

Approved Meeting Minutes
PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
10-27-08

ATTENDING: Bank, Cant, Coffey, Guarienti, Harryman, Hudson, Kaplan, Kirby, Mercurio, Peters, Shalaby, Shimansky, Southworth, Vann, Walters, Williams
NOT ATTENDING: Coomber, Dotson, Hart, Hooper, Phillips
STAFF ATTENDING: Barial, Olson, Kenny, Pfuehler, Rasmussen
GUESTS: Doug Siden
PUBLIC: Dallas Harryman, Norm Kidder, Karen Vigars, David L. Means, Monica and Joe Rod, Carol Frank, Thomas Debony, Dorothea Baldwin, Jennifer Hughes, Amy Matabuena

1. **Approval of Minutes:** The September 22, 2008 meeting minutes were approved with minor suggestions and edits. PAC member Walters clarified that item 5 should read "high bypass Reverse Osmosis units." This was noted by District staff.

PAC member Kirby moved and approval was seconded by PAC member Hudson. Two abstentions from PAC members (Kaplan and Mercurio).

2. **Introductions:** Chair Guarienti asked PAC Members and District staff to introduce themselves as well as members of the public. He also changed the agenda to allow public comments before PAC business.

3. **Public Comments:**
Thomas Debony spoke for an informal group called Oyster Bay Dog Group (OBDG). This group gathered between 130-140 signatures on a petition objecting to changes at Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline. They support a large off-leash area and prefer natural wild vegetation.

Jennifer Hughes, a member of OBDG, commented about coming from Alameda to Oyster Bay specifically because of the large off-leash area in the Regional Shoreline. She wants the District to engage in a dialogue with OBDG.

OBDG's Karen Vigars expressed her concern about proposed changes to the park's landscape. She appreciates the hills and valleys. She commented about how popular the park is with dog owners. She also highlighted the fact that dog owners currently share the park with non-dog owners and there have not been any problems.

Chair Guarienti explained the item was not on the agenda and the PAC had not been briefed on this issue. He asked if the OBDG expressed their concerns with the Board. Vigars said they had voiced their opinions at a Board meeting and discussed the issue with AGM for Planning and Design Mike Anderson. The OBDG members do not feel they have been heard. Guarienti reiterated that the PAC could not take action on the item at this meeting. PAC Member Kirby suggested, given the interest in the issue, that the PAC request a briefing from staff at an upcoming meeting. Guarienti agreed.

Guarienti asked for input from Park Operations Chief Jack Kenny. Kenny stated Oyster Bay is in transition from its former use as a landfill to a park. It is a lengthy process.

PAC Member Hudson suggested the PAC ask for a briefing from staff. He also suggested OBDG could gather more signatures if they held off submitting their petition to the District right away.

PAC Members Southworth and Vann asked if the PAC could even receive the petitions. PAC member Hudson clarified the PAC probably could, but the OBDG should get more input from Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline users.

PAC Member Kirby motioned and PAC member Walters seconded that staff provide information about Oyster Bay and the implementation of the Land Use Plan to the PAC. Unanimously approved.

4. **Board Member Comments:**
Director Doug Siden thanked PAC Members Kirby, Guarienti and Walters who were at the dedication of the trail around Alameda Point. He also commended Chair Guarienti for all of his volunteer service with the District, particularly the hikes he has led.

Director Siden gave an update about Measure WW. The Alameda County Registrar of Voters left off 13 key words from the Measure WW ordinance as it appeared on voter's ballots. The District took legal action and, as a compromise to reprinting all 880,000 ballots, the Registrar agreed to send a letter to each voter notifying them of their error. While generally considered a negative, the error called attention the Measure and the District received a lot of press, television and radio coverage. Director Siden thanked the PAC for their support of the Measure and asked if there were any questions or comments. There were none on WW.

Hudson, however, commented he was impressed with the District's police who recently caught turkey poachers at Anthony Chabot Regional Park.

5. **Presentations:**

a. **2008 District Grants Activities – Jeff Rasmussen, Grants Manager**

Grants Manager Jeff Rasmussen discussed the District's 2008 grants work. He also introduced, by way of powerpoint, Jessica Lau, Administrative Analyst and Eva Lowe, Account Clerk. The three of them comprise the District's grants team. The department secures government grants for the District. They ensure the District complies with contract conditions, and auditing and fiduciary requirements associated with the grants it receives. Rasmussen highlighted some of the projects grants have helped the District complete (projects associated with Black Diamond Mines, the Delta DeAnza Trail and the Iron Horse Trail)

The District did well in receiving grants from Prop. 12 (2000) and Prop. 40 (2002). The District allocated some of this funding to build a 300,000 gallon water tank at Del Valle and improve the water quality at Don Castro Lagoon with a filter outlet system. The District has been awarded \$3 million to build a boathouse at the Tidewater area of Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline.

