

Unapproved Meeting Minutes
PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE
March 25, 2024

MEMBERS IN PERSON:	Claxton, Dieter, Espana, Farmer, Henry, Lopez, Mahadevan, Peoples, Reid, Skaredoff, Tsutsui, Valenzuela
MEMBERS REMOTE:	Deschambault
ABSENT:	Chang, Marsh, Mendoza, Obringer, Simmons, Williams
STAFF:	Padmore, Csontos, Goorjian, Baldinger, Pfuehler, Fetterly, Moran
BOARD:	Director Rosario
PUBLIC:	None

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 March 25, 2024, Park Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting was held in-person and via video conference. Chair Tsutsui called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

The Park Advisory Committee meeting was video recorded and may be viewed by clicking the following link: [March 25, 2024 Park Advisory Committee - East Bay Regional Park District, CA \(swagit.com\)](https://www.swagit.com/2024/03/25/pac-meeting)

1. Roll call

Recording Clerk Flora Csontos conducted a roll call of the PAC members.

Vote: Member Peoples made a motion to approve. The motion was seconded by Member Farmer. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Approval of the Minutes

Discussion: Chair Tsutsui provided PAC Members the opportunity to make edits to the February 26, 2024, PAC meeting minutes.

Vote: Member Valenzuela made a motion to approve the minutes and forward them to the East Bay Regional Park District Board of Directors. The motion was seconded by Member Lopez. The motion passed unanimously with one abstention.

3. Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda – None.

4. Actions Items – None.

5. Informational Items

a. Board Member Comments

East Bay Regional Park District Board Member Rosario welcomed new and returning PAC members. He shared the passing of former Park District board member Carroll Williams. Director Rosario also shared information about the April 27th Roberts Pool grand opening as well as the May 23rd McCosker Ranch grand opening. He welcomed the new Park District Chief of Police Roberto Filice and new Chief of Land Acquisition Becky

Bremser. Director Rosario shared updates about Lafayette Ridge Staging Area, a closure on the Lafayette-Moraga trail. He also highlighted the \$1.38 million Federal funds via Representative Eric Swalwell's office. Director Rosario shared the news of his retirement from the Board at the end of the year.

b. Presentation(s):

1. Informational Update on the Junior Ranger Program

Regional Interpretive and Recreation Services Manager Mike Moran provided an overview of the Junior Ranger program. Supervising Naturalist Sara Fetterly shared information from the most recent survey.

Member Skaredoff asked what age participants join and how long they participate. Fetterly indicated there are two-year increments until age 14 when the program becomes four-year increments. A large majority of participants stay eight to nine years.

Member Lopez inquired whether there has been discussion about replicating the program in other areas of the Park District. Moran indicated this is the third group. Each program has paired with a community partner to create a strong community relationship. Lopez asked staff to expand on the "other" section about how the Junior Ranger program is publicized. Fetterly indicated the program is not publicly shared, but is advertised in the visitor center and may be shared more broadly.

Member Valenzuela asked about the community partner, People Who Care, and where it was based. Moran indicated it is a Pittsburg-based organization.

Member Peoples inquired whether survey respondents could be asked about the program's benefits to the Park District and community. Fetterly responded more programs have been requested due to the beneficial effects of the program for both the Park District and participants. Peoples inquired whether program participants were feeding into the Park District's seasonal employee pipeline. Fetterly confirmed they are.

Member Farmer hoped to see tracking of future program participants who apply for Park District positions. She inquired how program admission decisions are made given the low number of positions. Fetterly indicated it was difficult, but that not every applicant could be taken unfortunately.

Member Reid inquired about the level of diversity within the group. Fetterly indicated the group was diverse in several ways including race and gender.

Vice Chair Espana asked who the program is benefiting in terms of demographics, economic diversity and program access. She commented on program bias and ways in which the program experiences are presented to both new and returning participants. Espana hoped to see continued evaluation and metrics to determine program success.

Member Henry shared concerns about whether the Junior Ranger program was open to all, including new members, or becoming more of a legacy program.

Member Lopez asked what languages the program is posted in. Fetterly indicated it is not posted, but is shared verbally in English and Spanish at the visitor center. Moran shared these considerations are part of increasing access to the program in a sustainable way that allows enough spaces for new members to join.

Fetterly finished the presentation. Chair Tsutsui thanked staff for the information and commended the program for its success and for the chance to evaluate future opportunities.

Member Deschambault inquired about the science and climate science components of the program. Fetterly indicated there is a large education component especially focused on stewardship and science.

Member Dieter asked about the next steps following the questionnaire. Moran answered staff are collecting data in order to inform next steps. The goal is to reach as many people as possible while maintaining the values of the program with adequate resources.

Member Peoples indicated the Park District may have an opportunity to leverage resources aimed at increasing participation and leveraging limited staff resources.

Member Skaredoff asked what type of exploration is done with an applicant when deciding whether they will enter the program. Fetterly indicated the process is a conundrum especially to ensure new applicants are being exposed to naturalist and outdoor programs. Sufficient staffing is an additional challenge.

Vice Chair Espana emphasized the programs are targeting different career pathways. She asked how information would be collected to monitor whether a program is diverse. Assistant General Manager of Operations Lisa Goorjian indicated the ongoing demographics study with San Francisco State University This information will be shared with the Park District's Board Operations Committee. She shared Park District programs are delivered at an administrative, staff level. Due to the legacy of this program, the Park District is engaging families who have participated to help better align the program's future. Next steps will include compiling the information received, aligning it with the Park District's work, and working with the Board and General Manager. Moran shared his appreciation for the comments regarding career development and shared information regarding program events which speak to this goal.

Member Reid appreciated the observation of unmet need for a number of children who would like to participate. Fetterly indicated many of the program participants feel at home in this program.

Member Claxton shared her interest to see similar programs in Fremont and Union City. Moran indicated there is a similar program in process at Coyote Hills in Union City.

Public Comment – Francis Mendoza shared his appreciation for the presentation and encouraged more programs in Fremont, Union City and Hayward to spread the wealth. He shared his greetings from the Klamath River.

Member Farmer asked about the annual calendar and curriculum. Fetterly shared information about the Junior Ranger and the Richmond Ranger models including activities and timing throughout the school year.

c. PAC Member Comments

Member Valenzuela shared information about March 26th as All Abilities Day at Big Break Regional Shoreline. He invited members to participate in a morning event for the April 27th first Day of Service in Brentwood.

Vice Chair Espana invited members to the Bay Area Ridge Trail's Ridge to Bridge event on April 13th. There are volunteer and event opportunities. She also shared the Oakland Museum's All Power to the People event. The Dr. Huey P. Newton Foundation supported by United States Representative Barbara Lee, and is also supported by a resolution from the East Bay Regional Park District. Organizational letters of support were encouraged.

Member Lopez thanked Vice Chair Espana for the information and indicated she would like to support the effort.

Member Skaredoff invited attendees to the Earth Day and John Muir Celebration in Martinez on April 22nd.

Member Claxton inquired about information for the upcoming Board site visit schedule. Executive Assistant to the Clerk of the Board Yulie Padmore indicated more information could be shared by email as well.

Director Rosario thanked members for today's dialogue especially around diversity, equity and inclusion. He shared his appreciation for staff's work on these programs and the General Manager's work.

d. Report from Chair – No report.

6. Announcements – None.

7. Adjournment

Chair Tsutsui adjourned the meeting at 5:54 p.m.