

Griffith Park Master Plan – Working Group

Summary of Fifth Meeting held November 7, 2005

The Griffith Park Master Plan Working Group convened their fourth meeting on Monday, November 7, 2005, at 6:30 p.m. at the Griffith Park Ranger Station Auditorium.

Present: Bernadette Soter, Clare Dareden, Craig Kessler, George Grace, Gerry Hans, Jeff Gardner, Louis Alvarado, Lynn Brown, Richard Bogy, Susan Swan, and substituting for Valerie Vanaman was Chris Laib.

Absent: Wendy Triplett

Facilitator: Kevin Regan, Assistant General Manager,
Department of Recreation and Parks

Mr. Regan opened the meeting by introducing Ms. Patricia Malone, the new field deputy for Council District 4. Ms. Malone replaces Matt Levy. She is a resident of Silverlake and can be reached via e-mail at: Patricia.Malone@lacity.org.

Griffith Superintendent Vicki Israel announced the upcoming community meeting for the Griffith Observatory will be held on November 21 at 3:00 p.m. at the Satellite Office Exhibit Hall.

The Working Group then adopted their first re-write of the Griffith Park Master Plan. Consensus was reached on the Vision Chapter, as edited.

Mr. Regan announced that a presentation by Melendrez and Associates would be forthcoming. Hopefully a date will soon be finalized so that announcements could be made.

After identifying themselves and the group they are affiliated with, the Working Group proceeded with the recommendations from the sub-committee for the Environment Chapter.

The sub-committee reported there were some challenges with various issues due to a lack of expertise on some of the subject matters. They posed the question to the rest of the Working Group of the necessity to decide “how specific vs. how general” they wanted to be in their re-write.

Two specific questions were asked: 1) will there be expertise available to speak at sub-committee meetings? And, 2) will there be a moratorium on activities until the Master Plan is completed?

Mr. Regan advised that the Working Group process was started to get feedback from the community as a number of community members were unhappy and discontented with the Griffith Park Master Plan Draft. The Working Group process has evolved to where they are today and the document they are re-writing portions of is only a draft document. It is

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not in final form. To get to its final form, the document would need an environmental impact study before it could be presented to the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners and to the City Council. Mr. Regan further stated that the City is not necessarily asking the Working Group to be urban planners or architects, but is looking for community input. The Working Group is not expected to re-write the entire document.

Some Working Group members opined that it was their understanding that they were, in fact, tasked to re-write the Master Plan for eventual presentation to the general public.

The discussion returned to the question of expertise and whether or not experts would be made available to the Working Group. It was stated that a rudimentary understanding of technical subject matters such as hydrology, permeable surfaces, etc. would assist Working Group members in re-writing portions of the chapter on Built Environment.

The Working Group was informed that City employees could be made available but that there is no budget for outside consultants.

It was suggested that the Working Group compose their questions in advance for the City experts. That way, if information was needed from other departments, i.e. DWP or Sanitation, it could be researched and coordinated.

Discussion then ensued on whether or not the City would suspend any initiatives in Griffith Park until the Master Plan was completed. The Working Group was informed that the City would not be suspending initiatives in the park as some projects would not require a complete environmental impact report. The suspension of all initiatives could mean loss of funding revenue for improvement projects. Clarification was made that normal operations and maintenance projects are exempt from CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) guidelines where as capital projects are not.

It was then suggested that the vision statement could be used a “test” against other chapters to ensure projects were in line with the Urban Wilderness concept.

Sub-committee members read aloud portions of the redraft of Chapter 4, The Natural Environment. The park setting, as well as the flora and fauna were discussed in general. Specific goals and objectives in managing the natural habitat of the park were then discussed in detail. Recommendations for re-wording portions under this section were made and it was decided that additional modifications and fine-tuning may be necessary.

The next meeting of the Working Group will be Monday, December 5 at 6:30 p.m.

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Public Comments included the following questions and concerns:

- Whether or not Toyon Canyon would be restored to its natural habitat
- Complaints about litter on the hiking trails and what is the City going to do about it?
- Concerns about giant development
- Suggestion to utilize best management practices from Santa Monica's Heal the Bay project to deal with litter problem
- The need for open space and no development or paving of green space
- Alternative forms of mass transit to and throughout Griffith Park
- Whether or not the Working Group is being marginalized
- Will sewer lines being laid along the Ventura Freeway impact equestrian trails