

Unapproved Meeting Minutes
PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
November 27, 2023

MEMBERS IN PERSON: Reid, Skaredoff, Claxton, Espana, Valenzuela, Dieter, Obringer, Simmons, Henry, Mahadevan, Dieter, Mendoza, Claxton, Chang, Peoples

MEMBERS REMOTE: Marsh

ABSENT: Tsutsui

STAFF: Padmore, Pfuehler, Spaulding, Baldinger, Healy

BOARD: Director Coffey

PUBLIC: Shane Wiseman, Amelia Marshall

The East Bay Regional Park District (Park District) intends to hold meetings through a hybrid platform of in-person and remote attendance to allow members of the public to participate via remote attendance through the Park District's virtual platform, Zoom. The Board of Directors and designated staff will, with limited exceptions, participate in-person at the Park District Headquarters (2950 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland, California). Occasionally, members of the Board of Directors may attend remotely pursuant to the Brown Act, as amended by AB 2449.

The November 27, 2023, Park Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting was held in-person and via video conference. Chair Obringer called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

The Park Advisory Committee meeting was video recorded and may be viewed by clicking the following link: [November 2023 - Park Advisory Committee Meeting - YouTube](#)

1. Roll call

Recording Secretary, Yulie Padmore, conducted a roll call of the PAC members and staff.

2. Approval of the Minutes

Discussion: Chair Obringer provided PAC Members the opportunity to provide edits to the September 25, 2023, PAC meeting minutes.

Vote: Member Claxton made a motion to approve the minutes and forward to the East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors. The motion was seconded by Member Simmons. The motion passed unanimously with two abstentions as the members were absent.

3. Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

Park District Planner Rourke Healy called attention to produce provided for the meeting from Gill Tract Farm in Albany. This one-acre farm is a collaborative between UC Berkeley, City of Albany, and the Sogorea Te Land Trust which focuses its efforts on restorative agriculture.

4. Informational Items

a. Board Member Comments

East Bay Regional Park District Board Director Coffey provided a verbal update about the renewed master planning project and his experience preparing for the 2013 master plan. He also highlighted that 2024 would be the 90th Anniversary of the Park District.

PAC Comments:

Member Claxton thanked Coffey for the information and looks forward to participating in the process.

Member Skaredoff inquired if the plan would address climate change impacts. Director Coffey responded the next master plan will contain many objectives and projects directed at adapting to and combating climate change. Skaredoff also asked if there would be a focus on diversity and inclusivity in the master plan. Coffey hesitated to confirm those issues would be addressed directly by the master plan as those programs and policies are generated separately, but he believed they would be incorporated into the master plan. Coffey also noted the hiring of the District's first Equity Officer, José G. González, a senior manager in the General Manager's office.

Member Simmons asked Director Coffey what the major focus of the 90th anniversary celebration would be. Coffey directed Simmons to watch the presentations on the topic presented by Susan Shui at the prior Executive Committee and full Board meetings. Events will take place at many parks throughout the district all year long.

Member Marsh asked for more information about when and where the master plan interviews would take place. Director Coffey replied he did not have additional information, but could assure the PAC members would have significant opportunity to provide input.

Public Comment: None.

b. Presentation(s):

1. Park District 2024 Budget

Deborah Spaulding, Assistant Finance Officer, provided an informational overview of the 2024 Proposed Budget. The two volumes of the East Bay Regional Park District's (Park District) Proposed Budget are:

- The Operating Budget, including the General Manager's message, overview of funds, financial summaries by fund and budgets by division, including performance measures.
- The Project and Program Budget provides details on specific projects and programs.

Both volumes are posted on the Park District website at: <https://www.ebparks.org/publicinfo/budget>

PAC Comments:

Member Mendoza suggested combining the wildfire reduction and tribal access and allocation protocol budgets. He pointed out traditional tribal knowledge could inform the wildfire prevention process. Mendoza also inquired if there has been increased funding for electric vehicles in the fleet as many District staff do not require a 4x4 vehicle when driving to meetings, etc. Spaulding supports the idea of combining the wildfire reduction and tribal access and allocation protocol budgets. She will communicate the suggestion to the General Manager. Spaulding also confirmed the District has a plan in place for greening the fleet as vehicles age-out.

