

Griffith Park Advisory Board Minutes

March 24, 2022

Meeting began at 6:31pm

Ashouri, Chung, Crames, Gilbert, Greenwald, Thornton present. Phillips excused; Laib joined late at 6:38

Minutes

Thornton first; Chung second; approved with one correction: total revenue from 2021 Haunted Hayride was not correct in the draft February 2022 minutes, and those minutes have subsequently been updated to reflect the totals provided by RAP staff. The corrected February minutes are now posted on the GPAB website.

Reports from Government officials

CD4 report

Scheps: The Greek Theatre season is imminent. First concert on 4/1
The Riverside Dr traffic reconfiguration is underway. The Riverside/Los Feliz Bl to Fletcher Dr bike lane is scheduled to be opened 4/6. A ceremony/ribbon cutting will take place.

Comments from public on topics not on the agenda

-Dodge: She is leading a Fern Dell tour, meeting at Trails Cafe on Saturday, 3/26 9am-1pm

Special Reports

LA Parks Foundation

Esther Margulies, landscape architect, presented on the native plant demonstration garden at Commonwealth Nursery/Learning Center

-To be installed at the Gardeners Cottage (formerly the caretakers house), which is now used as offices for the LA Parks Foundation

-All plantings will be native plants

-2 levels to project, starting on the site driveway to the slopes, both of which are currently populated with clover, mustard and nettles. Invasive weeds will be removed and replaced with native species. Project includes bio swales and permeable paving. Attention to wildfire hazards of site has dictated plant selections

-Planting schedule screen shared. Steep slopes and erosion control dictate some plant types. The plantings and garden should be mature in

1-2 years

Board questions

Greenwald: When does planting begin? Esther: April

Laib: Is this part of the Commonwealth Learning Center concept?

Esther; Yes. It has learning aspects

Greenwald: Are the plantings specifically native to GP? Esther: All are

native to SoCal Thornton: Bio swale details? Esther: It exists now as a roof and existing dirt depression. Her vision is that it be more of a stone lined swale

Greenwald: Is the project grant funded? Esther: Yes, and she is working with LAPF and RAP planning division

Public comment

Hans: RAP should operate Commonwealth Nursery for its own benefit.

Looks looks a great project

Griffith Observatory parking revenue report

Sean Hinton, Park Services Supervisor

-GO parking revenue expenditure report

-YTD revenue for the fiscal year beginning 7/1/21 through 2/28/22 is \$3.592 million

-Breakdown on department expenditures as follows:

\$290k transportation/access

35k capital improvements

300k staffing

85k deferred maintenance

Total YTD expenditures are \$710k and there is another \$110k pending (i.e. already encumbered just not yet paid)

\$1.7m RAP general fund draw to date

-That all equals \$2.52m in YTD expenses, and leaves a balance of \$1.072m in account.

-Mgmt understands our concerns and appreciates what we do for park

-Hinton added that the new ecologist salary is also coming out of these funds. \$2.7m will be drawn for general fund this fiscal year (this was already reported in a prior meeting), whereas for the coming fiscal year ('22-23), the draw will be \$2.2m, a \$500k reduction.

Board questions

Thornton: Requested clarification about \$1.7 funds already drawn to general fund vs the 2.7m anticipated Hinton: Clarified that \$2.7m has been budgeted and that in turn leaves \$1m more to go to general fund for the remainder of fiscal year '21/22 (through June)

Ashouri: Can we prioritize access in general, transportation, bike lanes, sidewalks, striping out of these funds? Hinton: Safety projects a priority. Restripping, etc.

Laib: Will we see this analysis in a spread sheet? And, can we see them once/quarter Hinton: We don't have our own accounting dept but will endeavor to supply a spreadsheet, that makes sense

Crames: What is extra staff funding? It is general staffing? Hinton: Some ranger and traffic control for special events, and the ecologist funding

Public comment

Hans: Not happy that more money is going to general fund; seconds Aida's comment about access, and particularly re-creation of an alternative pedestrian access at the Beachwood gate.

