

AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Tuesday, August 9, 2011

C. BUSINESS BEFORE THE BOARD

6. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

c. Operations (06/16/11) _____ (Severin)

Present

Board: Directors Carol Severin (Chair), Doug Siden, Beverly Lane (Alternate)

Staff: John Escobar, Jeff Wilson, Anne Scheer, Anne Kassebaum, Michael McNally, Anne Rockwell, Kelly Barrington, Mimi Waluch, Leigh Padmore

Guests: Andrea Holland (President, Briones Archers), Robert Spencer (Local 2428)

I. Indoor Reservable Facilities Update

In June 2008, management of the District's indoor reservable facilities was transferred from the Parkland Unit Manager, into the Recreation Services Unit, to be the responsibility of Facilities Supervisor Michael McNally and Recreation Services Manager Anne Kassebaum. Staff felt that this transfer would help streamline operations and provide a higher level of customer service since this group works closely with reservations staff. Mr. McNally was present at the meeting to update the Committee on program operations, challenges, goals, opportunities and trends experienced in the past few years.

Mr. McNally began a PowerPoint presentation by describing his responsibilities as Facilities Supervisor of the Brazilian Building, Temescal Beach House, the Shoreline Center, and Fern Cottage (Kennedy Grove in El Sobrante), which include maintaining these unique and historic buildings by providing safe and clean facilities in good working order, and increasing rentals.

The PowerPoint presentation included statistics on rentals at each facility by different groups (District/non-profits/socials/business/ceremonies and receptions), and included survey results on catering, and how users heard about the District's facilities (friend/work/family/internet/Here Comes the Guide/Other).

Mr. McNally reported that staff plans to expand the Preferred Caterers list to include more ethnic food offerings to better accommodate the Bay Area's diverse community. Staff's facility marketing plans include working with Public Affairs, attending trade shows, and advertising on the internet and in publications. One component of the District's e-marketing plan allows staff to direct interested members of the public to a photo gallery on the District's website illustrating each of the District's rental facilities.

Upcoming facility projects include: installing an AV system at Temescal Beach House, providing internet access at the Shoreline Center, updating bathrooms at the Brazilian Room, and extending availability hours at Fern Cottage.

Director Doug Siden remarked on what he perceives as the dangerous lighting conditions in the Shoreline Center of Martin Luther King parking's lot during winter evenings. Although Mr. McNally has not received any complaints, he will look into improving the outdoor lighting conditions, while also soliciting bids to upgrade parking lot lighting at Fern Cottage to coincide with plans to extend hours of operation.

Asked by Director Siden to comment on positive changes that have taken place in the facilities rental program over the past few years, Mr. McNally cited staff's efforts to make the rental process move faster, a willingness to handle short notice events, and promoting flexibility in scheduling.

Operations Assistant General Manager John Escobar distributed a handout to the Committee listing facility rental fee waivers granted over the past eighteen months to in-District groups serving the disabled, seniors, and low-income individuals that cannot afford fees. Fee waivers are also considered for District partnership groups and public agencies based on the District's 1997 Board-adopted fee waiver policy. Director Beverly Lane suggested that now might be an appropriate time for the Board to review the 1997 fee waiver policy to discuss the need for amendments and to provide more clarity and rely less on judgment for implementing the policy. (Addendum: The Fee Waiver Policy was actually adopted by the Board in 1992.)

2. Ardenwood Wedding and Special Event Concessionaire Management Update

Revenue and Administration Manager Mimi Waluch reviewed recent events resulting in the loss of wedding and group picnic services provided by Ardenwood Affairs, a branch of the Picnic People, at Ardenwood Historic Farm since 1989. With the concessionaire's current business model no longer profitable, staff was notified that Ardenwood Affairs would cease offering services in December 2010. Since wedding reservations are made up to one year in advance, Ardenwood Affairs booked reservations for the 2011 season. In an effort to honor the commitments of the 14 clients wishing to retain their event date, the District agreed to match facility service and cost consistent with the initial commitments made by Ardenwood Affairs.

In coordination with park staff, an event planner, and a caterer from the District's approved caterers list, Ms. Waluch assisted in planning the first of the 2011 season wedding events. The next wedding is scheduled for June 22, followed by six events in July, five events in August, and a final event October 29.

Director Lane asked about the feasibility of upgrading Ardenwood's kitchen facilities to health department codes in order to generate revenue. Staff reported that Ardenwood probably does not attract sufficient business to warrant the investment in a full-service kitchen. Director Lane also suggested that having an event planner on staff might be a more efficient method of organizing special events at Ardenwood. AGM Escobar responded that typically the District

contracts out this type of service; however, staff will present recommendations on possible solutions at a future Committee meeting.

Responding to Director Siden's query as to how the Ardenwood situation might be resolved beyond this year, Ms. Waluch responded that if a decision were made to continue offering wedding event services next year, staff would need to make a recommendation to the Committee in September as to whether to go out to RFP for a concessionaire or event planner.

3. Review of Briones Archers Special Use Agreement: Briones Regional Park

Ms. Waluch briefed the Committee on the background of how the Briones Archers Club, founded in 1969, originally descended from the old Roving Archers Club of El Sobrante. The membership is active with approximately 75 individuals and families using the site on a regular basis. Since the current site of the Briones Archers Club is a possible venue for a District group camp development, shorter-term agreements are being used to retain the option to relocate the Club at a later date.

The Club's current Special Use Agreement expires December 31, 2011, but includes a two-year option through December 31, 2013. Commensurate with the election of new leadership, the Briones Archers have focused significant efforts into cleanup and upgrading of the site and are exploring further improvements to include a fencing project to aid in keeping the flow and safety of foot traffic throughout the range. Andrea Holland, President of the Club, was present at the meeting to request that the Committee consider staff's recommendation to revise the Briones Archers Club's two-year option to a five-year option. Before investing additional funds and effort into making improvements to the site, the Club would like some assurance that they will be authorized to remain at the site beyond their current two-year option ending December 31, 2013.

Ms. Holland presented slides showing the location of the Club's proposed fencing project. Following discussion centered primarily on the fencing project, Director Lane stated that from her vantage point, it is premature to comment on the fence until the Committee gets the kind of information from the field that is needed at this time. Director Lane also expressed concern about the seismic safety and aesthetics of a makeshift structure erected without the District's permission that she would like to see dismantled.

Director Siden commended Ms. Holland and Club members for providing a fine public service; however, he expressed some reluctance to take action on the Club's request at this time in light of the District's consideration of the site as a future group camp. AGM Escobar interjected that when the Camping Task Force reconvenes, they will be studying group campsite trends, the number of group campsites we presently have and number of nights the camps are occupied, and the need for additional group campsites.

Director Lane also commended the Briones Archers Club on having done a great job in terms of their cleanup efforts and improvements, adding that although she is happy with the two-year option, a site visit and further discussion is needed before the Committee is ready to take action on the Club's request for a five-year option. Director Lane motioned that this item be tabled pending coordination with field staff on the fencing proposal, and a field visit followed by

further discussion at the Committee level. Director Siden seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

5. Staff Comments

Park Operations Chief Jeff Wilson announced the appointment of Michael Avalos to the position of Supervisor at Quarry Lakes (recently vacated by long-term employee Elias Hernandez), and noted that Kevin Takei is now Supervisor at Crown Beach, and Scott Possin was recently appointed Supervisor at Miller-Knox.

6. Adjournment

Director Severin adjourned the meeting at 4:15 p.m. The Board Operations Committee meeting scheduled for Thursday, July 21, 2011, has been cancelled.

Respectfully submitted,

Leigh Padmore
Executive Secretary
Operations Division