Eden Landing Ecological Preserve is an ongoing partnership with the Department of Fish and Game and the Wildlife Conservation Board. On October 8th, a final breach was conducted to restore 700 acres of wetlands. When the preserve is completed, it will add nearly three miles of Bay Trail from the San Mateo Bridge southward.

Grant money also is used for acquisitions. For example, the Newbury property which is just behind the Del Valle campground was acquired.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides funding when disasters strike District property. After the winter 2005-2006 storms, 52 sites throughout the District had damage. For example, FEMA helped pay to repair a small landside area behind some homes near Redwood Regional Park. FEMA also provides resources to remove hazardous fuel to prevent fires in the Oakland-Berkeley hills. FEMA has awarded the District \$2.6 million for 38 projects with 12 still in need of completion.

Rasmussen added the District received over \$13 million in grant funding this year and is processing 113 payment requests to agencies for reimbursements. The District completed 66 projects this year. He expects 2008 grant revenue will approach \$17 million. The department is monitoring nearly \$70 million in grants: active \$35 million, applied for \$7 million, awarded \$16 million. They are closing out \$1.5 million and tracking another \$8 million.

Since the 2000 enactment of Prop. 12, the District has been awarded \$28 million from this proposition. Under Prop. 40 in 2002, the District has been awarded \$19 million and has until 2011 to complete Prop. 40 funded projects.

The District will be responsible for distributing the local portion, \$125 million, of Measure WW. Funds are awarded to local communities based on population. The District has drafted the guidelines for the distribution process, but the Measure has not yet passed.

PAC Member Shimansky asked if the District has restrictions about how the local WW money can be used. Rasmussen said it is up to the applicant, but clearly it needs to be used for parks and trails. He also added that since it is bond money, it has to be used for capital projects – meaning the projects have to last for more than 20 years. Clearly, locals will have to follow the California Environmental Quality Act and other state and federal laws as well.

Rasmussen says he hopes to make funds available by February 1, 2009. PAC member Hudson asked if it can be done that quickly. Rasmussen said that is the plan. Rasmussen continued discussing other active projects, such as pursuing \$1.1 million for Crown Beach, \$1.8 million for the I-580 undercrossing between Dublin and Pleasanton, \$2.2 million for Pleasanton Ridge land acquisition, \$900,000 from the Coastal Conservancy to expand Eastshore State Park, and \$750,000 from Caltrans to repair the Lafayette Moraga Trail.

As part of Prop. 84 in 2006, the state recently authorized \$400 million for the Urban Parks Act grant program. They will be taking applications next August. Two District projects would be competitive: the Pt. Pinole Visitor Center, and the Alvarado Day Camp and Bridge repair project. Prop. 84 also called for \$100 million for interpretative facilities grants, but that program has not yet been legislatively authorized. Once authorized, the Delta Science Center and Tilden Environmental Education Center (EEC) renovation would be good candidates.

PAC member Hudson asked if the Tilden EEC renovation has anything to do with the golf course. Rasmussen responded no, but the Center is an aging facility which needs electrical and sewer upgrades.

PAC Member Kirby asked about Alvarado Daycamp. Rasmussen said it is in Wildcat Canyon, but he is not real sure about the details. He mentioned the need to upgrade the restroom's lift station and flush toilets, but didn't have additional details.

PAC Member Mercurio asked if Prop. 84 implementation will be a competitive grants process. Rasmussen said it was likely and the District probably will have received more from Props. 12 and 40 than they will from Prop. 84.

PAC Member Hudson commented that Mountain View put a playing field on top of their large water tank and wondered if the District could do the same. Rasmussen was familiar with the idea, as they have done the same thing in his home town of Tracy, but that ball fields weren't really part of the District's mission. Hudson suggested that it was something to think about when negotiating with developers who are trying to demonstrate no net loss of land.

PAC member Southworth asked who provided the grant for Newbury Canyon. Rasmussen responded a competitive grant from state parks. Southworth also asked if the District had an active list of green projects. Rasmussen stated not yet, but the District did receive a grant for recycling containers and the solar panels on top of Peralta Oaks headquarters were half funded by grants.

PAC member Williams asked if the District conducted its own Environmental Impact Reports or used consultants. Rasmussen said some in-house, some by consultants and some by the agencies.

PAC member Shimansky asked if the current economy would impact grants. Rasmussen answered a slow down is likely, but certain areas will continue to be strong. For example, trails and transportation funding from the ½ sales tax passed by Alameda County will be distributed, Measure J funds in Contra Costa County will be available in 2009 and the federal transportation bill will be reauthorized.

