

Griffith Park Advisory Board
Minutes – May 27, 2021, 6:30 PM

1. Roll Call: Mike Hain absent at start
2. Announcements: Bryan Mercke is stepping down from the board.
3. Approval of Minutes: Minutes approved with amendments.
4. Special Guests: Councilmember Nithya Raman.
 - Councilmember Raman introduced herself and addressed the board.
Councilmember Raman noted that departments are still dealing with fiscal challenges and have not received federal dollars yet. Rec and Parks saw large revenue drop and wanted to hear from us on priorities on the budget for the upcoming year. Councilmember Raman expressed awareness of concerns regarding access to the Hollywood sign, including building a possible visitors center for Hollywood sign outside of park. The Councilmember was aware of concerns about the Beachwood Gate and wants to hear from us about that issue.
 - Councilmember was concerned about fire safety in Griffith Park, which is made more acute by homelessness. Wants GPAB's partnership on finding resources to help outreach and resources to people in encampments.
Councilmember noted that quicker action on homelessness in the park can only happen if this is a high-risk area and we advocate for it.
 - Councilmember understood ongoing issues with Mulholland Fence and Deronda gate, and is looking into both. An estimate on repairing gate is ongoing and investigating possible support for repairing it. Councilmember was unsure of long-term solution with Mulholland fencing, and will require more conversation with this group and stakeholders in that area.
Councilmember understood this board was very vocal about costs of parking in Griffith Park and looked forward to partnering with us to help set those rates, to raise revenue but also not cut off access to Park. Councilmember wants to reduce traffic and increase access to Park.
 - Board question – Jason Greenwald – Question – What would you say to those who want to move process along of goal to reducing traffic in Park and

furthering goals of Dixon report? Answer – The most important things in terms of next steps, and we need to get a sense of what are the community’s priorities. Councilmember asks, what are the most urgent next steps? How do we build support around those recommendations? We must come to a community consensus. There are changes we can make about access to the park and how we think about the park, such as helping people learn about how to get to the park without getting in a car, like an information campaign to advertise how to get to the park by public transit.

- Question from Jason Greenwald – What can we do to advocate for the park, and how can we be helpful to reestablish staffing in park? Answer – I can commit to making sure that opportunities to share community budget priorities are shared with this group, so we can make our voices heard. I have already communicated to Mayor’s office our budget requests, but I will continue to do that advocacy which includes Rec and Parks. If you have opinions of Dept. budget request, let me know.
- Question from Jason Greenwald – There are fires in the park with alarming regularity. Rangers are often on scene before LAFD. The top issues are smoking in the park and encampments causing fires. Can you say some more about your commitment and how we can work together for reducing fire risk? Answer – I do not think camping in the park is safe for many reasons, and fire in the park is one of the biggest. It can have devastating impacts on the city. What I can do is make sure we have the resources to respond quickly and effectively to homelessness. Having outreach workers and possible mental health crisis team members respond to calls in addition to rangers is what we are fighting for. For smoking, what do you think I can do? Chris Laib – responds: Smoking is allowed on golf courses in Griffith Park. For the most part, the golf course is fairly well watered, but sometimes people get in their car and still smoking and throw it out the window.
- Question from Michelle Crammes – We want to communicate with people in the park multilingually and asks Councilmember if she can help us find people

with a focus on diversity on the Board. Answer – We can put recruitment on our newsletter or social media.

5. General Public Comment:

- Julie Coffey – I am a local resident and am an ecologist and land manager. I realized there is no staff ecologist managing the park, which was shocking to me. I want to emphasize the need for active stewardship to manage biodiversity and resources in the park.
- Emmy Goldknopf – The lights are still out in merry-go-round lot 3. Every winter this happens. A lot of people park there. Hope they will be brought back. Want to mention that there are a lot of diverse groups in the park. Hikers often know where homeless groups are. We are a resource in that.
- Marian Dodge – Wants to give us a heads up that FOGP is teaming up with Friends of LA River. A video of Anzia trail and will be posted soon.
- Gerry Hans – Happy Earth Day. Want to announce that next month, we will host lectures on species of special concern, including western gray squirrel, horn lizards, and several species of concern. Agenda notes the Shakespeare Stage, but is really called the LA Performing Arts Center. With how big this is, we want conditions on use of that area. Still concerned there is no biologist or ecologist working for Department.

6. Information Reports and Presentations:

- a. LA River Master Plan: Review and discuss potential impacts on Griffith Park. Consider sending comments to project team.
 - Alex Phillips presents. LA River Master Plan revision started in 2017, and timeline is next 25 years. Master Plan does not consider approving proposed projects, and any proposed project would still need to be approved on a project specific level with its own CEQA process. The Master Plan helps identify larger goals of LA River and methods of achieving those goals, which may then impact subsequent proposed projects. Phillips adds that GPAB is not listed as community organization in master plan, and Griffith Park Vision Plan is not mentioned. LA Zoo Master Plan is also not mentioned.
 - Public Comment

