

Griffith Park Advisory Board Regular Meeting

December 5th, 2024 at 6:30pm

Final Minutes

1. Call to order

Chair Crow called meeting to order at 6:36 pm

Present: Crow, Carlson, Chung, Greenwald, Gustincic, Griffin, Hagans, Laib, Phillips

Excused:

Absent:

2. Board Announcements

The next meeting will be in January due to the upcoming holidays.

3. Approval of Minutes

Motion: Greenwald motion to approve minutes, Crow second. Unanimous.

4. Public Comment

- Marion Dodge – Thank you for coming to P22 mural ceremony. Saturday 12/7 FOGP will be doing some maintenance, join us at 8:30am at the merry-go-round parking lot.
- Laib – Thanks to FOGP for the P22 mural

5. Information Reports and Presentations

Ranger Kleckner

- I'm providing an update on the new fence at the Mt. Hollywood trail. I've personally spent a lot of time up there, and change it hard for folks. All signage is in place. Noticed only about three people going around the fence and ignoring the signs. Fence is open at the bottom because we're waiting for signage. The fence will likely come down, but not for awhile due to fire hazards and these are dangerous areas. Griffith Park used to be home to the deadliest forest fire ever. South facing slopes are the most at risk during fires and you cannot outrun a fire. We have between 12-20 rescues a year. Each rescue requires a ton of resources that should be dedicated elsewhere. Since the fencing we have not had to do any rescues.
- Crow – There are two fences, on the lower one I've noticed some doors are unlocked at some point.

- Ranger – We're just getting everyone on the same page about what needs to be locked and when. Most likely attributable to parks employees.
- Crow – Where are the signs going? Are they going to be at the top?
- Ranger – there will be signs at the top to tell people not to go down the trail.
- Phillips – The lower fence does cut off the trail at the second door that is considered a RAP approved trail.
- Ranger – Most of what is being closed off is not a real trail. There is a small section of a legitimate trail closed off. We should question what a legitimate trail is.
- Phillips – Would the goal be to cut off the trail to restore the trail that is on the map, but to make it not a trail?
- Laib – Pointing out that 90% of people that use a map use the Tom La Bonge map.

Public Comment

- Tracy – there is one comment submitted from Emmy– Would like to hear what is happening with the pipeline trail, the shortcuts have been used for years. We hope the shortcut will be restored.
- Greg Wickstrom – I came to Ranger Kleckner and started this with the fence. I rescued two women and I'm up there all the time and I've had it. There has to be more control of the hillside. The rescues have been very treacherous, and people have gotten hurt. Google maps has had it as a trail.
- Yasmine – In the last three years there have been over 100 rescues in Griffith Park, in this area, there have been 11. Hiker rescues have not happened near the bottom of the fence, and very few at the top.
- Justin – We created an open letter, we've had 257 people sign the petition questioning whether this is the right place to start. Maybe putting up signs or improving the trails would have been a better start. People are cutting through new trails.
- Marion – National Parks Service did a study, 1/3 of deaths that have occurred in National Parks are to Rangers that have rescued people that have not been in the right places.
- Pete Teetie – I'm turning 101 this month. In 22 years I have only seen one lady fall and she broke her collarbone. I helped Tom La Bonge carve stairs. We need railings.
- Tom McGovern – I've been walking in the park for 40 years and use those trails, so they've been around for a long time. If you consider the number of rescues vs the number of people that visit the park, it's very small. It would be the envy of most businesses and department. The fences seem to just be obstructionist.
- Gerry – This Board tries to base its decision on the Vision Plan. We should close

and prohibit trails not commissioned by the Department. My big interest is in restoring the habitat. I've documented rescues. Now, my issue is that the one to the left, the one that goes through the second gate, as is the one going to bird sanctuary. We're really closing two sanctioned trails. I have an example of a sign that we could consider using.

- Phillips – Great that you did the petition. I posted on Nextdoor and asked a poll, 60% say they are happy to see habitat restoration if it meant closing a trail. And 18% disagreed with fences.
- Greenwald – Can we give Ranger Kleckner an opportunity to respond?
- Ranger Kleckner – Bird Sanctuary is still open, this is just one little hook. As far as the metrics, I respectfully disagree. I have dedicated my life to public safety. Have a little faith. This is doing the right thing. I have been on those rescues and helicopter rescues are very scary. I humbly disagree the sign can do the work.
- Laib – One of the major tenets of the Vision Plan is to remove built environment. Maybe this is a question for Courtney, could the fence be a green fence?
- Phillips – We've tried green fencing before and it hasn't worked, only once we put the fencing up did the restoration occur.
- Ranger – There are other trails to go to the Hollywood sign. These are shortcuts.
- Griffin – I'm listening to everyone, and I'm hearing someone is concerned about safety and lives and death, and someone is concerned about how things have always been done. Nothing is more important than saving lives.
- Greenwald – The executive team may want to give some thought to the sanctioned trail to the left and allowing different regulations for that trail.

Courtney McCammon

- I'm presenting on the habitat restoration portion of this. There have been a number of priority areas Ranger Kleckner and I have been identified. We're going to stick with native habitat plants, some of which are very rare across the country and in the park. We will be hosting a planting event during the rainy season, but not before. Once it gets hotter and dryer, we will water those plants to make sure they are taken care of and supported.
- Laib – The sage is not going to stop people. Is there substantial large brush?
- Courtney – There are some larger shrubs.
- Carlson – Are you planting along the pipeline? Or just on the edges?
- Courtney – Just planting along the bottom. And no mulch.
- Crow – Are you saying we need 2-3 rainy seasons until the fences could come down?
- Courtney – We like to give plants two years to establish.
- Stefanie – Can you explain why it's difficult to get the plants?

