

Griffith Park Advisory Board

Minutes – February 25, 2021, 6:30 PM

1. Roll Call: All present
2. Announcements:
 - Sarah Tanberg from CD4 present.
3. Approval of Minutes: Minutes approved with amendments.
4. Special Guests: Sarah Tanberg from CD4: Covers this area as community outreach for CD4 and is available and excited to work with GPAB.
5. General Public Comment:
 - Emmy Goldknopf – Have two requests from evening hikers: First, the lights of merry-go-round lot three are not on in the evening. Hikers park there and it is nice to have the lights on. The area by the pumphouse is now closed and walking in this area at night is not safe. Request that area be open again.
 - Marian Dodge – Was wondering if GPAB or Rec and Parks if we are aware of Master Plan of LA River update. Two pieces of it, one is plan, other is CEQA document. It will impact Griffith Park. One positive area of the plan, MRCA will create wetlands in Verdugo area.
6. Information Reports and Presentations:
 - a. Park Rangers – Q & A with Chief Losorelli
 - Griffith Park area is returning to somewhat normalcy as traffic increases. We are issuing a lot of citations for smoking due to the high fire risk in Park. We got a new horse, Poncho, who is adapting well to Park and patrolling. We continue to deploy fire readiness vehicles during high fire risk times.
 - Member Chris Laib recounts crime statistics for Griffith Park and thanks Chief Losorelli for providing that data to GPAB.
 - Member Alex Phillips inquires about mask citations and compliance in Park. Answer: When we see people without mask, we ask them to put the mask on. Often we get compliance when we ask.
 - Ron Deutsch questions – If the rangers have not issued a single citation, does that mean rangers have 100% compliance? Answer – We will escort people

out of the park if they do not comply or give them a citation. Some people choose to be escorted out of the park.

- Member Bryan Mercke questions – If the rangers will issue a citation immediately for seeing someone smoke, then do the rangers see Covid as being a less significant risk by not citing people? Answer – Wildfires present a serious concern that is different from Covid that requires zero tolerance.
- Member Ron Deutsch – We can enforce both cigarette policy and the mask policy at the same time. What instructions have you received from the City about mask rules? Answer – We follow the same standards as the LA County Health Department instructs us to do. There is a mandate that if you are around others and in hiking trails, people are required to put the mask on. It is up to law enforcement agency’s discretion to cite. Agencies do not want to get in confrontation for non-criminal matter. City attorney has also not enforced citations on a first offense.
- Vice Chairperson Michelle Crammes – Members of the public also want mask compliance. If rangers are afraid of people who refuse to wear masks, how do you think moms in the park feel when they ask others to wear masks?
- Member Alex Phillips – Compliance is nowhere near 100%, it is really between 60 to 40%. It would be appreciated if rangers would lean into mask compliance more. Do rangers issue citations for people going off trail? Answer – Yes, we issue citations for people who go off trails every week.
- Member Karen Thornton – Can you give better signage or gates that lock, or how can we keep bikes off horseback riding trails? Answer – It is difficult, but we would probably have to work with Stefanie Smith to get more signage.
- Member Mike Hain – Los Feliz neighborhood council got approved for five containers for cigarette butts around the community. We want to know where we can put these that are legal. We will be installing these outside of the park.

b. Griffith Park Paid Parking Fees – Review current pricing in light of Covid closures and request information on funds designated for Griffith Park, review expenditures. Possible motion item.

- Chairperson Jason Greenwald presents brief history of past paid parking pricing. Current pricing is \$15/hour, and parking fees go into a “Special Fund”. Question for Board consideration: Does GPAB recommend RAP lower current parking rate in light of park and transit closures? Does GPAB wish to request a report on “Special Fund” revenue/expenditures to better understand the use of these funds? Stefanie Smith and Tracy James answer Board questions.
 - o Vice Chairperson Michelle Crammes – Has footprint of where parking is changed? Answer – No. Question – Where do the proceeds of tickets and parking fees go? Answer – Ticket revenue goes to LADOT, and parking revenue supports traffic staff and traffic measures in park, such as a walkway from Greek Theatre to Observatory, removing graffiti, making crosswalks, etc. Money must remain in Griffith Park.
 - o Member Mike Hain – When parking prices are increased, do we get more busses? Can we get a sign stating how long the next bus might come? Answer – When we are exceptionally busy, we do get more busses. Busses sometime get stuck in traffic even with a dedicated bus lane.
 - o Member Alex Phillips – How dynamic can the pricing be? Can it change based on need? Answer – When we change the price it takes about a week to take. Machines to support dynamic pricing are cost prohibitive.
- Public Comment:
 - o Kristina O’Neil – When the prices in the Park go up, it pushes traffic into surrounding neighborhoods where parking is free.
 - o Gerry Hans – FOGP was in support of \$4 fees to help reduce traffic, which did not work. We were in support because it would be used for increasing shuttles, rangers, a Park biologist, and other improvements. We did oppose increase for \$10 to \$25 parking range. \$15 is too high.
 - o Emmy Goldknopf – Sierra Club opposed increase this summer. I am glad this revenue has raised a lot of money, but I am afraid it is

soaking the Angelinos as opposed to tourists. I hope shuttles can come back. Would like more off-site parking and shuttles going there.

