

MINUTES

City of San Diego
Park and Recreation Board

DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

January 12, 2011

Meeting Held at:

Balboa Park Club, Upstairs Conference Room
2150 Pan American Road West
San Diego, CA 92101

Mailing Address is:

City of San Diego
Park and Recreation Department
202 C Street, M.S. 35
San Diego, California 92101-3860

ATTENDANCE

Present:

Wilbur Smith
Kathryn Fulhorst
Stuart White
Simon Andrews
Don Leonard
Roger Utt
Jim Winter – Staff Representative

Absent:

Dann Mallec (excused)
Fred Blecksmith (excused)
Vincent Marchetti (excused)
Dennis Otsuji (excused)
Michael Theilacker

CALL TO ORDER–The meeting was called to order by Chair Smith at 8:30 am.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 10, 2010 minutes were approved with a correction to remove the second paragraph under Speakers Opposed on page 3. This paragraph was inadvertently carried over from previous minutes.

REQUEST FOR CONTINUANCES - None

COMMUNICATIONS – None

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – No Report

STAFF REPORT – Mr. Winter reported the Park and Recreation Department had been working on the Department's Capital Improvement Program for fiscal year 2012 and very few new park projects are being added.

OLD BUSINESS – None

ACTION ITEMS:

1. **Fiesta Island General Development Plan**

City Staff: Paul Jacob, Associate Engineer, Park and Recreation Department
Presenters: Mike Singleton, Principal, KTU+A Landscape Architects

Mr. Jacob introduced the project and indicated the Committee had last reviewed the project in 2007. The Park and Recreation Department was directed to review the design of the dog off-leash area and in the process made other design changes. The purpose of the presentation at today's meeting was to present the

changes made as a result of the dog off-leash review. Mr. Jacob informed the Committee one of the primary goals of the General Development Plan (GDP) was to accommodate all Fiesta Island user groups while staying in conformance with the Mission Bay Park Master Plan (Master Plan). The Master Plan does not address dog off-leash use. He then introduced Mr. Singleton to present the proposed changes to the GDP.

Mr. Singleton informed the Committee they had approved Alternate 4h in 2007. After meeting with the dog off-leash group (FIDO) and other user groups they had studied many other alternatives and the current plan is labeled Alternate 5f. The Mission Bay Park Committee approved Alternate 5f as presented at their December 2010 meeting with no additional comments.

Mr. Singleton reviewed Table 1, Land Use, of the GDP which provides a breakdown of the proposed land uses and their portion of the 485.72 acres which makes up Fiesta Island. Some of the more significant changes in acreage from the previous Alternate 4h were:

- Developed Regional Park was reduced from 79.59 acres to 36.79 acres. This change significantly reduced the turf areas in order to decrease water use and park maintenance.
- Fenced dog off-leash was increased from 33.4 acres to 88.64 acres.
- Sensitive habitat areas increased from 85.02 acres to 90.24 acres
- Circulation and parking increased from 30.01 acres to 33.81 acres.
- Overall, 1.9 acres of land used in the Mission Bay Park lease calculations was lost to new wetland habitat being created at the north end of the island. Wetland does not count as land in the calculations.

Mr. Singleton then presented the overall changes to the GDP. These included:

- Revised traffic circulation pattern from counter-clockwise to clockwise to facilitate traffic management during special events.
- Improved sand management and sand dune habitat creation
- A relocation of the camping area closer to the entrance to the island
- A more complete multi-user trail system separated from vehicular traffic
- Enlarged fenced dog off-leash area
- Reduction in developed parkland leaving more of the island in an undeveloped state
- Added a pier at the dog off-leash and non-motorized watercraft beach area
- Improved traffic and trail connections at the causeway
- Fencing locations changed to separate dog off-leash use from vehicular traffic
- Use of bio-swales along the roadways to control and treat storm water runoff

These proposed changes will reduce the overall costs of development from the \$236 million estimated in the Master Plan to approximately \$99 million. Approximately 54% of the Island won't change from its current use and configuration.

The next steps for the project include environmental review, Park and Recreation Board approval, City Council Committee approval, full City Council approval and Planning Commission approval during the Site Development Permit process.

