

Griffith Park Advisory Board

Final Minutes

July 21, 2021

Meeting began at 6:30 pm
via zoom

1. Roll Call: Greenwald, Crames, Gilbert, Phillips, Thornton, Deutsch, Laib (arrived late); Hain absent
2. Minutes: Approved with one abstention
3. General Public Comments: 3 comments. Griffith Park south of Los Feliz Boulevard needs a master plan, including a permanent Adult Center; planning should begin for the upcoming 125th anniversary of Griffith Park; the need for more public exercise classes in Griffith Park.
4. Special Guest: Helene Rotolo, new CD 4 deputy for Griffith Park, presented her experience in city, capital projects being her “specialty”. The councilperson visited the Deronda gate, and has communicated with Public Works regarding her concern about public safety there. She has recommended that the gate be locked overnight until a permanent solution can be devised.
5. Observatory Paid Parking-Matthew Rudnick, Acting Assistant General Manager, Recreation and Parks. Discussion regarding allocation of Griffith Observatory parking meter revenue, as a follow up from GPAB letter.

-Chair Greenwald thanks the department for their financial transparency on this matter and welcomes Rudnick.

-Rudnick: A review of financials resulted in his opinion that an effort should be made to allocate most meter revenue back into Griffith Park. The department has a current annual \$2.7m draw into the department general fund. Reducing the draw down “will not happen overnight”.

-He asked that GPAB make funding suggestions during preliminary department budgeting process, which begins annually in September. Chair Greenwald will assign consideration of this to the Executive Committee and report back to the board with any recommendations.

-Rudnick states it is “odd that the department doesn’t have a budgeted biologist position”. He commits to bring one on this calendar year via the contract consultant program, as there is no current department job classification for this position. He sees a biologist as part of the coming out-of-the-pandemic department hiring acceleration, and that the position should be “front facing”, in terms of environmental education, training of rangers and staff. He believes the position should be a permanent civil service position. The GPAB engagement committee will provide position description input.

-“Equity in access” is a guiding principle in decisions about public transit in park. There is no financial reason weighing on restoration of parkline shuttle, however, DOT is having staffing challenges, that will determine its start up.

-CD4 Deputy Rotolo: She will consult with the council office legislative team about budgeting Griffith Park transit, as a regular annual city budget expense.

-4 board comments regarding the original commitment that meter revenues stay in Griffith Park. Rudnick replies to one board inquiry that decisions about parking fund allocation were made before his leadership and that the Parks Commission is responsible for those decisions.

-1 Public comment re \$2.7m meter fund revenue going to department general fund being “disturbing”

Tom La Bonge Panorama: Tracy James, RAP, initial review of memorial tribute at Mt.

Hollywood. Griffith Park is a “particularly central element of Councilman LaBonge’s legacy”. Review of the elements of the hilltop site, including need for new fencing, furniture, pilasters under gate sign. A commemorative plaque will be mounted on a boulder.

-3 board comments, including that the gate seems large for the park, the guiding Griffith Park vision principle that built environment be minimized and low profile; the plaque does not

mention LaBonge's leadership in achieving historic cultural monument status for Griffith Park, as one of his seminal accomplishments .

-1 public comment regarding the size of the memorial

Rec and Parks will report back about integrating our feedback.

6. Superintendent Updates: Acting Superintendent Smith

-Shakespeare in the Park begins again on 8/7, by reservation only

-Haunted Hayride coming back at Crystal Springs, with a new vendor, a smaller footprint and a desire to modify the event so as to minimize impacts to park users and impact on the park environment

-GPAB recruitment process has resulted in a new board member who will join August meeting

-Brush clearance completed in the park

-4th of July had no incidents in park, due to acute diligence. Two July 18 fires near Fern Dell were extinguished quickly and were the result of arson. An investigation is ongoing

-Deronda Gate meeting with Councilperson Raman resulted in Public Works studying safety issues and logistics for a permanent fence

-2 abandoned restrooms in the park, one at Crystal Springs, another at Fern Dell, have been demolished and picnic tables will be installed at those locations

-Observatory DASH is back 7 days/week, but ridership is low

-Post covid volunteer work has resumed

-LFIA funded and initiated installation of 28 new trees in the Vermont median, with coordination of CD4, RAP, LACC and Urban Forestry

-LA Shares site has suffered a fire, vandalism, is a public danger and is slated for demolition.

No plans for site at present

-Mask wearing required in all department indoor facilities

-1 public comment regarding the demolition of the LA Shares site and question about that site's future

7. Committee Reports

Safety ad hoc

Chair Laib advises that a virtual wildfire logistics meeting was held with LAFD, CD4, RAP, City Emergency Services and GPAB chair and safety chair. CD4 has a summer intern program that will disseminate awareness, preparation and evacuation information in the high fire severity residential zones surrounding the park. If park goes over view behavior/conditions that are inappropriate, notify park central ranger communications 323-644-6661. If one sees fire or smoke, call 9-1-1. Committee has prepared and forwarded to RAP proposed trailhead and golf course locations for installation of city *no smoking signs*, which it recommends be installed on existing infrastructure. Once these signs are installed, greater enforcement and fines are possible.

Community engagement committee

Chair Crames reports that Alex is doing a great job of social network posting for the committee. Announcement of LA Zoo conservation program. Committee will work on biologist position description

Bylaw, vision and mission plan committee

Chair Greenwald reports the committee is examining the action items in A Vision for Griffith Park and will report back next month

Equestrian ad hoc

Chair Thornton reports that 3 Lynne Brown memorial water troughs have been funded and that Easter Field and Martinez Arena are on track for installation at this time

8. Board Business

Laib requests that Griffith Park Adult Center be considered for discussion at August meeting; next meeting August 26, 6:30pm via zoom. As of now, no live meetings are under consideration

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourns at 9:00pm