- Emmy Goldknopf – Angeles chapter of the Sierra Club is quite critical of the LA River Master Plan. Objections were to the whole thing that it could be better. LA River Master Plan does not address greening the river, gentrification, and treats LA river as flood channel.
 - Julie Coffey – It is nice to see improvements in LA River. I am interested in if they did address gentrification at all.
 - **Motion made to write letter of support for LA River Master Plan with caveats and investigation**
 - Karen Thornton notes that the Master Plan helps improve access areas, seeks to limit vehicles, and has many goals aligned with ours, along with mitigating flood risk.
 - Alex Phillips notes that the Master Plan, with our focus limited to Griffith Park, has a lot of good things in it for the park.
 - Michelle Crammes states that we should write our letter with respect to Griffith Park.
 - Gene Gilbert notes that we want a letter which addresses our concerns about being included in discussions.
 - Bryan Mercke states that the Master Plan appears to include plans which could help integrate Griffith Park and the LA River.
 - **Motion passes**, Chris Laib and Bryan Mercke abstain.
- b. Fern Dell Trail Restoration and Stormwater Capture: Presentation by Gerry Hans, Friends of Griffith Park. Seeking letter of support for \$300,000 Measure W Grant.
- One of the biggest challenges of this area is the hydrology. Capturing and storing stormwater could help this. We are seeking support in a grant application to assist. Goals are to rehabilitate Fern Dell Trail, enhance parking lot with permeable surfaces, enhance detention basin with native habitat, and construct stormwater capture facility to treat local runoff and provide sustainable water supply for landscaped areas. Water captured could also be piped into the creek. It could divert water and create underground reservoir. All water captured has opportunity to be reused.

- Question Ron Deutsch – What is the timeline for the entire project?
Answer – Once design drawings are done, construction could take a year. Question – What is the impact on the present location? Answer – This location would be closed for the year, but portions could be opened.
- Question Jason Greenwald – What would displaced users do instead?
Answer – The area would need to be fenced off due to excavation. There is grassy area west of Fern Dell drive that people could use.
- Question Chris Laib – Who will own this project and be responsible for maintenance? Answer – Would be transferred over to Dept. of Public Works. Bureau of sanitation has a lot of experience managing these systems already.
- Public Comment:
 - Emmy Goldknopf – Sounds like a great project, but will cause a lot of disruption.
 - Julie Coffey – With these types of projects, usually what is considered is water quality and sedimentation.
 - Katherine Pakradouni – Encourages board to support this.
- **Motion made to support FOGP’s grant application for this project.**
 - Chris Laib – This is one of the goals of the Vision for Griffith Park, to restore water quality in Fern Dell
 - Michelle Crammes – What does this \$300k get us? Answer – The majority of the work will consist of survey of park. Water quality sampling, development of design drawings. Question – Do we have a path to full funding once study complete? Answer – Next step would be to go to final design, and once that is done final step is construction. Funding would be through Safe Clean Water program.
 - Motion passes – Alex Phillips volunteers to draft letter
- c. GPAB Mission Statement: Ad Hoc led by Ron Deutsch to present revised mission statement for board consideration.
 - Ron Deutsch presented the proposed revised mission statement.

- Michelle Crammes – Have we ever stated shared goal of elimination of carbon and reduce vehicles.
- Public Comment:
 - o Emmy Goldknopf – Encouragement of busses and shuttles is not the same as the elimination of private vehicles.
- **Motion made to approve revised mission statement.** Chris Laib seconds.
- **Motion made to table,** seconded. Passes.

7. Superintendent Reports:

- a. Safer at Home
 - Griffith Park train ride opened yesterday. Plan to open train rides to Travel Town.
- b. Observatory Parking
 - As of this past Monday, April 19, hourly rate lowered to \$10 per hour following GPAB's request to lower rates.
- c. Shakespeare Stage
 - Griffith Park Performing Arts stage was reviewed and approved by Board of Commissioners. Electrical work should start in May.
- d. LaBonge Panorama
 - Planning division is working with Mrs. LaBonge on wish list of what she would like to see up there. Hope to show this to the Board next month.
- e. Fern Dell Railing
 - Lower railing has been completely restored
- f. GPAB Member Terms and Board Recruitment
 - If anyone is interested in reinterviewing after two-year term, let us know, or if they know anyone who is interested.
- g. Griffith Park 125-year anniversary
 - This is coming up this December

8. Committee and Ad Hoc Reports:

- Public safety – We are getting regular crime and fire reports from Chief Losorelli. There has been a significant increase in encampments and fires

related to that. Second issue was about the elimination of smoking on the Golf Course.

- Community engagement – We had meeting this week. Friends of the Observatory has rebranded. One idea we are considering is cross-promotion of attractions in the park. Was interested in volunteer appreciation day.
- Bylaws commission, governance – We had meeting last week with RAP staff. They allowed us to ask questions about parameters we could rewrite our mission statement and bylaws. We also questioned the purview of our subject matter jurisdiction, including about our inquiry about parking revenue.
- Equestrian ad hoc – More information next month.

9. Suggestions for Upcoming Agenda Items

10. Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday May 27, 2021 at 6:30 pm on Zoom.

11. Adjournment: Adjourn at 9:25pm.