

# Griffith Park Advisory Board June, 2023 - Minutes

## June 22nd at Park Central Auditorium

### Call to Order

Crames welcomes all and will chair this meeting.

### Roll Call

Crames, Griffin, Phillips, Thornton, Laib, Crow, Greenwald, Carlson. Chung absent.

### Board Announcements

Welcome to new GPAB member Billy Griffin. Stefanie Smith introduces Billy. Billy has lived in the city since 1976, wants to provide ideas to bring in more young kids and adults from urban areas and provide constructive recreation.

### Minutes

Greenwald first, Thornton seconded. Approved, no corrections.

### Special guests

Jennifer Hull, CD4

-Left hand turn signal on Los Feliz and Vermont is under construction. No timeline provided.

-Kimley Horn report is now final. Report available on CD4 website.

-A few motions regarding park have gone through council: asked for LADOT to do a report for redevelopment of buses connecting Metro to Park's northern amenities—motion passed.

-Councilmember asked about bus stop for Western Heritage way—motion passed, will get a report back.

-Yesterday CC approved to create recommendations for emergency response across all City agencies.

-Happy Ad Hoc report regarding south Griffith park is finished. Will be commenting in the future regarding next steps the office will be taking.

Laib: What are the next steps CD4 will be taking

CD4: First step is talking to park management and stakeholders regarding ad hoc's recommendations.

Crames: Talked to Mehmet of CD4 about getting a formal response from CD4 concerning the two ad hoc reports that were disseminated.

Phillips: Any bulletpoints regarding Kimley Horn

Crames: Mehmet said closure of Griffith Park Drive, signage, and Crystal Springs reconfiguration.

CD4: Funding can be a barrier, but office is working with local, state, and federal partners—have secured \$4M in funds from Laura Friedman's office to address concerns.

Crames: Updates on Ferraro speed bumps?

CD4: Not as of now.

### General Public Comment

Gerry Hans: FoGP - Painting of P-22 in GP Auditorium was gift of Anthony Portantino. Griffith Reporter Newsletter is now available. Wildlife ordinance passed in City Hall. Protecting habitat.

Marian Dodge: FoGP - Bird sanctuary is being rehabilitated. On Saturday June 24th at 8:30 AM they will be gathering with volunteers to clear debris and mulch.

Alexander, Resident of Canyon Drive: Neighbors who live close to gate on Canyon Drive say gate has not been closed at night. LAPD is in charge of keeping gate closed, but has not been doing so.

Wonderview Drive resident: Lock on another gate also is not working. 25 people were heading down past the gate that should have been locked after sundown.

Dawn, local resident: Weed clearance has been happening along trails, but feels like they are not safe for pets because of leftover debris and foxtails. Wants to know if it is a two step process clearing weeds.

Stefanie Smith: It's a one step process, the work is performed and debris is left on the ground unless they are larger impediments on the trail. Have had foxtail issues, but not much else that RAP can do. Could potentially post a sign.

Christina, Lake Hollywood Homeowners Association: Was told by another resident that someone authorized Wisdom Tree trail to be closed for July 4th. Does anyone know anything about closing it?

Stefanie Smith: Won't be closed.

Laura Smith, Burbank Homeowner and Equestrian: Has question concerning route of new Bicycle Path. Looks like it stops at Tunnel 7, which is a dead end and bikes will end up on equestrian trail.

Crames: This is a topic of concern for us. Perhaps we will agendaize soon.

Stefanie Smith: Path is still in design phase so feedback at this stage is helpful. You can email directly to Council Office.

### Information Reports and Presentations

Chris Atencio, Landscape Architect, Planning and Construction, Dept of Rec and Parks -

Bronson Canyon Update: We have developed the beginnings of road, includes a walkway that connects from outside gates to road. Path goes until stream before stopping. There will be a 20 foot continuation of sidewalk and then a crosswalk. In the future, would like to continue sidewalk alongside Canyon Road. Survey was done recently to identify where trees were so sidewalk could be implemented without removing any trees. Construction documents are being compiled, once they are a timeline can be provided.

Greenwald: Initial intent was for sidewalk on Eastside of the roadway because it would not require a double crossing east to west. Westside also has an uprooted area of sidewalk. Can you speak to the analysis that determined that the westside should be the route of the sidewalk instead of the Eastside?

Atencio: Based on grading survey a retaining wall would have needed to be disassembled, large trees would be in jeopardy and forestry team did not want to tamper with strand of trees on the Eastside. It was Forestry representative who determined westside was preferable.

Greenwald: City reps said they would meet with constituents prior to project moving along, we would like to be sure that that meeting takes place whether it is through RAP or CD4.

Carlson: What problem were we trying to solve?

Atencio: ADA Access. We are introducing sidewalks into the park and over time we can continue to build out the sidewalk so folks can access via sidewalk and not road.

