

AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

C. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

7. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Operations (10/20/11) _____ (Severin)

Present

Board: Directors Carol Severin (Chair), Ayn Wieskamp, Doug Siden

Staff: Jim O'Connor, Jeff Wilson, Mimi Waluch, Nancy Kaiser, Anne Kassebaum,
Sergio Huerta, Janet Gomes, Ira Bletz, Tiffany Margulici, Noah Dort,
Daria Schwarzschild, Leigh Padmore

Guest: Director Whitney Dotson

I. Memorial Bench Program Update

Park Operations Chief Jeff Wilson reviewed the program's history dating back to 2003 when the Board of Directors adopted the Commemorative Bench Policy to provide the public with an opportunity to make donations for commemorative benches throughout the park system. This policy was superseded in 2006 when the Board adopted the Memorial and Outdoor Art Policy. Under that policy, the commemorative bench and plaque policy is referenced in general terms, but the actual procedures for accepting donations for commemorative benches and plaques were incorporated into the bench guidelines contained in the overall Memorial and Outdoor Art Policy. During a recent review of the program, a number of issues and concerns were raised that are being brought before the Committee at this time because it has been eight years since initiation of the policy, which requires a review ten years following its adoption.

Since 2004, staff has installed 110 ADA-accessible benches, averaging 12-14 installations a year, with Tilden, Pt. Isabel, Contra Costa Trails and Redwood being the most requested parks. The price for a plaque, bench and installation for a ten-year period is \$2,500. The cost of materials amounts to \$1,300 (the balance of the donation covers maintenance costs), and the entire process takes about 2-3 months. Many parks are at capacity but staff anticipates that after the 10-year period, many donors may not want to renew, which will open up benches in the more popular parks.

Chief Wilson reviewed a list of points that need to be addressed and incorporated into any future revision of the policy:

- We need to establish a process of notification to contact original donors to inform them that it is time for a renewal.
- What should we do with the plaques if we are unable to locate the original donor after 10 years?
- Should the renewal price be the same as the initial bench cost?
- Should we honor a family's request to install a second plaque on a bench already dedicated to a family member?
- We presently allow benches for living people and pets. Should we restrict this program to the deceased and human species?
- Should we establish a park ratio of memorial to non-memorial benches?
- Should we establish a practice of allowing people to purchase more than one 10-year agreement in advance?

Chief Wilson provided Committee members with a copy of the current policy and displayed samples of memorial plaques. He also indicated that he would provide the Committee with a copy of the current guidelines for accepting benches and plaques.

In addressing the question of whether to place restrictions on allowing benches for living people and pets, Director Ayn Wieskamp remarked that if donors wish to establish a bench honoring themselves, a loved one, or a pet, they should be allowed to do so. Director Wieskamp also suggested that since the bench has already been purchased by the donor, a reduced price should be established for a 10-year renewal based on maintenance costs. Directors Carol Severin and Doug Siden suggested that a \$1,000 donation might be an appropriate amount to cover maintenance costs over a 10-year renewal period.

Chief Wilson explained that the Memorial Bench Program was initially administered by the Regional Parks Foundation and later turned over to the Operations Division. At the program's inception, few detailed records were kept; therefore, with limited contact information available, locating bench donors after 10 years could pose a challenge. To alleviate staff from taking on the time-consuming task of locating original donors, Director Severin suggested that, for example, Boy Scouts seeking to become Eagle Scouts could take on the project, or a Human Resources intern could be assigned to contact original donors or their family members, and with the assistance of Park Operations Secretary, Daria Schwarzschild, could create a database matching donor information with each bench location. It was also suggested by Director Wieskamp that to facilitate donor family contact after 10 years, future donors could be required to provide staff with more than one family member's contact information.

The Committee recommended that recognition of the donation should come from Public Affairs, and also recommended that the program's relationship with the Foundation be re-examined. Director Siden remarked that the entire issue raises a philosophical question of whether we are in the business of selling park benches to anyone for any cause. Chief Wilson responded that the program was originally initiated to accommodate the needs of the community. Operations AGM Jim O'Connor commented that the approach he perceives

from reviewing the policy, is that the District has a need for benches and the community can help provide them while also meeting their need for memorials honoring their loved ones. Chief Wilson noted that with so few sites available for installing benches, the District needs to consider another vehicle for accepting donations other than bench installation.

