

GRIFFITH PARK ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

May 26, 2022

Meeting began at 6:31pm

Greenwald, Crames, Laib, Chung, Crow, Gilbert, Phillips, Thornton present. Ashouri joined at 6:40pm

Board Announcements

Greenwald: Park GM Smith is absent, due to a family leave; James will be representing RAP tonight

Approval of Minutes

Phillips first, Crow and Crames second. Approved as is unanimously

Report from Government Officials

-Schepps, CD4: Two new city council motions of note; community development and employee owned enterprises. The restaurant beverage resolution has passed, and will make acquisition of liquor licenses easier, and will be in effect in CD4

Board Questions and Comments

Phillips: When will the new n

motions be heard? Schepps: No date yet but both in process

-Chief Ranger Losorelli: Recent fire at the Observatory was put down quickly. It was set by a transient, but filing charges are challenging as there are no direct witnesses. He is free and rangers are monitoring his whereabouts in the park.

There are ongoing incidents involving animal rights protestors at the Pony Rides, including an altercation between parents and protestors on a recent weekend. There have been arrests by rangers, resulting in a first amendment lawsuit, which is a common practice for these activist groups. The Chief reminded the board that an outside vet has reviewed the conditions at the venues and found them fine. He gave a shout out for *Signs of Life*, the new show at the Observatory. LAPD Central has deployed motorcycle officers on major arteries in the park and they have been writing speeding tickets.

Board Questions and Comments

Crames: What is the best manner for the public to get emergency info when there is an emergency in the park? Losorelli: LAFD/LAPD have notification systems, including reverse 911 for evacuations. Griffith Observatory has a robust emergency plan. The Rangers not being armed is a problem, as they would not be able to take down an active shooter, which was the manner by which several recent national shootings were terminated. They must wait for LAPD response, which is rarely as fast as ranger response.

Laib: Have rangers been writing tickets for smoking and speeding? Losorelli: Rangers have increased ticket writing, as a result of community requests. Vehicle speed a major problem on mountain roads, including bicyclists, who often dangerously speed on descending roads, such as Vermont, and cause numerous accidents. The Griffith Park rangers have written over 1000 tickets this past year.

Phillips: Is the LAFD twitter feed the best source for real time emergency info? Losorelli: Park Central Communications has emergency procedures and again, the Observatory has a robust plan

-Retired park superintendent Salaires: A RAP consultant for development of a new RFP for the GP Equestrian Center. Thanks board for their volunteer service. RAP commission has announced that the current Equestrian Center operator has been given a 90 day notice to return the venue to the city and cease management. ASM Global, parent of SMG Management has been designated as an interim operator. A lawsuit has been filed by the current operator and he and the department will not be commenting further, as a result

Board Questions and Comments

None

General Public Comment for items not on the agenda

Note: There were two written public comments submitted prior to meeting

Lionel: Bike safety in park a concern. Greenwald: This item is on the agenda, so he will need to comment then

Informational Reports and Presentations

Sowmya Chandrasekhar and Matt Stewart from Kimley-Horn and Associates

A planning and design engineering firm, they presented their initial framework to study traffic circulation and road safety issues on Griffith Park Drive and Crystal Springs Drive. Among the key issues to be studied are cut-through traffic; vehicle speeding; and safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Data collection and field observations will inform recommendations, which may include such items as physical separation of cyclists/pedestrians from vehicles; raised crosswalks and clearer traffic control; and consideration of road closures and/or changes to roadways (e.g. narrower roads, changes in striping, vehicle patterns, etc.). Kimley-Horn will return with initial findings once data collection is complete.

Board Questions and Comments

James interceded: Thanks Kimley Horn for quick analysis/results. RAP has an upcoming meeting with various government entities, including Assembly office, CD4, CalTrans and LADOT, with a desire to expand the scope of the study; email her for a copy of tonight's power point presentation

Laib: It looks like an initial premise of report is that commuter cut throughs are a primary safety problem. Do you agree with the proposed GP Dr northwest segment closure? Why no more robust public transportation recommendations? Chandrasekhar: Yes, speeding commuters a major contributing hazard; the GP closure makes sense; strategic public transportation elements outside the scope of this initial report, although easier access to bus transport included in the report.

Ashouri: Thank you for these quick recommendations. How will the GP Dr closure be implemented? James: That will be covered in upcoming superintendents report

Ashouri: Doesn't find the signage in report to be effective, need more international symbols. And, are curb bump outs, and WAZE changes being considered? The traffic lights and merge lanes at Los Feliz Bl and Riverside are dangerous. Chandrasekhar: Other signage and bump outs will be considered and as for social network traffic routing, these companies are challenging to work with, however, she does have some contacts at Google. The Riverside/LF Bl issues are not in this reports scope

Scheps intervened: CD4 is currently working with Google and commuter cut throughs in GP are being discussed.