- Marian Dodge – It would be helpful if we knew how much money has been made from parking and where those funds have gone.

- Board discussion:

- Member Ronald Deutsch – We should ask that the rates be lowered because there are no public transit options. **Motion that rates be lowered until such time as shuttles return to Griffith Park.**
- Member Alex Phillips – Would lowering rates be a near term or short term hardship? Answer – We support social equality and for people to enjoy the park. With Covid crisis decisions were made.
- Member Bryan Mercke – Will vote no because I do not understand full picture with how Covid has impacted budget and will defer discretion to Rec and Parks.
- Vice Chairperson Michelle Crammes – People are sharing concern about parking rates on social media. There is an equity issue concern about the high parking rates. Would like to see parking reduced to 2016 levels and increased to 2018 levels when shuttles are returned.
- Member Mike Hain – Lowering the price of parking may actually cost more money than what it costs to maintain the program. Is there a reduced rate for people with handicaps? Answer – It costs a little over \$1M to operate parking/transportation even without Parkline. Parking for people who are handicapped is free. Main goal of pricing was to reduce traffic, and it just has not really worked when things were open. Raising price to \$10/hour did not stop traffic.
- Member Chris Laib – It is wrong that Rec and Parks has to handle all of this without mor City assistance. The City does not have adequate public transit servicing the Park. This should be in letter.
- Motion passes – 5-4, Members Bryan Mercke, Alex Phillips, Karen Thornton, and Mike Hain vote no.

- **Motion made to request a report on “Special Fund” revenue/expenditures to better understand use of parking fees. Motion passes unanimously.**
 - Members Chris Laib, Ron Deutsch, Jason Greenwald will draft letter.
 - c. Lynn Brown Memorial, presented by Member Karen Thornton. Motion item to write letter of support.
 - Would like to put mounting block for Lynn Brown in Martinez Area. The mounting block would have a plaque as well. Completely paid for through private donations. **Motion to write letter of support for privately funded mounting block installation in Park in memory of Lynn Brown.**
 - **Amendment to allow up to three mounting blocks.**
 - **Motion with amendment passes unanimously.**
 - Karen Thornton and Gene Gilbert drafting letter.
 - d. Tom LaBonge Panorama. Requesting letter of support, possible motion item.
 - Tracy presents: Cannot rename Mt. Hollywood summit. Request letter of support of naming Tom LaBonge panorama.
 - Member Chris Laib – **Move that we support Tom LaBonge panorama in Park. Passed unanimously.**
 - Public Comment: Emmy Goldknopf –Hope there is some messaging that the mountain is not renamed.
 - Members Ron Deutsch, Jason Greenwald drafting letter.
7. Superintendent Reports:
- a. Safer at Home
 - Zoo is now open by reservation only. Soccer fields are now open by permit for practice and conditioning.
 - b. Mulholland Fencing
 - Maintenance working with contractors to make modifications of moving fence and removing portion of fence. Working on purchasing plant material.
 - c. Bronson Caves Closure
 - Closed now for about one month. Working with Bureau of Engineering for assessment.

- d. Greek Theatre outdoor events
 - Greek Theater has been having outdoor events, including drive in movies.
 - e. Update on restrooms slated for demolition
 - Fern Dell and Crystal Springs restrooms, working on getting permits for removal.
 - f. Wonderview Gate
 - Wonderview Gate installation has started.
8. Committee and Ad Hoc Reports:
- Public safety – This was largely covered during Chief Losorelli’s questioning. Plan to meet with Chief Losorelli regarding mask enforcement.
 - Community engagement – Alex Phillips is doing great on Instagram. The Committee is reaching out to others to join committee and be involved.
 - Bylaws commission, governance – Generated revised mission statement and will get notes back on it. Then will present for ratification by next meeting.
9. Suggestions for Upcoming Agenda Items:
- Items can be submitted to Chairperson Jason Greenwald.
10. Next Meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2021 at 6:30 pm on Zoom.
11. Adjournment: Adjourn at 9:09pm.