public Land and Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority.

Teifion Rice-Evans reported since 2000, there has been a 13% increase in the population of the East Bay and a 32% increase in acres of District parks, trails and open space. There has been a 65% increase in visitor spending and a 97% increase in recreation value.

Sigman reported the economic value measures how much a good or service is worth to residents. Regional economic impact measures economic activity within a geographic area. The report estimated the economic value through five inter-related lenses:

- Ecosystem services
- Recreation value
- Property value
- Health care value
- Additional benefits including agriculture, public safety and more

The District has 25 million visits annually in the parks. It provides a range of benefits to residents, businesses and visitors which total about \$500 million annually. The District produces a return on investment of 400% with its annual General Fund budget of about \$127 million. The District generates an estimated \$191 million in annual economic activity in the East Bay that would not occur its absence.

Sigman discussed the recreation value. Economists commonly define the economic benefits from recreation as a participant's 'willingness to pay' for activities, regardless of market price. EPS examined ten categories of recreational activities such as biking, hiking, equestrian, bird watching and dog walking. Extensive research exists about the value of real estate adjacent to and near parks and open spaces. EPS used GIS data and County Assessor data to identify residential property values proximate to Park District lands. EPS estimated current real estate market values and aggregated them. Estimated annual residential market value attributable to the District is \$65 million.

Sigman explained the health care value. He stated there is a significant body of research which concludes outdoor exercise is good for health. EPS analyzed the level of exercise undertaken by District visitors which would not occur in the absence of District lands and facilities. The number of individuals who would not exercise regularly if not for the Park District is 60,000. The health care benefit from the District is estimated at \$20 million dollars in cost savings annually.

Sigman reported ecosystem services is the term used to capture the broad array of green

infrastructure benefits provided by the preservation of open space, habitat, agricultural land, parkland and water bodies. EPS estimated the annual value of ecosystem services is \$215,000,000.

Additional benefits from the District are:

- Providing a living wage to 1,000 people
- Providing additional public safety from police officers and firefighters
- Providing funding to local communities through \$125 million in grants from the Measure WW local grant program
- Supporting local agricultural production with 60,000 acres used for grazing
- Contributing to sustainability by providing defacto urban limit lines
- Providing space and programs for outdoor education to 60,000 children annually
- Leveraging public and private grants including from the Regional Parks Foundation

Rice-Evans reported the District plays a huge and irreplaceable role in the East Bay economy. It is an important part of the East Bay's livability and quality of life. Economic value and impact of the District has increased significantly since the initial report in 2000.

PAC member Mercurio inquired about the five components of the study. He asked which one was the most difficult to quantify. Rice-Evans replied the recreational value component took time to produce and EPS relied on Dr. Manross' report for key information.

PAC member Gregory commented the San Francisco Bay Area is number four in congestion/density. He commented if this information had been included in the study it would fuel the value of the District tremendously.

PAC member Ho asked if the Additional Economic Benefits section were too large to quantify. Sigman agreed with Ho and said he could pull the numbers and add them to the Additional Economic Benefits section.

PAC member Godfrey asked if Healthy Parks Healthy People (HPPH) was included in the health care calculations. Rice-Evans replied EPS is aware of the work being done. He believes that is why there is such an increase in use of the parks. The park use data, and the information about how people use it, how vigorously they use it and how often is the genesis of how EPS came up with the health care benefit number. Rice-Evans commented it captures some of HPPH.

PAC member Thompson asked if EPS included the value of parks in attracting companies to the East Bay. Both Rice-Evans and Sigman replied it is a very important piece to evaluate, but it is not included in this study.

Abreu commented there is a difference in having open space and open space that is useable.

(I) c. Community Relations Plan – Carol Johnson, AGM Public Affairs

The Community Relations Plan was postponed until the March PAC meeting.

(R) d. Work Plan – Bruce Kern, PAC Chair, Erich Pfuehler, Government Affairs Manager

Chair Kern discussed the items to be included in the 2017 Work Plan. The first item, the dog issue, will be worked in three phases. The three areas are: managing dog use, incorporating dog use in planning processes and the engagement with dog interest groups as part of community education.

Kern and Pfuehler met with Public Safety, Operations and Planning to come up with a joint work plan that everyone feels is workable for staff and at the same time will address the PAC's issues.

Another item for the Work Plan is the review of balancing the need to protect park resources, while providing opportunities for mountain biking. Kern said he will be working with Operations on this item. Kern suggested the PAC members listen to KQED's discussion on mountain biking issue in Marin County.

Kern announced there are two adjustments to the Work Plan. The first is to add a damage assessment report from the winter storms to the yearly trails update. The second item in September is the expansion of the volunteer program. Kern explained Directors Corbett and Rosario are interested in this work.

Ho asked if there are corresponding target dates for Board Action or Board Committee review of the mountain bike issue. Kern replied no, staff are looking to the PAC for some direction. Ho expressed concern the mountain bike issue will need communication with user groups, and will likely require as thorough a process the same steps as the dog use issue. Kern agreed and will take the matter under advisement and consult with staff.

The motion to approve the 2017 PAC Work Plan was made by PAC member Wilkins. Volin seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

5. **PAC Member Comments**

PAC Member Robinson reported she went to a community meeting about the potential to build 4,000 homes near the Southeastern side of Black Diamond Mines. Robinson stated for the immediate planning area, the city is discussing 1,300 homes. The back parcel is surrounded on three sides by Black Diamond Mines. It goes from Deer Valley Road to the edge of the park. Robinson will attend the Antioch City Council meeting on the 14th, and will provide the PAC with an update.

PAC Member Rickard reported he and District staff and Board members have been meeting with the Oakland City Council to begin working on closing the remaining gaps in the San Francisco Bay trail. Good progress has been made on meetings with the Oakland City Council. He feels they have received the attention of the city to begin work on the gaps again.

Skaredoff announced the Martinez City Council is having a meeting on regional trails planned in the city. The question is to incorporate the trails into the general plan or make it a standalone action item. Johnson suggested that Skaredoff reach out to Brian Holt in Advanced Planning for guidance.

6. **Report from Chair** – Kern reported he met with the Foundation President William Yarbrough. They discussed the Foundation's outreach and what the PAC can do to participate. The Foundation is working with REI, which will be selling Park District memberships in their stores, and Whole Foods for Foundation giving. Kern called upon the PAC members to help with this effort. Kern asked Thompson to report about her discussion with PAC member Madsen and members of ABAG planning staff. Thompson replied they decided the PAC does not need a standalone Plan Bay Area subcommittee because of where ABAG is in the process. Thompson and Madsen will provide updates to the PAC.

7. **Board Committee Reports** – None.
8. **Status of Recommendations** – None.
9. **Old Business** – None.
10. **New Business** – Gregory asked the meeting be closed in PAC member John Mercurio's mother, Tanina Mercurio's memory.
11. **Adjournment** – The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Summary of Actions:

1. The PAC approved the January 27, 2017 minutes.
2. The PAC approved the 2017 Work Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Clay
Confidential Secretary