Chair Guarienti commended Rasmussen for a good presentation and added he is extremely knowledgeable.

b. Habitat Conservation Plan Update – Brad Olson, Environmental Programs Manager

Brad Olson, Environmental Programs Manager made a powerpoint presentation about the 172,000 acre East Contra Costa Habitat Conservation Plan (ECCHCP). The plan sets aside a certain amount of land to mitigate the impacts of development. It is designed to protect 28 threatened and endangered species, while allowing for development and some incidental take. It also provides a streamlined process for regulatory approvals. Plan implementation for approximately 30,000 acres of land acquisition, restoration and management is around \$350,000 million. Some funding is included in Measure WW.

PAC Member Shimansky asked if Antioch was included. Olson replied no. PAC Member Hudson asked if Clayton was included. Olson responded yes.

PAC Member Kaplan asked if incidental take permits for 28 species means they can be accidentally killed. Olson responded yes, although some rare plants and species like Golden Eagles cannot be taken incidentally. The plan makes it clear that steps must be taken to limit the impact on threatened and endangered species.

PAC Member Peters expressed concern about kit fox den protection. Olson responded that dens need to be monitored to determine if they are currently in use before being removed.

PAC Member Hudson clarified the urban growth boundary limits were set by a vote of the people with Measure J and need to be respected in the HCP. Olson said yes they were.

Some additional goals of ECCHCP are to prevent loss of wetlands, loss of other special status species, preserve rare plant habitat and restore about 600 acres of wetlands. Olson highlighted wetlands restoration projects at the Black Diamond Mines/Lentzner property and the Vasco Caves/Souza I property. The projects are small, but significant in order to create new habitat for the endangered tiger salamander.

PAC Member Kaplan asked if there was a population of tiger salamanders nearby. Olson confirmed there was. Kaplan also asked about cattle grazing. Olson responded no cattle, but sheep graze at these properties because they don't like to get their feet wet so they stay out of the wetland areas. Sheep provide grazing management benefits while giving the salamanders and native vegetation a relatively undisturbed environment to thrive without the District needing to fence off the area. The objective is to try to make these kinds of projects blend into the existing landscape.

Another project, Souza II, involves acquiring 190 acres near Vasco Road and the Byron Vernal Pools. It is currently home to a large patch of starthistle which needs to be eradicated. The plan is to restore the parcel with native grasses and wetlands which should allow for the return of the San Joaquin kit fox. It also presents an opportunity to tunnel under Vasco Road for a potential regional trail as a large culvert is currently in place.

PAC Member Jean Peters asked about the weed management techniques being used on the thistle. Olson responded that several techniques are needed including: aerial application of herbicide, prescribed fire and using heavy equipment to drag steel beams through the patch to flatten the thistles.

PAC Member Kaplan asked if tadpole shrimp will return to the restored wetlands. Olson said that is the hope since some eggs were retrieved in dirt from a PG&E project nearby.

PAC Member Southworth asked if there is evidence of the old creek bed. Olson said there was and Robin Grossinger, an environmental scientist from the San Francisco Estuary Institute, is putting together a historical atlas of Contra Costa wetlands to use as a guide for the District's restoration work. He is using 100 years of aerial photography and old topographic maps.

PAC Member Hudson wanted clarification about the possible trail connection under Vasco Road. Olson said, at this point, it is simply a possibility since funding to acquire the Byron Vernal Pools is in Measure WW. Hudson expressed concern about users parking along Vasco Road to access the trail. Olson clarified the District would plan a staging area off the road.

The District is helping to line up grant money to acquire 10-15 acres of Souza II by the summer of 2009 or summer of 2010. Since development is not occurring as rapidly, it is a good time to acquire land.

PAC member Kirby asked for confirmation that the HCP and the urban growth boundary could be re-opened in 30 years. Olson clarified the two issues were on separate tracks, but perhaps some of the HCP parties could decide not to participate in the future.

PAC Member Hudson clarified Measure J requires a vote of the people to change urban growth boundaries. If cities expand without a vote, they stand to lose up to \$2 billion in LAFCo funding.

Chair Guarienti referenced the fact that eastern Alameda County does not have an HCP. Olson confirmed that there is a East Alameda County Conservation Strategy, but not an HCP.

PAC Member Cant asked a non-HCP related question concerning the District receiving money from the Cosco Busan oil spill settlement. Olson responded the District is conducting a natural resource damage assessment in an effort to put a monetary value on the impacts to both wildlife and recreation. The District will then propose a plan to complete up to 12 restoration projects within three years.

Chair Guarienti thanked Brad Olson for his presentation.