Laib: Are we migrating to less funds to RAP general funds? Hinton: Yes, next fiscal year a reduction of 500k. And we also reduced the hourly parking rate to \$10/hour

Greenwald: This is a process moving in the right direction.

Board meeting attendance Chair Greenwald: Return to personal meetings?

Greenwald shared Phillip's thoughts, which are to prioritize a combination of live and on line meetings, specifically 1/quarter live and others on line. If we are to go back live, it would currently still require masks and proof of vaccination

Ashouri: Wary of live meetings due to new variant; once/quarter ok

Gilbert: Has our attendance improved since we went to zoom? Which format will support better attendance?

Hinton: The dept does not have the ability to do a combined virtual and live meeting.

Laib: We should wait till masks and proof of vac are not required, but

the live meetings held years ago at Park Central attracted much greater public attendance.

Thornton: Live meetings have a collaborative/familial value. We're missing out on that opportunity. More and sooner live meetings

Greenwald: Can we attract more public attendance while still on zoom?? How can we better engage new attendees?

Public comment

-Steven Alpert: In person meetings are valuable; could live meetings be live streamed? -Greenwald: Clear direction for now. Virtual in April. Live perhaps soon, but based on conditions at time. The board direction here and other factors demonstrates it is unlikely we will be live in May

Recreation and Parks update

Sean Hinton, Park Services Supervisor

-Park covid protocols remain consistent with City/County

-A Fern Dell tour will be led by Courtney, our new ecologist. Dates forthcoming

-Old zoo update: Fencing will be paid for out of GO parking funds

-Pony Rides: The expert veterinarian has been back to monitor the vendors follow up on recommendations and is preparing a report; many recommendations already implemented.

- A new member for GPAB has been asked to join the board, pending background check

Board Questions/comments

- Greenwald: I was involved with the interviewing process and hope that is now a precedent Board Questions

-Thornton: When do we start the conversation about whittling down the general fund allocation of GO parking revenues? Hinton: Stefanie is working on it

-Laib: What are status of the Park Line shuttle and Equestrian crosswalk striping? Hinton: Park line shuttle remains tabled due to shortage of drivers. Hoping for labor easing. Equestrian crossing is a bit of an interagency process. The scope of work is done for Western Canyon striping and the Mineral Springs striping is "next up"

-Ashouri: Does Griffith Park Dr restriping scoping include bike lane

improvements? Narrowing of vehicle lanes? Hinton: Crosswalks and stop sign improvements are being scoped now. Narrowing of lanes on Crystal Springs still being considered as a priority but addition of bike lanes near Mineral Wells not possible due to narrowness
-Greenwald: Very pleased that Old Zoo fencing moving along; this is a safety and wildfire prevention priority for our board

Committee Reports

Executive Committee

Greenwald: Discussion about reconstituting the traffic/mobility committee upon addition of new member

Engagement

Crames: Small meeting re: biologist and her initiatives with the LA Zoo. 'LA is for everyone' conversation took place. We will reach out to park stakeholders re a 'Griffith Park is for everyone' concept. The Zoo is bringing diversity in via family zoo events

Safety

Laib: Update on No smoking Signs, which are imminent, and we are relentlessly pressing Old Zoo fencing. Besides the two armed robberies at golf course offices last month, crime is quiet in park.

Equestrian

Thornton: Looking forward to the vet update at Pony rides. Analyzing water trough issues, particularly as summer comes.

Sustainability: No report

Zoo

Greenwald: Good communications with Carol Armstrong re: EIR, and her attempts to integrate community feedback. Feels like there will be some progress in coming months

Board Questions

Laib: Any word on the LFNC delayed Zoo EIR public meeting?

Greenwald: NC public meetings are holding as well

Board business

Tracy: Table Tennis boards donated and installed at the Vermont Canyon Rec site by LFNC and LFIA acknowledged

Adjournment

8:08 Crames first; Ashouri second; unanimous approval

Next meeting 4/28 via zoom