

Griffith Park Advisory Board  
Minutes – January 28, 2021, 6:30 PM

1. Roll Call: All present
2. Announcements:
  - CD4 Councilmember Nithya Raman will join us for March meeting.
3. Approval of Minutes: Minutes approved.
4. Special Guests: No special guests.
5. General Public Comment: No general public comment.
6. Information Reports and Presentations:
  - a. Bette Davis Park Forest Plan and Design, presented by LA Parks Foundation/  
Katherine Pakradouni
    - Native Micro Forest Project at Bette Davis Picnic Area. Plan on installing a Miyawaki forest, which consist of densely planted indigenous plants in layers. The method affords more biodiversity, grows faster, and is self-managing after two years. Forest will be 1000sqft circle with pathway down middle. Projected to begin planting by end of April or early May. [Katherine@laparks-foundation.org](mailto:Katherine@laparks-foundation.org)
  - b. Review of LA Zoo Environmental Impact Report for their Master Plan – possible motion item – LA Zoo/Bureau of Engineering to present
    - Erika Leachman gave the presentation, assisted by Zoo executive Darryl Pon. The plan will add 1.2M visitors annually, but will not result in an expansion of Zoo footprint in Griffith park
      - o Potential unavoidable impacts could be the inclusion of a parking structure and increased vehicle traffic.
      - o The plan has several proposed mitigation measures. These include a TDM program (regarding vehicle traffic mitigation), MM Rec-1 (for recreational trail impact mitigation), MM T-1 (construction mitigation), and MM T-2 (long-term transportation mitigation).
      - o Member Chris Laib questions: Are golf courses in any way compromised? Was there any consideration to parking off-site, and shuttling people in? Answer: Plan will not impact golf course. Currently parking

lot is within footprint of zoo. Parking structure is last phase of build, things could change a lot before we even need to build it. Do not see the need for parking offsite. Do not see need for additional parking until the Zoo reaches 3M visitors per year.

- Member Ron Deutsch questions – Are you now turning away a lot of visitors to the Zoo? Is the expansion necessary? Answer: Expansion is really to modernize the zoo, want to increase spaces for animals, want more naturalized species exhibits. Zoo is pretty much same design as 1966, and modern zoos are very different. There are safety and sustainability issues as well. Want to separate service, tram, and public routes.
- Member Bryan Mercke questions – Is the transportation mitigation part of the plan? How do the mitigation efforts outlined in the plan differ from the multi-modal transportation alternative plan? Answer: Mitigation measures are already part of the plan, but the multi-modal alternative is a more aggressive transportation mitigation alternative. Two key features of the multi-modal alternative include:
  - TDM mitigation – Parkline shuttle can be used to provide regional service to Zoo. Expand Parkline to make sure it is running during Zoo hours and connect to key metro stations, people can actually use rail and transit to get to the zoo.
  - Focus on employee travel patterns – emphasis on van pool program.
- Member Michelle Crammes questions about how paid parking will work. Answer – Intent is to keep some free parking, but have paid parking as a means to discourage driving and encourage accessibility.
- Member Mike Hain questions about the funicular and aerial tram. Answer: Will be in California planning area of zoo. This project looked at other related projects, such as the proposed aerial tram.
- Member Alex Phillips questions about how reduced project alternative will impact the number of events. Answer – Under the reduced project

alternative, there will be fewer events because there would not be a proposed additional visitors center.

- Member Ron Deutsch questions – Can you give us a little more detail about how the expansion will enhance Zoo animal experiences? Answer: Public wanted more space for elephant exhibit. Big improvement all around for animal experience. Modernized enclosures that have day rooms and move animals into different areas and groups. Multispecies spaces can be implemented.
- Member Jason Greenwald questions – The multi-modal transportation alternative is more closely aligned to state guidance about vehicle mile reductions and is much more aggressive than the regular mitigation measure. This alternative commits to a 15% VMT (vehicle miles traveled) reduction, compared to no-mitigation projections.
  - Question – Is the expansion of metro bus service, Parkline shuttle, and a dedicated shuttle between union station and zoo a possibility or commitment?
  - Answer – Planning for interjurisdictional transit is difficult, and Zoo does not control other systems. We will be implementing these things as we are able and as they are needed. Employee VMT reduction measures are easier to accomplish and still have a significant impact. They are not requirements because we do not know what we will need yet.
  - Question: Are you all open to transportation mitigation beyond the multi-modal transportation alternative? Answer: Yes.

- Public Comment:

- Gerry Hans – Would like to see more conservationist stewardship in its own backyard. Concern about entire plant communities and mature live oaks and walnuts that are protected. Concern about wiping out largely intact scrub habitat for the California area. These are entire ecological systems that could be eliminated. Gerry suggests just leaving them alone because they are biodiverse. Ask to set aside certain

number of acres for non-development and urges Zoo to adopt the reduced project alternative.

- Marian Dodge – Question about pie charts for existing and proposed land use. Would like to know the division between land use between visitors and for animal habitat. Answer – We don't know yet because this is conceptual and not drawn yet. Increase proposed animal space to about 58 acres from about 21 acres.
- Emmy Goldknopf – Share Gerry and Marian's concern about effects on habitat. Why must modernization be accompanied by expansion? Emmy fears the answer might be money. Emmy is also concerned about traffic and is glad there are opportunities to increase public transit. Emmy hopes that public transit options will consider equity and hopes Zoo will scale this project back.

- **Member Michelle Crammes moves that we as a board comment on the EIR as to transportation issues.** Seconded.

- **Member Karen Thorton moves to amend the motion to include a subcommittee to address the issue and aggregate comments to the draft letter.**

Seconded

- Amendment passes.
  - Members Ron Deutsch, Bryan Mercke, and Jason Greenwald as chair appointed to ad hoc committee.
- Motion passes unanimously.

## 7. Superintendent Reports:

### a. Park Closures:

- Food vendors can resume outdoor dining as of this Friday. Mask enforcement is ongoing. Rangers may take enforcement if they knowingly put others at risk and issue non-criminal citation.

### b. Maintenance Report

- No major updates. Preparing for storm by placing sandbags out and cleaning out storm drains in Park.

### c. Mulholland fence

- Met on site based on concern for plants that have died. Plan to report back and work on it. Hope to show concept of how to address vista viewpoint concerns.
- d. Wonderview pedestrian gate
  - Contractor scheduled to start work early February. Gate is being fabricated currently, and 4-6 weeks to complete.
- e. Tom LaBonge Memorial Planning
  - Mayor Garcetti put out press release yesterday announced Mt. Hollywood summit renamed to Tom LaBonge summit. Tom hiked there every single day. Plans – Sign at entrance of corral, posts there will support sign that says Tom LaBonge summit. Other possible plans include pedestal sign at peak that will show points of interest and little bio and photo of Tom LaBonge. LA Parks Foundation is accepting donations for Tom LaBonge that will go to some of these improvements.

8. Committee and Ad Hoc Reports:

- Exec committee – Held first meeting and went well.
- Public safety – Held meeting. Two areas of concern include property crimes and fire. Got statistics for crime in park for last two years.
- Community engagement – Held meeting. Want to focus on social media front with engaging with other communities in LA. Want to extend membership of ad hoc to community members.
- Bylaws commission, governance – Held meeting. Decided to take look at mission statement first and are working on draft.
- Equestrian ad hoc – Fact finding mission this month.

9. Suggestions for Upcoming Agenda Items:

- Items can be submitted to Chairperson Jason Greenwald.

10. Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2021 at 6:30 pm on Zoom.

11. Adjournment: 9:15pm adjourned in memory of Tom LaBonge and Ms. Lynn Brown