

APPROVED

JAN 04 2024

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

BOARD REPORT

NO. 24-011

DATE January 04, 2024

C.D. 11

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: VENICE OF AMERICA CENTENNIAL PARK – RESCISSION OF PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION FOR CONCEPTUAL APPROVAL OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY HISTORY MUSEUM ON PARK PROPERTY

B. Aguirre	_____	M. Rudnick	_____
B. Jones	_____	for *C. Santo Domingo	<u>DF</u>
B. Jackson	_____	N. Williams	_____

General Manager

Approved X

Disapproved _____

Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Rescind its prior action of September 3, 2014, (Board Report No. 14-228) approving in concept the development of a community history museum at Venice of America Centennial Park (Centennial Park) and authorizing the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) staff to review, coordinate, negotiate project details and prepare an operation and maintenance agreement or lease for future Board consideration; and,
2. Authorize RAP staff to make technical corrections as necessary to carry out the intent of this Report.

SUMMARY

On September 3, 2014, the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners (Board) approved in concept the development of a community history museum at Venice of America Centennial Park (Centennial Park) by the Venice Heritage Foundation (VHF). The park property in question is located at 501 South Venice Boulevard, east of and immediately adjacent to the existing Venice-Abbot Kinney Memorial Branch Public Library. VHF, a 501(c)(3) non-profit community organization, had intended for a museum to celebrate the diversity and heritage of the Venice community through rotating exhibitions, events, and educational activities, with the purpose of transforming the space into a community hub and a safe space to learn. The development of the proposed museum was to be done in two phases over a period of four years, funded by VHF through grants, endowments, in-kind and cash donations, and membership fees (Attachment 1 – Report No. 14-228).

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Following the Board's conceptual approval of this museum, VHF kept both RAP and Council District 11 updated in their fundraising efforts, as well as providing updated phased implementation plans when prompted.

On August 10, 2023, VHF met with RAP and Council District 11 representatives to discuss their project's status. Given that the museum project's scope and timeline continued to shift, RAP requested that VHF confirm in writing whether or not VHF could execute the museum project in a timely manner.

Following the meeting, VHF responded with a memo, stating that while they remained committed to the community and Venice of America Centennial Park the operational needs of VHF have grown and therefore VHF has decided to withdraw from the previously granted conditional approval for the use of Centennial Park. VHF has found that, with their successes in programming and fundraising, as well as the growth of their operational needs, "...owning and operating a museum within a public park [...] would impede [VHF's] ability to grow..." (Attachment 2 – VHF Letter of Withdrawal).

VHF still envisions an active and collaborative role for itself at Centennial Park, and plans to come back to RAP with a new proposal for the space. Any subsequent proposal from VHF to RAP for new capital improvements at Centennial Park would need to be reviewed by RAP staff and be submitted to the Board for approval.

TREES AND SHADE

There are no impacts to trees or shade

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Section 21065 of California Public Resource Code (CPRC) defines the characteristics of the projects subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as an activity undertaken or funded by a public agency that may cause direct physical change or foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, or an activity that involves the issuance of a lease, permit to use or other entitlement by public agencies.

The conceptual approval of the development of a community history museum at Centennial Park did not include a complete, fully-defined project scope or approval of any relevant agreements, which were still to be negotiated by the parties. The rescission of this conceptual approval is not expected to cause any direct or indirect physical change in the environment. Therefore, staff recommends that the Board take no CEQA action.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact to RAP.

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STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES AND GOALS

Approval of this Board Report advances RAP's Strategic Plan by supporting:

Goal No. 1: Provide Safe and Accessible Park

Outcome No. 1: All parks are safe and welcoming

This Report was prepared by Angela Wang, Management Assistant, Planning, Maintenance and Construction Branch.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Attachment 1 – Report No. 14-228
- 2) Attachment 2 – VHF Letter of Withdrawal

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SEP 03 2014

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

NO. 14-228

DATE: September 3, 2014


**BOARD OF RECREATION
& PARK COMMISSIONERS**

C.D. 11

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: VENICE OF AMERICA CENTENNIAL PARK – CONCEPTUAL APPROVAL OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY HISTORY MUSEUM ON PARK PROPERTY

R. Adams	_____	*V. Israel	_____
R. Barajas	_____	K. Regan	_____
H. Fujita	_____	N. Williams	_____



 General Manager

Approved _____ Disapproved _____ Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board:

1. Approve in concept the development of a community history museum at Venice of America Centennial Park, to be provided and operated by the Venice Heritage Foundation, all at no cost to the City; and,
2. Direct staff from the Department of Recreation and Parks' Planning, Construction and Maintenance (PCM) Branch to work with the Venice Heritage Foundation to determine project requirements, review plans, and coordinate project details for staff recommendations and preparation of an operation and maintenance agreement or lease for future Board consideration.