Member Williams asked if the District is subject to CARB rules requiring public agencies to have a schedule for moving to electric vehicles as early as next year. Spaulding confirms the District is subject to those rules.

Member Henry commended Spaulding on the themes in her presentation, citing the importance of land acquisition, trail development and fire suppression.

Member Williams commented the district could save staff time and money by implementing a two-year budget process. Williams then asked for clarification regarding the 2024 budget increase numbers. Spaulding indicated the revenue from 2023 was higher than originally expected, allowing the 2024 budget to increase by 6% over the 2023 budget.

Member Mahadevan asked if pension costs are fully funded actuarially. Spaulding stated the district still has an unfunded liability, but the number is expected to smooth out and go down in coming years.

Member Valenzuela asked if the District will extend availability of trails to e-bikes and consider purchasing site-specific, rechargeable vehicles to reduce carbon footprint. He commended the storm damage repair at Round Valley. Spaulding stated she is not an expert on those topics, but the District is doing a survey on trail usage/users which may provide additional information on e-bike users. She also indicated an increase in requests for ATVs/site specific vehicles.

Member Simmons inquired about the source of funding for the 90th Anniversary Celebration budget. Spaulding responded the \$90K in funding for this is housed in the Public Affairs Department budget. Simmons then inquired how the budget surplus from prior fiscal years is allocated. Spaulding replied in previous years, it was reallocated during the mid-year budget process. The District has subsequently done away with that process. The District has an overage estimate so there is no longer a mid-year budget. Spaulding then commented multi-year budgeting is a best practice and is something the Finance Department is looking to implement in the future.

Member Peoples requested clarification about the paragraph stating the District would be drawing funds from the pension trust fund to help stabilize rates and reduce the CalPERS pension costs. Spaulding responded CalPERS annually provides the District a percentage which needs to be deposited for every employee based on their current cost and unfunded liability. Currently, those rates are going up and likely will continue to for the next two years before decreasing. Approximately five years ago, the District created a pension trust with excess revenue, knowing pension costs would increase. There is a 10-year plan to build up the pension trust and then to draw it down. Peoples inquired if land acquisition is part of the capital outlay. Spaulding responded in the affirmative. She stated while there is not a particular appropriation in this budget for it, there are funds already budgeted from prior years. Peoples inquired why the investment earnings from unexpended balances of over \$300 million is not included as revenue in the presentation. Spaulding explained the District is required to invest very safely in bonds. The investment is on track to earn four or five million by year's end, but because this number is so variable, it is not budgeted.

Member Skaredoff asked if there's an optimal balance for the District to have debt it is paying off versus being debt-free. Spaulding responded the District does have a debt policy that addresses the question. The debt discussed in the presentation are the Measure WW bonds. The District then has debt service owed on those bonds so it works with financial advisors to structure how much the debt service should be and ensure it does not exceed \$10 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation. This protects the taxpayers from excessive assessments on their property tax bills.

Chair Obringer asked where on the funding list for projects is the Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50. She also asked about the process for ranking a project. Spaulding responded the project did not receive funding this year, but its ranking can be found in the project budget book. The process for project ranking is dependent on objective factors rather than advocacy to the Board of Directors. Project readiness and funding from another source such as a grant would increase the project's overall score.

Member Marsh inquired if the multi-language signage referenced in the presentation would be representative of the people in a particular community or would it be in English and Spanish only. Spaulding indicated she did not have the answer but would find out and get back to the member. Lisa Goorjian, Assistant General Manager, Operations, clarified this budget item is to support the effort of the Park District to expand both the number of languages and the number of multi-lingual signs throughout the District. The intent is to reflect the languages spoken throughout the District. Marsh then inquired what kind of technology upgrades will be made at the parks (referenced in the budget). Spaulding responded upgrades are targeted at improving internet connectivity for staff whose offices are at parks and technology for electronically accepting credit cards. Marsh then inquired about the nature of the partnership with the Antioch School District for water safety education. Spaulding indicated this project is being managed by the Lifeguard Services Division and she does not have further information.