The Committee then asked questions and provided comments on the proposed revisions of the GDP. These included:

- Due to the level of detail and studies, a question was raised whether this is a GDP or more of a Precise Plan for Fiesta Island. Staff response was the project is to process a GDP for approval. The requirement for a Site Development Permit pushes the project beyond the process of a normal GDP and, therefore, it begins to assume the properties of a Precise Plan.
- The Master Plan calls for a water oriented development of the Island, but it appears urban pressure for active and passive recreational opportunities have pushed the plan beyond just being a marine oriented park.
- Would like to see the fencing reduced for the dog off-leash area. Mr. Singleton suggested looking for ways to reduce the visual impact of the fencing, but one of the primary needs for fencing the dog off-leash area is to protect sensitive habitat on the Island.
- The habitat areas seem to be bisected by roadways. More contiguous habitat areas should be provided. Mr. Singleton explained the concept behind the roadway patterns and how loops can be closed for specific recreational activities. There is still a need for a road along the water's edge at the north end of the Island to accommodate many of the activities which currently occur on the island.
- Can the sand operations be moved somewhere else besides Fiesta Island. Staff indicated that very question had been studied by a consultant several years ago and the study showed using Fiesta Island as the best alternative. Mr. Singleton indicated the sand operations will have very little impact on the public due to the time of day the sand operations occur. The sand operations area will provide habitat and foraging for wildlife. Maintaining the sand operations on the Island will not sacrifice usable parkland or disrupt current or proposed uses of the Island.
- Will development of the Island have a negative impact on eel grass? Staff indicated the proposed development will not impact current eel grass areas and will actually create new eel grass habitat on the north end of the Island. The causeway design will also improve water quality allowing additional eel grass to be established when the Tecolote shores habitat area is developed.
- Were any studies done to determine how much beach is needed for swimmers? No formal study was done regarding swimming. It was suggested KTU+A review the Master Plan may identify swimming opportunities and consider making the Fiesta Island swimming beach larger.
- Add wind surfing type activities to the GDP somewhere just so those activities are recognized.
- What does the equestrian staging area include? Mr. Singleton explained the equestrian staging area will be an informal area on the beach. It will provide water for horses, but will not include a formal parking lot. It will function similar as the equestrian areas do today.
- The multi-use trail should be wide enough to accommodate the various users and should be paved. Perhaps a 4' wide DG trail next to the paved trail or a physical barrier is needed to help separate high speed uses from pedestrians.
- How will the Coastal Commission weigh in on the project? Staff indicated they will review the plan at the end of the City process and have not provided any direction or comment to date.
- A concern was raised about the maintenance implications of using turf in a portion of the dog off-leash area. Mr. Singleton indicated the area is large enough to spread the use out. They will also recommend a turfgrass suitable for sand and alkaline soil conditions.
- What is the lighting scheme for the Island? Mr. Singleton explained there will be security lighting in the parking lots and around the comfort stations, but they are not proposing lighting along the roadways or trails.
- Will the proposed trees be permanently irrigated? Yes. Torrey Pines are proposed for the higher elevations on the Island and Sycamores and Willows will be used at the lower elevations.

- All fencing within the Fiesta Island General Development Plan should be reduced wherever possible.
- Remove the fence at the grass play area to provide direct access to the beach within the off-leash area.

Upon completion of the presentations and discussions by the Committee, a motion was made.

Motion (Utt, second by Fulhorst) – Approve the Fiesta Island General Development Plan as presented with the following comments:

1. Preserve the intent of the Mission Bay Park Master Plan by keeping Fiesta Island a water oriented park.
2. Reduce bisecting the habitat areas with roads.
3. Reduce fencing wherever possible.
4. Review separating high speed use and pedestrian use along the multi-use trails.

Discussion: None

Vote: Unanimous approval.

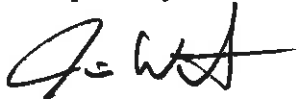
INFORMATION ITEMS: None

WORKSHOP ITEMS: None

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

NEXT MEETING: Wednesday February 9, 2011 at 8:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Jim Winter

Staff Representative, Park & Recreation Department