At the conclusion of the staff presentation, Director Severin asked staff to draft a revised Memorial Bench policy to address unresolved issues, and also requested documentation of bench locations where hikers could rest on the new loop trails.

2. Annual Review of Fee Schedule: 2012

Noah Dort, Administrative Analyst II, presented a draft of the District's 2012 Consolidated Fee Schedule, along with a summary of the proposed 2012 administrative and document fee changes, noting that there were relatively few changes being requested this year. Mr. Dort reported that Fee Schedule changes requested for 2012 should result in an increase of \$35,300 in concessionaire revenue, and Public Use Fee recommendations will amount to \$66,700 in increased revenue.

Since the Committee's initial discussion of proposed changes to the Consolidated Fee Schedule in September 2011, a number of late submittal changes have been added including:

- Ardenwood Historic Farm: Staff proposes raising various event fees at Ardenwood ranging from 9% (group picnic) to 40% (wedding catering packages). The wedding ceremony rate has remained at \$1,200 since 2008; staff proposes raising the rate from \$1,200 to \$1,500, a 25% increase. Staff reports that the District's rates are still fairly low, based on price comparisons with Dunsmuir House, Palmdale Estates, and Mountain Winery.

Director Siden asked whether staff is conducting marketing for Ardenwood wedding events. Revenue & Administration Manager Mimi Waluch reported that at this point staff does not need to market the facility since Ardenwood has just about reached capacity with 25 solid reservations for 2012.

- Anthony Chabot Equestrian Center: (As an aside, Mr. Dort commented that there have been some excellent improvements made recently at the Equestrian Center.) With regard to the proposed fee increases, the concessionaire cited increased fuel costs that continue to raise the price of hay shavings, and proposes increased boarding rates of between 4% and 8% for 2012. The proposed price increase will bring the Anthony Chabot Equestrian Center fees in line with other District equestrian boarding facilities.
- Tilden Park Merry-Go-Round: At a recent AGM meeting, a question was posed regarding why the \$2 merry-go-round fee did not match the steam train fee of \$3 per ride. Mr. Dort reported that after researching several merry-go-rounds including carousels at Golden Gate Park, Santa Cruz, and Pier 39, he found that most carousels throughout the State charge \$2-\$3 per ride. Considering the quality of the Tilden Park carousel, and based on comparisons to similar carousels, General Manager Bob Doyle and the AGM group have proposed that the fee for the Tilden Park merry-go-round be

increased from \$2 to \$3 per ride for 2012. Mr. Dort noted that the operator of the merry-go-round does not support this proposed fee increase.

Referencing the “odd” pricing of \$16 for the merry-go-round 7-ride ticket book, Director Siden recommended, and the Committee agreed, that the ticket book fee should be rounded to \$15.

Director Wieskamp motioned that the 2012 Consolidated Fee Schedule be recommended for approval by the full Board. Director Siden seconded the motion, which passed unanimously (3-0)

Director Wieskamp requested that staff provide an update on the Shadow Cliffs Waterslide at the November 17 Board Operations Committee meeting.

3. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

4. Staff Comments

AGM O'Connor reported that on October 18, the Board was briefed on the recent vandalism at Big Break. Shortly thereafter, a subsequent incident involved the theft of copper pipe. Temporary cameras have been installed at the site and Public Safety has agreed to conduct increased patrols of the area with assistance from the Oakland Police Department (OPD). Staff is also obtaining quotations for new “verified” system cameras that are tied in with the motion detector lighting. When tripped, lights come on and the cameras start recording. Bay Alarm, the current contractor, can pull up the feed to determine whether the motion is caused by an animal, wind, or a human. The contractor will then contact Public Safety Dispatch who will determine whether Public Safety or OPD should respond. AGM O'Connor will provide the Committee with more information on security measures at Big Break at the November 17 Board Operations Committee meeting.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m. The next Board Operations Committee meeting is scheduled for 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 17, 2011, in the Peralta Oaks Board Room,

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Padmore
Executive Secretary
Operations Division