

Griffith Park Master Plan – Working Group Meeting Summary - July 10, 2006

The Griffith Park Master Plan Working Group convened their meeting on Monday, July 10, 2006, at 6:30 p.m. at the Griffith Park Ranger Station Auditorium.

Present: Working Group – Bernadette Soter, Clare Darden, Craig Kessler, George Grace, Gerry Hans, Jeff Gardner, Jose Sigala, Lynn Brown, Richard Bogy, Susan Swan, and Valerie Vanaman

Patricia Malone, Council District 4
Rory Fitzpatrick, Council District 4
Steve Davis, Bureau of Engineering
Darryl Ford, Planning and Construction
Mark Mariscal, Recreation and Parks
Vicki Israel, Recreation and Parks

Absent: Louis Alvarado

Facilitator: Kevin Regan, Assistant General Manager, Department of Recreation and Parks

Ms. Israel began the meeting by calling the role of the Working Group Members and City employees. She then opened the meeting with the first item on the agenda: discussion and review of meeting summaries.

Ms. Soter requested that a statement she made at the May 1 meeting be amended and reflected in the summary. She stated that she had asked the Department to work up a budget in order to provide copies of materials produced by the Working Group for public distribution.

Ms. Soter also requested that comments made by Mr. Kessler be inserted into the May 1 Summary. She indicated that Mr. Kessler made a remark that he had been involved in meetings downtown about Griffith Park. Ms. Soter stated that she was concerned about separate meetings happening outside of the Working Group's purview. Ms. Israel asked Mr. Kessler to comment. Mr. Kessler stated he did not recall making that statement and clarified that he has not been involved in any confidential or private meetings regarding this process. Ms. Soter rescinded her request.

There were no other comments regarding the May 1 Summary. At this point in the meeting, Mr. Regan joined the meeting and asked for an update from the Working Group of summaries from previous meetings. Mr. Gardner stated that a transcript of the January meeting was completed. Mr. Hans shared that the meeting summaries in question are still under review by Working Group Members and are not yet quite ready to be posted on the Department's website. Mr. Regan asked that any meeting summary ready for posting be sent to him.

The discussion then moved to the next agenda item: presentation and discussion of subcommittee report. Prior to this discussion, Mr. Hans asked for clarification of an agenda item on an upcoming Arts, Parks Health and Aging Subcommittee Meeting. Mr. Regan stated that the meeting for tomorrow is an update of items discussed at the previous Arts, Parks meeting held at the zoo. Mr. Hans also inquired about another subcommittee agenda item that involved moving

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trailers from the Observatory to Friendship Hall. Mr. Regan stated that he believes this item also involves a quick update.

Ms. Soter stated that land use initiatives and global planning for Griffith Park was taking place outside of the Master Plan process and as such, was undermining the process. Other questions specific to construction trailers being moved from the Observatory to Friendship Hall was also discussed in further detail. Ms. Vanaman pointed out that there is a “domino effect” present with the trailers moving to Friendship Hall in that a number of parking spaces would be eliminated. Further lack of parking in Griffith Park could then lead to a recommendation for the construction of additional parking. Mr. Regan stated that he and Ms. Israel would convey the Working Group’s concerns and viewpoints to the subcommittee tomorrow. Ms. Soter stated that perhaps shared use of Friendship Auditorium could be a solution for a senior citizen center. Mr. Regan again assured the Working Group that all of their concerns would be conveyed to the subcommittee.

Ms. Vanaman then provided an update of the Working Group’s subcommittee’s report of the Built Environment Chapter. She stated that at the meeting in May, an initial draft of this chapter was circulated to Working Group Members. After receiving some more additional comments, the subcommittee did some additional work and produced this second draft of the Built Environment Chapter. While some sections remained the same, other sections had some additions and minor changes were made. The term “needs study” was replaced with “needs analysis.” An analysis of existing documents could be used rather than the necessity for a “needs study” that could cost upwards of a million dollars.

Mr. Kessler commented that the Cal State Northridge study is being cited as the needs analysis. He stated that although the survey provided a lot of information, he believes the methods used in the study were flawed and that the study draws conclusions unsupported by evidence. Mr. Grace suggested that all reference to this study be struck from the chapter. Ms. Soter disagreed and a lengthy discussion ensued about whether or not to remove all references to the Cal State Northridge study due to validity and methodology issues.

Mr. Regan reminded everyone that such discussion is exactly what is supposed to occur and asked the Working Group if a compromise regarding this matter could be reached. He further provided a review of how the Working Group operates and reminded everyone that reaching consensus is their goal. Mr. Regan suggested that the terminology referring to the study be left in the chapter, but that a footnote be included to explain the questionability of the study’s methodology.

After additional discussion, the Working Group agreed to the following: that a footnote be attached to the wording “No existing, valid analysis exists to support” and that the footnote explain that “a survey done by California State University Northridge reached certain conclusions that are set forth in the study which is attached as Appendix X.” Ms. Vanaman then summarized the remainder of the Built Facilities chapter.

There was some discussion of what other parks and other entities within Griffith Park are doing and that the Working Group needs to be aware of such projects and activities as part of their re-

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write of the Master Plan draft.

Additional discussion was held regarding ad hoc projects and how they are decided and who gives permission for them to take place. Mr. Regan explained the difference between ad hoc projects and capital improvement projects.

Ms. Soter asked Mr. Regan if funding could be made available for hiring a temporary worker to assist with typing duties at the subcommittee meetings. Mr. Regan replied that he would have to research this request.

Regarding new business, Ms. Evelyn Davis, Senior Director of Marketing and Communications at the Autry National Center, was present and stated that she would be happy to return for the next meeting to discuss the Autry's future plans. Ms. Israel also stated that a representative from the Zoo Department would be present at the next meeting.

The following comments from the public were shared:

- Concerns regarding other entities in Griffith Park expanding into parkland and that it is disturbing the other entities are not a part of the Master Plan.
- Suggestions for specific wording regarding mention of the Cal State University Northridge survey in the Built Environment chapter.
- The cost of having all of the electric wires put underground in Griffith Park would be very prohibitive and it would be better to use that money to purchase Cahuenga Peak.
- Thank you to the Working Group for the enormous amount of work being done on behalf of the citizens of Los Angeles.
- Sometimes it is necessary for the Working Group to vote on matters rather than attempt to reach a consensus.
- The Cal State survey has more validity than the Working Group.
- There are big pieces missing from the Griffith Park Master Plan regarding other entities in the park; and that the Autry National Center will be undergoing a huge expansion that will have an affect on Griffith Park.
- The Autry National Center does not have a master plan and any planned expansion will be taking place within current boundaries.
- Inquiry regarding why there was a lack of a formal survey analysis for Griffith Park.
- The majority of current park users do not want changes to be made in Griffith Park.

The next meeting of the Griffith Park Master Plan Working Group is scheduled for Monday, August 7, 2006. Due to a holiday in September, that month's meeting will be held September 11, 2006. This concluded the Working Group meeting for July 10, 2006.