Public Comment

Lionel: Sent a written comment (note: it was shared with the board prior to meeting) that a painted stripe separating vehicle and bicyclist traffic is not sufficient. A hard barrier needs to be installed

Damian Kevitt: Great presentation, thank you. Can we also get your study metrics? Thanks RAP for speed signs and asks why no immediate Crystal Springs re striping. Announced he is involved with a CalTrans meeting in early June regarding closing the north bound I-5 GP off ramp.

Melissa Sparks: Thank you for great presentation. Finally dealing with speed! Recommended connection to river bike paths is another safety problem, due to the homeless encampments on the bike path

Steve Alper: Great presentation. What is your data acquisition process?

Helene Rotolo, CD4 special projects, intercedes: CD4 has received a state grant to get homeless on LA River indoors.

Geoff Thompson, CD4 deputy chief of staff intercedes: Our office has also applied for congressional funding, through Congressman Schiff's office

Phillips: Great presentation and approach. How can GPAB help get more community input and feedback?

Ashouri: Will upper Vermont be included in future study, bike lanes on Crystal Springs are too crowded, including pedestrians, hard concrete barriers needed between vehicles and bicyclists, bollards are not enough

Greenwald: Glad study will be expanded to allow for a more complete view of transportation issues in and around the park; very pleased with coordination of RAP and CD4

Thompson intercedes: This project is but the tip of the iceberg. We recognize this is but the first and only one element of a larger strategic project

Chandrasekhar: We will have a lot more within as short as one month. Thank you all for the feedback, Matt took notes. Defers data collection questions to RAP

Superintendents Report

James: The department will be transparent and share information as it comes to them. Email me for a copy of tonight's report.

Several electronic speed signs are up in park, warning those motorists who are exceeding the speed limit.

GP Drive temporary closure is proposed to begin sometime in June and electronic re route messaging will be placed at Travel Town and golf course areas

This is a pilot and with an intent of gathering any adversely impacted user groups and whether it, in fact, curtails cut through drivers or only reroutes them to Zoo Dr.

Covid updates remain unchanged.

Old Zoo fencing project has begun and should be complete by July

Pony Rides third party veterinarian recommendations have been implemented, the vet has made a return visit and is satisfied

Wings of Mexico installation underway and a dedication is scheduled for mid June

Board Questions and Comments

Phillips: Are the Wings a temporary installation? James: An AP Diaz question, I don't know

Ashouri: When will GP Dr be closed? James: Next week meeting will determine, thinks in mid June

Committee Reports

Executive

Greenwald: A discussion about and desire for fast action on transportation issues

Engagement

No report

Safety

Laib: We had a meeting earlier in week, partially to brief new member Crow on Old Zoo safety issues, pony ride escalating confrontations, ranger responses to speeding and smoking and pony ride problems; announcement that the first new No Smoking sign installation will be in early June; reminder that the new signs will be at major trailheads, golf course parking lots and replacements for defaced illegible existing ones. Object is to utilize existing posts and infrastructure for placements. Underscores the collaboration between RAP and GPAB to get the Old Zoo fencing and wildfire signs implemented; kudos to the LFIA for contributing the funds for sign acquisition

Transit and Mobility

Greenwald, Ashouri, Phillips: The draft GP bike lane map shared and discussed, including whether the closure of GP Dr might be opportunity for more bike lanes; LA River final EIR published and posted on LA County Public Works website. GPAB letter on p. 293, our concerns deferred back to the original master plan; an update on Zoo EIR from meeting with Carol Armstrong, and the Zoo will be coming back to the public shortly.

Equestrian

No report

Board Comments and Questions

Greenwald: Will the River master plan be coming back soon? Phillips: Unknown, but the final EIR will be voted on within months

Public Comments and Questions

Alper: The bike lane map illustrates that there is no continuous bike route in GP; all segments need to be connected

Lionel: Likes idea of connecting the bike path on Crystal Springs to LA River paths

Nori: Is the northern dark purple bike path from the Circle X Stables correct? That is a bridal trail, NOT a bike path! Greenwald: This is only a draft map

Hans: Until 1992, there was private vehicular traffic on interior park roads. They were closed. So, there is a history in GP of reducing vehicular traffic.

Phillips: Agree with Nori re equestrian/bike trail should be resolved and Alper's point about connecting bike lane segments

Board Business

Laib: Update on old LA Shares site plans please

James: We should invite park emergency management team to our next GPAB meeting. Will coordinate with Safety ad hoc

Ashouri: Can new ecologist reestablish native plantings at Toyon landfill? James: That site is still in methane reclamation phase and can't be touched for several years still.

Adjournment

Next meeting on June 23 via zoom

Motion to adjourn: Ashouri first, Phillips second; unanimous

Greenwald adjourns meeting at 9:04pm with thoughts and best wishes for superintendent Smith and her family