Public Comment: None

II. Park Advisory Committee – 2024 Draft Objectives and Workplan

Lisa Baldinger, Legislative and Policy Management Analyst, provided a presentation on the Park Advisory Committee's 2024 Draft Objectives and Workplan.

Updated role of Committee:

To provide community perspectives and advice to staff and to the Board on the issues, projects and policies of the Park District.

Proposed 2024 Objectives:

1. Provide Community Perspectives on the Park District's Second Century District Plan
2. Expand Understanding of the East Bay's Biodiversity and Role the Park District Serves in Protecting Natural Resources
3. Provide Guidance and Recommendations on Park District Policies and Practices

4. Maintain Understanding of the Park District's Funding Programs
5. Provide Oversight of Park District Local Funding Measures and Initiatives
6. Maintain Understanding of and Engage on the Park District's Active Capital Projects and Programs

Erich Pfuehler Chief of Government and Legislative Affairs, thanked Baldinger for her work on these objectives and thanked the Park Advisory Committee members for their review and feedback. He added these objectives are designed to guide outcomes.

PAC Comments:

Member Peoples recommended deleting the word "sensitive" in objective number two so that it applies to all East Bay ecosystems.

Member Simmons recommended changing the word "engage" to "engagement" on objective number three. He asked where the 90th anniversary celebration activity would fit into the objectives. Baldinger responded it fits within the sixth objective "providing guidance on park district practices." Pfuehler commented it is incorporated in the Second Century District Plan.

Member Williams inquires if the order of the objectives signifies order of importance. Baldinger responded the list is not necessarily in order of importance. Williams then asked if this item is eligible for a vote as there was a clerical error in the agenda in which the item was marked informational. Obringer shared the concern and decided not to vote in accordance with the Brown Act. Baldinger explained these objectives will be presented at the December Executive Committee. The PAC feedback will be integrated into the proposal.

Member Henry expressed concern Ordinance 38 and refuse policies are really important in Ward 5 and are not reflected in the objectives.

Member Espana complemented the presentation as providing a clear lens for the committee's purpose and objectives.

Member Mendoza asked for objective number two to be expanded and include cultural resources as well. He would like to see cultural diversity included within the objectives.

Chair Obringer notes this was a heavy lift, a long-time coming and compliments the objectives for providing clarity on the Committee's role.

Public Comment:

Shane Wiseman serves as a commissioner on Lafayette Park, Trails and Rec Commission. He looks forward to seeing how cities can get involved and contribute to the general regional plan.

Amelia Marshall commented she agrees with Member Mendoza on objective number two. Cultural diversity should be explicitly included.

Chair Obringer

5. **Actions Items**

a. **Election of 2024 Officers for Discussion**

Erich Pfuehler Chief of Government and Legislative Affairs explained the Committee is to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair for a two-year term.

Chair Obringer stated Member Tsutsui expressed interest in serving as Chair. She asked if anyone else would like to nominate themselves or someone else for Chair or Vice-Chair.

Vote: Member Skaredoff motioned to elect Member Tsutsui as Chair. Member Deiter seconded the motion. The motion passes unanimously.

Chair Obringer stated Member Espana expressed interest in serving as Vice-Chair. She asked if anyone

else would like to nominate themselves or someone else for Vice-Chair.

Vote: Member Mahadevan motioned to elect Member Espana as vice-chair. Member Peoples seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: None.

b. Chair comments:

Chair Obringer shared it has been an honor to serve as PAC Chair. She tried for many years to join the PAC. The experience of Chairing was very rewarding. Member Deiter thanked Obringer for her service and skill in the role. Obringer thanked staff for their efforts, commitment and communication.

6. **Announcements** – Pfuehler announced the December 11 networking event will be held at Drakes Dealership.

Member Mendoza congratulated the new Equity Officer, Jose Gonzalez. He asked if there will be a PAC meeting in December. Chair Obringer stated there would not be a December PAC business meeting.

Member Williams brought up the issue of dog feces at Lake Chabot Regional Park. He asked if there is anything that can be done. Director Coffey stated the issue has actually improved, perhaps more signage needed.

Member Skaredoff notes there are millions of ladybugs on the Stream Trail at Redwood Regional Park.

7. **Adjournment** – Obringer adjourned the meeting at 6:31 p.m.