

Griffith Park Advisory Board
Final January 2022 minutes

January 27, 2022
Meeting commenced at 6:35 pm

Role Call

Greenwald, Cramas, Laib, Ashouri, Chung, Deutsch, Gilbert, Phillips, Thornton

Announcement by Chair

Longest serving member and Ex Chair, Ron Deutsch has announced that he is retiring from the board; we will have some comments at the end of the meeting and adjournment shall be in his honor

Approval of Minutes

Deutsch first, Thornton second; unanimous approval with no corrections

Presentations by elected officials and special guests

CD4 report, Deputy Rotolo

-LA Shares structure has been demolished, as jointly agreed to with RAP, due to its deteriorated condition and the presence of contaminants. Update on site use hopefully at February meeting

-The New Hampshire/Hollywood BI pedestrian tunnel has been permanently closed, an objective for many years.

-The Community Grant program is active for grants

-The Homelessness count has been delayed, due to Covid. 2/22 through 2/24 is rescheduled date

-The annual Griffith Park half marathon run is on 2/13, proceeds benefitting the LA Parks Foundation

Board Questions

Phillips: Is the Zoo EIR still going to City Council in mid February? Rotolo: Councilmember Raman is set to visit the Zoo in mid February; any City Council action will likely be sometime after that.

Chief Ranger Losorelli

-Crime is down in GP. A new fire truck has been delivered to the Ranger Division, to be deployed in GP. Its 4 wheel drive and allows for access to previously unreachable areas of the park; the What3words app is now active in the park

Board Questions

Laib: Should park users continue to call 9-1-1 for any active fire sightings and ranger dispatch for any conditions that may lead to fire? Losorelli: Yes, nothing has changed

Thornton: What is the what3words app? Losorelli: It is an app that park user can download on their devices that will identify where they are to responders, if in trouble

Deputy Fire Chief Hogan

-Wildfire preparedness begins with 3 basics; community, family and personal. Preparation includes having an emergency bag ready, with medicines, spare keys, water and a sweater; think about which neighbors may need help and who is elderly or has small children nearby that may need assistance

-Each of us should have the LAFD incident auto alert on our devices; available on LAFD.org

-Fire Station 35, which serves much of the area around/in the park, has a fast response vehicle, which is more nimble and can roll faster; it is also being used to educate homeless encampments about the dangers of cooking in their tents

-More about the value of the what3words app, a tool for one to identify/convey their location in the event of need for emergency assistance.

-Wildfire season is traditionally from fall to February, and is technically over now, but due to global warming and changing weather, the dept is being vigilant earlier

-Wildfires are generally associated with high wind events, not so much with summer heat; historically, the late fall Santa Anas have been the most dangerous times for wildfire

Board Questions

Crames: What can GPAB do? Hogan: Board members and public can call in smokers in the park, identify hard to read and de-faced signage in the park and join LAFD notifications; Crames stated that she had just downloaded and tested the what3words app and it asked her to recite 3 words describing her current location; Hogan expounded

Phillips: Has the what3words app been vetted regarding privacy security? Hogan: Yes, by city staff

Chair Greenwald: Thanked Chief Hogan for his time and wisdom

AP Diaz, Chief Executive Officer and Chief of Staff, RAP

-Wings of Mexico Art Installation, a gift from the Mexican Federal Government to the US, has been assigned for installation in LA, due to our strong physical and social connection to Mexico. It is a symbol of peace, and the department wants to install it in an area adjacent to the Griffith Observatory parking lot. Diaz shared a power point presentation, that addressed ADA, security, description signage and the appropriateness of the location. Installation may be financed with city art fees and/or Quimby funds, and not with Observatory parking revenue. It is desired that it be installed before the Summit of the Americas, being held in LA in June.

Board Questions

Phillips: Will the artist or Mexican authorities be bothered/insulted due to the proximity of restrooms? Diaz: There is a buffer and the Mexican consulate has visited and approved location.

Laib: Supports more public art and the location is already a built environment, right next to a paved parking lot, and large concrete walking area. We will want to add a public transportation clause to our letter, he believes

Crames: It will become a selfie site and can't this be a bridge to a greater city focus on public art and connectivity? Diaz: Yes

Chung: Loves the placement. The information plaque should be multi lingual and have QR code.