6. PAC Member Comments:

PAC Member Kaplan said he impressed with the Bob Walker photography exhibit at the Oakland Museum. It has been extended through November. He encouraged other PAC members to visit the Natural Sciences Gallery to see it. PAC Member Kirby added portions of the exhibit will be relocated for a year to both terminals at the Oakland Airport.

7. Report from the Chair:

PAC Chair Rich Guarienti presented the PAC's proposed goals for 2009. He asked PAC Members to e-mail or call Legislative Administrative Manager Erich Pfuehler with any ideas or suggestions. He mentioned Pfuehler had meet with other District staff to develop the proposed goals. He and other PAC members suggested a few changes to the document. Guarienti will present the proposed goals at the Board's next Executive Committee meeting.

PAC Member Coffey asked why the PAC would review Measure WW in 2009. Pfuehler clarified if WW passes, the District will need to develop criteria for distributing local grants and moving forward with projects.

PAC Member Kirby asked for clarification about the trails checklist. Chair Guarienti recommended PAC members visit the trails before it rains in order to make first-hand recommendations on them. He believes trails at Mission Peak, Tilden and Briones are being reviewed. PAC Member Kaplan said he thought the Board had already considered the trail at Briones. Kenny clarified the Board considered a different area of Briones. Guarienti added it was near the entrance coming off Kenny Reliez Valley road. Kaplan wanted to know which trail in Tilden needed review. Kenny said Vollmer Peak.

PAC Member Southworth asked about the community outreach task force. Pfuehler clarified District staff, including Public Affairs AGM Rosemary Cameron and Chief of Interpretation and Recreation Rick Parmer, will be meeting in November and prepared to address the PAC community outreach subcommittee early next year.

Chair Guarienti raised the idea that the PAC may form a master plan review subcommittee. PAC Member Kirby agreed and said he participated in the last subcommittee which reviewed the master plan.

Chair Guarienti clarified the review of the trail repair guidelines would be similar to the pavement presentation the PAC received this year.

Kenny asked for a clarification about the PAC's role in reviewing special use permits. Kaplan suggested the PAC should be looking at the District's overall process as well as reviewing new permits. Kirby clarified that the PAC reviews permits and concession agreements as they come up. Guarienti said the PAC should keep reviewing special use permits as a specific goal for 2009 and then perhaps list it as an on-going goal from now on.

Chair Guarienti mentioned the District sent letters to those who appoint PAC members to ask if they wanted to reappoint current members. No one is termed out, although one was elected to the Board and another may voluntarily be leaving. We will have elections for the chair and vice chair at the next meeting, as well as subcommittee members.

8. Board Committee Reports:

Chair Guarienti mentioned the successful September 24, 2008 landscape art show at the Bankhead Theatre in Livermore. On October 8, he went to the Eden Landing Levee Breach. The new staging area links to the pedestrian bridge over the highway. There will be 2 ½ miles of trail. A new trail has also been completed at Brushy Peak.

PAC Member Southworth asked if a sign had been placed at Brushy Peak to prevent hikers from going all the way to the top. Chair Guarienti answered there is not a sign, but the peak is fenced off. He also reminded members the peak is actually owned by LARPD. Kenny added the trail is not yet officially open.

Chair Guarienti attended the successful Cowboy Festival at Sunol on the 18th. He also spoke to the trail patrol on the 21st.

Chair Guarienti added that there is no finance committee report.

PAC Member Bank distributed the Board Operations report. Ardenwood's picnic concession has been given an extension for the year. District cash registers are being upgraded and computerized to accept credit cards. She added more memberships are being sold. Kaplan wondered where membership cards should be placed in the car. Kenny responded to hang it from the mirror.

PAC Member Bank mentioned an oral history project is underway to record the history of the parks. They will be catalogued for people to access. Chair Guarienti mentioned he informed the Board that the public should have access to these histories.

9. Status of Recommendations:

All items passed.

10. Old Business:

Kenny mentioned the District received a report card from EBMUD. The results were mixed, but when all irrigation accounts are combined the District as a whole does not exceed its water conservation limits.

11. New Business:

Pfuehler announced the PAC Holiday Dinner at Scotts in Walnut Creek on December 1, 2008 cocktails at 6:00 pm.

12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m. The next meeting will be Monday, November 24, 2008.

Summary of Actions :

1. The September 22, 2008 meeting minutes were approved with minor suggestions and edits. Unanimously approved with two abstentions.
2. PAC member Kirby motioned, PAC member Walters seconded that staff provide information about the implementation of the Land Use Plan for Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline. Unanimously approved.
3. Jack Kenny commented that EBRPD met their water conservation goals according to EBMUD.
4. Holiday Dinner is Monday, December 1, 2008 at Scotts in Walnut Creek.

Respectfully submitted,
Yolande Barial, PAC Secretary