Carlson: What is the timeline for the next phase of the sidewalk?

Atencio: For now it's a dirt path.

Crames: How do people access the playground?

Smith: Most people walk on the Eastside on compacted dirt soil, not ADA compliant.

Laib: Do you need concrete to be ADA compliant or does DG work?

Atencio: DG works, but is temporary, it will decompose (decomposed granite), want to provide a more permanent solution — concrete is thus preferable.

Phillips: Is there a drop from sidewalk to dirt?

Atencio: We will feather the dirt from the sidewalk.

Smith: An engineer will ensure ADA compliance from the end of the walkway to be level with the street.

Laib: You are ending the sidewalk because there aren't resources to elongate the path?

Atencio: Correct.

Crames: You mentioned you would like to pass a motion, Greenwald would like to have further talks addressing concerns.

Atencio: We can discuss next steps.

## Public Comment

Gerry Hans: Purpose of this is to keep pedestrians off of the road. Road is very narrow. This project came out of Dixon Study in 2018, went to council committee and it was specified that entry would be on Eastside as that is where all of the traffic is. We are hoping that the project follows the initial plan of using the Eastside even if additional resources are needed. There is only one live tree in that area next to a California Sycamore—a protected tree—there are large vines all around. The Sycamore is in bad shape as a result of the vines. Two dead trees in that area should be removed, Forestry should take a look again at Eastside.

Alexander from Oaks of Bronson Canyon: Completed a project outside of gate for access. Sidewalk was cleaned up, stretch of 420 feet and planted 7 trees. There is gas company infrastructure placed in the area obstructing the path into the park. We know you have \$550k for this project, bathrooms should be a higher priority. You could use DG to save money.

Crames: Thank you, please send your statement to the GPAB email address.

Dawn Goins: My comment is if you have limited funds the idea that you use top quality materials and your project is very limited in scope then perhaps the strategy should be reexamined.

Greenwald: there was an understanding that members of the community could meet with planning team prior to finalizing of plans, no one disagrees with the goal here, but there are questions about the safety and efficacy of the westside placement.

Smith: Please work with CD4 and Planning and Construction to set up this meeting. We will notify the board and public.

Gerry Hans: If we can make it work on the Eastside you get a savings on installing the proposed diagonal crosswalk.

Crames: We will move on.

## Sheila Irani, LHA President - Lake Hollywood Presentation:

Former GPAB member. Here representing Western GP. Lake Hollywood Park, Vista, Wisdom Trail, etc. This issue arose in 2009 while managing popularity of Lake Hollywood as a destination to take pictures of the Hollywood Sign. We see over 4000 visitors a day. LAPD has shutdown Lake Hollywood Drive 4 times to control traffic limiting residents' access. Asking for partnership with the city and have ranger deployed to Western GP area to manage issues related to the park.

Greenwald: Stefanie, what is the best way for our board to assess whether a ranger should be deployed in this regard?

Smith: We would need to speak to the chief, we are short staffed at this point, it is difficult to retain park rangers. We can have the chief attend a GPAB meeting and address these concerns directly.

Irani: Time is of the essence. July 4th is nearly upon us.

Smith: We have a plan in place with traffic staff and park rangers that there is an impending holiday.

Phillips: Irani, have you emailed chief?

Irani: Yes, we have sent correspondence, but have not heard back. We have had issues with vendors that were not adequately addressed until LAPD showed up.

Phillips: Can we give the chief a nudge to respond?

James: This is a motion item, you can write a letter, they are asking for help a ranger isn't necessary to rubber-stamp this, there can be a GPAB letter written.

Smith: If the chief was here he would agree, my understanding is there is a ranger.

Irani: I have heard that as well, and they do not come. I hear the rangers asking dogs to be leashed, but there is not a recognition to the volume of traffic in the area. The weekends are the worst.

James: At the Greek we have rangers at events and even then it is difficult to staff.

Irani: I was working for Tom LaBonge and Traci and I worked together and we have been saying it needs full time ranger enforcement.

Crames: It sounds like a staffing issue.

Irani: That has always been the response. Observatory has 5 rangers, Western GP has none.

**Motion** can be to rush a letter suggesting a ranger be deployed to Western Griffith Park for July 4th and to assess the resources available to the park in terms of rangers and if they can be more regularly assigned to Western GP.

Crames first, Laib second

Crames, Thornton, Crow, Carlson, Greenwald, Griffin, Laib, Phillips: yes, Thornton: abstains

Crames: Will write it

Public Comment:

Christina: We need someone to ensure that smoking doesn't happen. There are 1000s of butts being picked up every day. The ranger can ensure that smoking doesn't occur. Can also assist that patrons can stay on trails and keep the community safe.

Emmy: It sounds like a resource issue, but can there be cameras that can spot fires. Do you have any?