Thornton: And, should also recognize history of indigenous peoples

Phillips: Could we support it as a temporary site? Diaz: No, its a large installation, not easy to move

Public Comments

Steve Alper: Location vis a vis the Hollywood Sign viewing site is problematic, and could block that site line. Diaz: There is a long area of viewing points there and this will not obstruct sign shots.

Danelle Bond: Light at night can interfere with the GO astronomy. Diaz: The lighting is the same wattage as the street lighting already there, points horizontally and will be timed on/off with other lighting there

Marian Dodge; Why not install it at City Hall, along with other sister city installations. It's a commercial invasion of a wilderness area

Rachel Fox: This location is supported by CD4

Board Deliberation

Laib: Motion of support with transportation, security and multilingual signage.

Thornton: Second

Ashouri: Review after 6 months to 1 year

Deutsch: Not too many provisos in our letter. We should just support it

Motion passes 8-1 in favor, with Ashouri voting against. Chair Greenwald asks Laib and Deutsch to draft board letter

Tracy James

-Old Zoo signage; after several site visits regarding security concerns, a new informational sign has been recommended. James shares picture of sign

Board Comments

Phillips: Less words, a QR code for more information

Superintendent Updates

Stefanie Smith, GP superintendent

-Masks still required in all RAP facilities

-Covid resulting in staff shortages, including multiple closures at Griffith Observatory

-Ecologist search is down to one candidate. Going to Parks Commission by end of February

-Pony rides have been inspected thoroughly by an independent veterinarian and a thorough assessment will be presented to commission.

-Western Canyon re-striping will be completed at end of January

-GPAB board participation. This is a working board, requiring active participation on committees, where the business of the board takes place. Ron Deutsch is a good example of an ideal board member; always first to volunteer and speaks his mind

Board Questions

Thornton: Are the horse/street crossings being re-striped, as per past requests. Smith: Horse crossings are up next

Laib: Is the unicycle and e-bike riding on park roads issue being addressed? James: It is an issue currently under review

Committee Reports

Executive Committee:

Greenwald: We have been discussing the size of board, how to replace Deutsch, who also held Transit and Mobility chair; goal is to attract new members who have expertise in key issue areas.

Community Engagement:

Crames: Discussion at first 2022 meeting was how to coordinate messaging. Looking at other constituent groups to approach this year.

Safety: Laib: Potential LAFD no smoking sign Funders have asked that if they fund the signs, will the Rangers ticket smokers. There is also an expressed astonishment that smoking is allowed on park golf courses, that this seems a dangerous carve out.

Equestrian

Thornton: There will be a dedication of two Lynn Brown memorial mounting blocks on 1/30, beginning at 10am at Easter Field, followed by a ride to Martinez Arena

Zoo

Greenwald: Another meeting was held with Armstrong from CD4. There is a desire to integrate GPAB and other feedback. The EIR approval process is unlikely to go before the City Council in the next few weeks.

Board Questions

Ashouri: They will have to redo entire EIR process if they change their option preference.
Greenwald: They are consulting with City Attorney's office about that and are also planning an LFNC town hall public meeting in near future.

Sustainability

Phillips: Excited that the first hydration station location in Fern Dell is underway. And, the committee is actively considering other hydration station locations in the park.

Board Questions

Thornton: Are dogs and horses also being considered in stations? Phillips: Yes, multi-modal is desired, but site water pressure and availability impact that

Board Business

None

Adjournment

In honor of retiring longest term board member and past chair Ron Deutsch Smith, Greenwald, James, Phillips, Laib, Thornton and Gilbert feted Ron for his compassion, drive, fairness, mentorship, aggressive nudging, friendship and elevation of GPAB to a stronger board

Deutsch: "I feel that the board is in good hands with Greenwald, and have great comfort leaving the park in Smith and James hands, as well". He is at peace that the vision for Griffith Park is being followed and implemented. Finally, "we need zero private passenger vehicles in this great wilderness park"

Motion to adjourn in Deutsch's honor: Greenwald

Second by Thornton. Passed with one abstention from Laib, who jokingly explained that we shouldn't give Ron permission to leave.

Meeting ended at 9:30