- Courtney – Because we have to grow them from seeds for cost reasons.
- Phillips – How many plants would be ideal. Like two times what you have?
- Courtney – The whole restoration is zero cost. Ideally, I would have 2-3 times the number of plants and seeds.
- Gustincic – Once you remove the fence would the plants be at risk.
- Stefanie – Our goal will be to take the fence down when the plants are established.
- Gerry – happy to help. I have ideas already. I would use deterrent plants.

Courtney McCammon

- I'm presenting the year in review. I want to make sure you know what I'm doing. We now have a Junior Urban Ecologist. As we started off the year, we did a number of bird surveys, mostly nesting bird surveys. There was a long list of events we've held throughout the year and several nature hikes. Big participation in bio-blitz month, you encourage residents to track wildlife they see throughout LA in October. There's an invasive species treatment tracker tool and removal reporting tool. We assisted with forest schools throughout the park. LAEC educational pamphlet related to wildlife feeding. Revitalization of a trail project. Helping Tracy with Griffith Park visitor center.
- Hagans – I went out with Courtney and she pointed out all the invasive and dangerous plants. I encourage everyone to do it.
- Phillips – Just want to thank you, Courtney.

Mehmet Berker

- *Presented a map on Forest Lawn Dr.*
- Proposed project is from Memorial to Zoo Dr to encourage safe speeds. We've done engagement through a survey, the road is used as a freeway bypass. Have talked to neighboring jurisdictions, neighborhood councils, ongoing outreach. The faster a car is going the higher your chance of dying. On Forest Lawn, 74% of vehicles driven 42 mph. When you do a speed survey, the 85th percentile goes up, but then the speed limit goes up. There have been collisions and deaths. The proposed design includes several traffic calming measures.
- Greenwald – If I pull over to buy flowers, will I be blocking the bike lane?
- Berker – No, there will be curbside loading. The proposed design would extend the left turn lane into the cemetery. The project is not expected to increase travel time by more than two minutes, even at peak times. Implementation is expected by February or March 2025. Get more info at <https://Ladotlivablestreets.org/projects/forest-lawn>. We reviewed additional connected projects, including ones that will not possibly be funded for a very long time. The Forest Lawn drive project is potentially the best option for bike lanes

until those other projects receive funding.

- Laib – What happens west of memorial drive?
- Berker – There are existing bike lanes.
- Phillips – Fits with our broader approach to traffic in the park.
- Gustincic – Super excited about this as a user of that street. The fact that it could be done by February or March is fantastic. And it's about safety and that's important.
- Hagans – I would appreciate fewer cycling trails near the equestrian areas, along the river.
- Greenwald – I know you met with stakeholders last night. Can you share any of the concerns from the meeting?
- Berker – The main concern is about traffic for services. There seems like there are known peak days of the year. Maybe this is an area that could benefit from redesign even separate from the traffic calming. The signals are not smart cycles but can be adjusted based on peak hours.
- Crow – How is the traffic study done?
- Berker – Fehr and Peers do the study, they utilize the current conditions and then model it to see what it would be like in the future.
- Hagans – I'm still stuck on how redundant the two bike trails are.
- Berker – The argument for both is that they are on different sides of the river. But it will be a while anyways.
- Crow – this is outside RAP jurisdiction. But I'm interested in still writing a letter in support.

Public Comment

- Ken – General impression I had was that everyone who was against it brought up that the accidents that have occurred were over a very long period of time. Where are the cars supposed to go?
- Gerry – This is great and wanted to point out that there is an opportunity for a wildlife bridge. Getting back to the project, I love the idea with one caveat. I'm a biker and was a runner once, this is very dangerous for a runner. What are the accommodations for runners.
- Karen – Big fan of yours, this was really well done. I want to echo the concern about the equestrian concern. And I want to echo the idea of a wildlife bridge.
- Berker – I would encourage you to stay involved with the Headworks project.
- Greenwald – Would you be willing to come back to us in a year to share the results of the report and share data with how it has gone?
- Berker – Yes

- Motion: Greenwald moves to write a letter of support for the project and hear in a years time how it's going, with the caveat that we clarify the road is LADOT, not under RAP management. Gustincic second. Unanimous. at 8:45pm. Next meeting Thursday, January 23, 2024. Crow will write letter.

Crow

- We are pushing the last two items to next month.

6. Superintendent Updates

- Crystal Springs road and safety project – still working on the request to translate into DOT format. Our goal is to have the project start by early 2025.
- Visitor Center – Tracy has been working everyday on the visitor center. Had a meeting this week with folks about the Adobe. Plan to form an ad hoc in early next year.
- Concessions at Park Center – Plan is to open by spring 2025
- P22 mural – I was at the celebration. Want to thank FOGP. We miss the artists working here.
- Laib – how are the meters doing?
 - Stefanie – There are occasional issues but no major issues
 - Laib – And the funding is coming back?
 - Stefanie – Yes
 - Laib – maybe we could use it for plants and other projects.

7. Committee and Ad Hoc Reports

Vice-chair Crow: The Executive Committee met and discussed agenda for the this meeting.

8. Board Business

- Greenwald – January is one of the months we schedule an update about the meters.
- Gustincic – Can we get the map?
- Crow – we are tracking down the map

9. Adjournment

Motion: Greenwald moves to adjourn. Phillips second. Unanimous at 8:45pm. Next meeting Thursday, January 23, 2024.