SUMMARY:

The Venice Heritage Foundation (VHF), a 501(c)(3) non-profit community organization, has approached the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) and presented their vision and proposal for creating the Venice Heritage Museum (Museum), a community history museum at Venice of America Centennial Park in the community of Venice, where the culture and history of Venice, California, can be shared with the local community and broader public through rotating exhibits. The park property in question is located at 501 South Venice Boulevard, east of and immediately adjacent to the existing Venice-Abbot Kinney Memorial Branch Public Library.

Pursuant to VHF's vision, the Museum would be a site where stories, artifacts, collections, and

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archives about the history of Venice would be shared with City residents and tourists. VHF has requested that RAP approve in concept the development of the Museum Project by VHF through funds raised by VHF through grants, endowments, in-kind and cash donations, and membership fees. This conceptual approval is part of VHF's process to seek permission from the City to be allowed to develop the Museum. Once the Museum has been opened to the public, other sources for running Museum operations would include admissions, gift shop sales, coffee bar sales, and funds from special fundraising events.

VHF has shared details of the proposed Museum with the public through their website at www.VeniceHeritageMuseum.org. The Museum Project has two phases. After sufficient funds have been raised and collected for Phase I development of the Museum, VHF intends to renovate a Pacific Electric Red Car trolley to house the Museum's exhibits and collections and move the trolley on-site. VHF proposes to have a paid staff of three (3) and a core group of 15 to 20 volunteers run the day-to-day operations of the Museum, which will be addressed either through an agreement between RAP and VHF for operation and maintenance of the Museum or property lease. Later on, after sufficient funds have been raised for Phase II of the Museum Project, construction of a replica of the original Tokio Red Car substation to house additional Museum exhibits would begin. A depiction of the proposed Museum site plan is attached as Exhibit A. Should the Board approve in concept the development of a community history museum at Venice of America Centennial Park as proposed by VHF, staff from RAP's PCM Branch will discuss with VHF details regarding site development and future grounds maintenance, provide firm criteria for development of the property, and decide whether an agreement for operations and maintenance or property lease would be the appropriate instrument for VHF to use the park property. Staff will approach the Board at a later date after details for an agreement with VHF have been negotiated and agreed upon, and only after VHF has demonstrated or shown they have raised the necessary funds for Phase I development of the Museum and to pay for staff costs to operate and maintain the Museum and related park property for a minimum of one (1) to three (3) years, depending on negotiations between RAP and VHF.

Staff has determined that the California Environmental Quality Act impact this project has will be addressed when the complete project scope has been determined and sufficient funds have been identified to begin the project.

Staff has discussed VHF's proposal with the Superintendent of the Valley Region and the staff of Council District 11, and each supports VHF's proposal on the condition that VHF raises sufficient funds to develop the Museum and thereafter maintain the Museum and related park property at their sole expense, including payment for all utilities and waste disposal associated with their operations.

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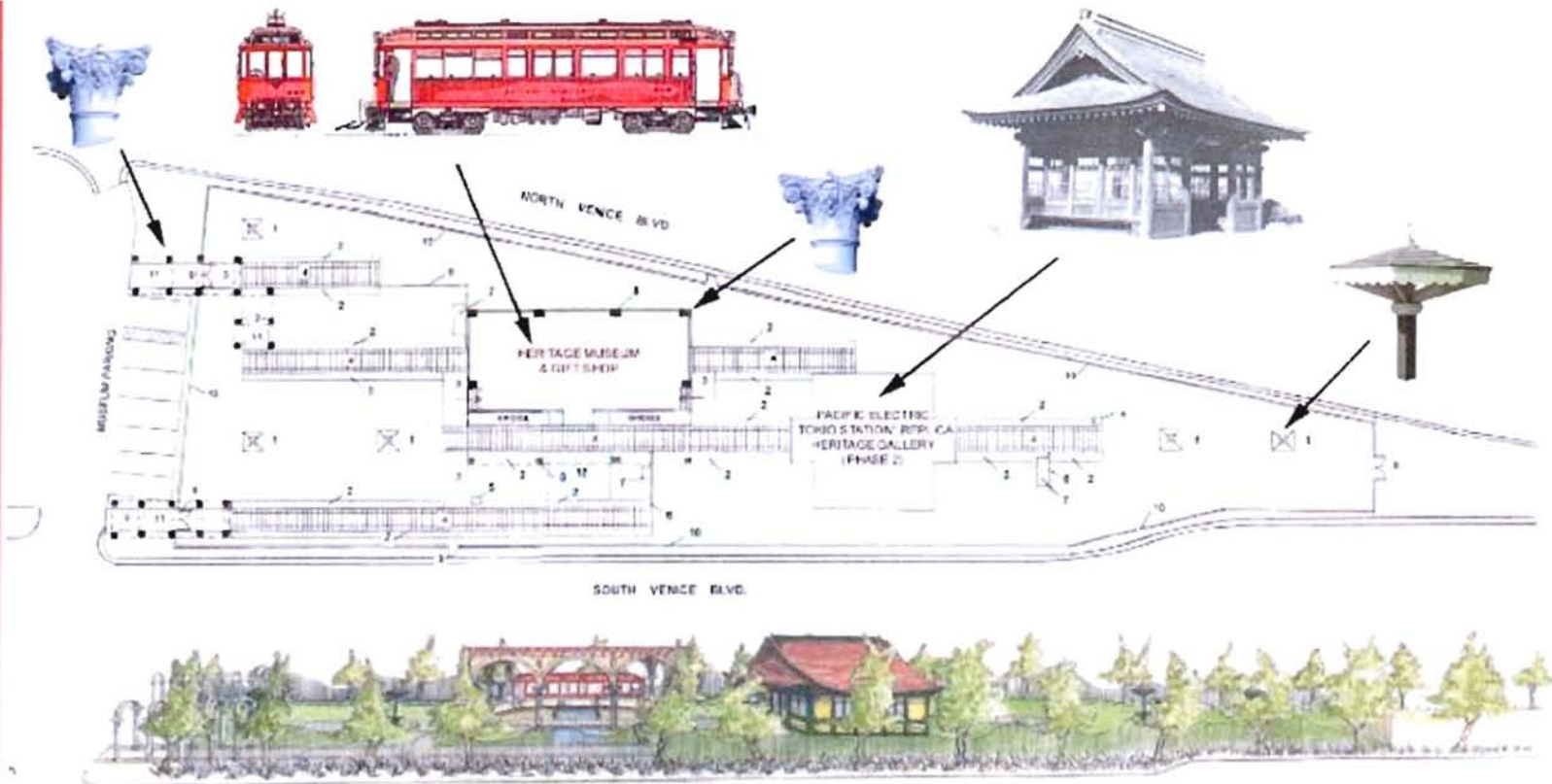
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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