Smith: We don't have any, but it's something that can be looked at.

Steve Alper: I have been talking to you guys about this problem for awhile now, you should form an ad hoc to find out what your needs are.

Ken, Wonderview Drive: It would be great if Google Maps could be changed so Wonderview isn't suggested as the beginning of the trail.

**LA Zoom Vision Plan Revised Final EIR: Adhoc report**

Greenwald: Phillips and I have been analyzing the EIR for sometime. We wrote our first letter in February 2021. The EIR envisions raising the number of visitors to Griffith Park to 3M. Our board wanted to focus on transportation. From a transportation standpoint, they revised their estimates from 3M visitors to 2.5M, dropped a proposed parking structure — still not enough specificity. Last Fall we wrote a 10-page letter praising certain aspects of the new proposal, but you are not adequately addressing the influx of private vehicles without proper mitigations in place to withstand the extra visitors. The Zoo then released their 4th EIR, the latest had a big asterisk.

Phillips: There is more accountability now. There needs to be better strategy for moving visitors around. There are two programs in place to address these concerns, but they were not talking to each other, but now the programs are integrated. LADOT is now going to be involved. The new plan has 4 new event spaces. All vehicle miles traveled are now being accounted for. Bigger commitment to bike access.

Greenwald: Our last letter said there are 6 principles that need to be addressed before GPAB supports project. 1 of those is the Vehicle Miles Traveled metric, that is the new statewide standard for projects to address how they are mitigating transportation impacts. New changes are great, but the VMT leaves some questions to be asked. CD4 has secured commitments from Zoo and LADOT to set up additional VMT monitoring and mitigation program. Given those commitments we feel good about where this project currently is, it has changed drastically from the initial EIR. We are supporting this project, while acknowledging there are ecological concerns, which is not our area of expertise.

Laib: Can we get the CD4 commitments in writing?

Greenwald: Our letter includes such language, clarifying their oversight as a key component in our support.

Crames: Is there a motion?

Greenwald: We should take public comment.

Carlson: How will they accomplish the mitigation and what are the repercussions?

Greenwald: My understanding is DOT is the key agency here ie a direct shuttle from Red Line to Zoo. I trust the leadership of CD4 and support of DOT.

Phillips: TDM is the state metric and that is what we need to go by.

### Public Comment

Irani: I am a TDM expert nationally. These suggest bike racks, metro bikes, carpools.

Emmy: I am representing the Sierra Club. I am glad you are concerned with transportation, but this board was established to honor the urban wilderness identity. We wrote a letter opposing some of the ecological impacts. There is a ridge in question that will be adversely impacted.

Gerry: We spent a lot of time on the ecology aspect of this project. I will note in your last letter you asked that the urban ecologist consult on six different bullet points regarding condor canyon. What was the follow up on those bullet points, what did the urban ecologist say, was there follow up? There is a lot of talk about Biodiversity, but the Zoo is not helping to that end. I recommend you make comments on traffic, but not ecology.

Crames: The Zoo is excluded in the purview of Griffith Park and that is why we chose to focus on transportation.

Greenwald: We wanted to adhere to the six aforementioned principles in our last letter, the way we chose to frame it here is there continues to be significant concerns that have been raised by others including those related to the ecosystem, but this new document states that RAP will have a role to play in dealing...

Phillips: Urban ecologist will be working as part of the process.

Crames: Can we only endorse the transportation aspect of the EIR.

Greenwald: It would unduly narrow our focus.

Crames: I understand that the Zoo isn't part of the park.

Laib: The board years ago decided to focus on transportation issues.

Julie: I wanted to say that it sounds like a cop out that you say you aren't ecology.

Laib: Can we add a letter that we are concerned about the environmental impact on the park.

### **Motion Greenwald, as a result of TDM, CD4 and LADOT's commitments we revise the LA Zoo EIR Report.**

Crames, Thornton, Carlson, Greenwald, Griffin, Laib, Phillips - yes, Crames - No, Crow - Abstain

Motion: **we support EIR**: passes.

### **Superintendent Updates**

Road and Safety Improvements: We will be reducing the number of lanes on Crystal Springs, installing speed humps, and introducing signage, funding will come from state.

Park Closures: Merry Go Round remains closed. Other closures remain as well.

Pony Rides: There is a consulting group Placeworks that will be reaching out to GPAB to discuss the future of the Pony Rides site.

Parking Meters: Anthony Gallo is here — Out of 22 meters only 4-5 work. Verizon seems like they have the most ideas to help rectify the situation.

Smith: We do not know what the total revenue loss was.

### **Committee and Ad Hoc Reports**

Executive Committee: We will be having a meeting in July.

### **Board Business**

Bike Horse Trail

Bronson Canyon Improvements

Parking Revenue  
Rangers with Chief Losarelli

**Adjournment**

Laib first, Carlson second.