Approval in concept of a community history museum at Venice of America Centennial Park has no fiscal impact on the Department's General Fund.

This report was prepared by Joel Alvarez, Senior Management Analyst I, and Raymond Chang, Management Analyst I, Partnership Division.

EXHIBIT A



LEGEND

- 1 COVERED SEATING
- 2 DRAIVE
- 3 CONCRETE WALK
- 4 TALL RAIL ROAD TRACK
- 5 TRASH CANS
- 6 CONCRETE CURB
- 7 BENCH SEATING
- 8 PLATFORM ROOF COLUMNS
- 9 GATE
- 10 IRON SECURITY FENCE
- 11 COLUMNNADE
- 12 WATER FEATURE

VENICE HERITAGE MUSEUM

DONALD L. THUOTTE
DESIGNER (310) 398-7800

Red Car Elevation
Courtesy: HOWARD NOURSE

VENICEHERITAGEMUSEUM@GMAIL.COM



ENVISIONING A
Venice History Museum





September 18, 2023

Superintendent Darryl Ford

City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks

Dear Superintendent Ford,

Thank you for your time during our meeting in August. As discussed, I am writing on behalf of the Venice Heritage Foundation to formally withdraw from the conditional approval granted to our organization in 2014 for the use of Centennial Park.

With recent successes in programming and fundraising, our operational needs have grown exponentially. There are several specific challenges and limitations associated with owning and operating a museum within a public park that would impede our organization's ability to grow and provide the type of environment that we feel the Venice Heritage Museum requires to appropriately house our collections, programs, and events.

Given those considerations, the Board of the Venice Heritage Foundation has chosen to pursue a commercial space that can accommodate our expanding operations more effectively.

Venice Heritage Foundation's commitment to enhancing Centennial Park remains unwavering. We firmly believe that active parks make safe parks, and the Venice Heritage Foundation is devoted to funding an array of improvements to our cherished Venice of America Centennial Park.

To start, we are ready to donate a Community Plaza including an ADA accessible stage and shade pergola that will help bolster public programming such as storytelling events and community classes, as well as the Pacific Electric Red Car Trolley site specific sculpture. Both projects are detailed in our memo submitted on August 10, 2023.

We believe that the establishment of the Venice of America Community Plaza, along with the installation of the Pacific Electric Red Car Trolley, will undoubtedly contribute to the vibrancy of the park.

These engaging additions are anticipated to attract a diverse range of individuals, including local families, children, residents, and the countless visitors who flock to the vibrant community of Venice, California annually.



It is our belief that these contributed assets will serve as valuable resources for the Department of Recreation and Parks, our friends at the Venice-Abbot Kinney Memorial Library, and community groups engaged in public programming.

We feel that we are uniquely positioned to help build out that programming together with local organizations, such as Friends of the Venice Library, in addition to partnering with various community groups and individuals interested in activating the park.

The Venice Heritage Foundation looks forward to continuing this conversation with the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks and Los Angeles City Council District 11.

Warm regards,

Kristina

Kristina von Hoffmann

Board President

Venice Heritage Foundation

kristina@veniceheritagemuseum.org