

Griffith Park Master Plan – Working Group Meeting Summary – June 2, 2008

The Griffith Park Master Plan Working Group convened their meeting on Monday, June 2, 2008 at 6:38 p.m. at the Griffith Park Ranger Station Auditorium.

Present: Working Group: Bernadette Soter, Clare Darden, Craig Kessler, George Grace, Gerry Hans, Jeff Gardner, Louis Alvarado, Chris Laib for Valerie Vanaman, Lucinda Philips and Susan Swan

Council District 4: Renee Weitzer, Jullian Harris-Calvin

Recreation and Parks: Marilyn J. White and Christina Iwata

Absent: Jose Sigala, Lynn Brown, Richard Bogy and Valerie Vanaman

Facilitator: Vicki Israel, Assistant General Manager, Department of Recreation and Parks

The meeting was opened by Ms. Israel by calling the roll of the Working Group members followed by the Council District 4 (CD 4) and Recreation and Parks (RAP) staff. The outstanding summaries were discussed and resulted to the following:

- August 2007: No changes to be made by Mr. Gardner. This summary is to be e-mailed to the Working Group members and to be posted.
- March 2008: Ms. Iwata will e-mail Ms. Vanaman of the revised language on the Summary.
- April 2008: Corrections should be e-mailed to Ms. Iwata by Tuesday, June 3, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Summary shall be posted by Wednesday, June 4, 2008.
- May 2008: It will be e-mailed to the Working Group. Hold for the August 2008 Meeting.

Ms. Darden opened for discussion the project that the Griffith J. Griffith Trust (GJG Trust) has been involved in. The said project is the nomination of Griffith Park to be a historical cultural monument. The GJG Trust hired a firm to research and prepare the nomination. The GJG Trust hopes that the City realizes that there is no hidden agenda and it is their goal to keep Colonel Griffith's vision. A letter prepared by Colonel Griffith's great grandchild was read by Ms. Darden.

A presentation was made by Jones & Stokes who prepared the nomination. There are four criteria in considering a historical cultural monument. These are social significance, significant people, archeological and design significance. According to the City ordinance, if one meets one of the criteria, it can be considered to be a historical cultural monument. Griffith Park possesses all these four criteria. The nomination was submitted two weeks prior to this GPMPWG meeting. The Trust is hoping for the Working Group's support. Copies of the nomination were given to Council District 4, RAP, and the GJG Trust for review. This will be reviewed at the Cultural Heritage Commission meeting in July. The Commission consists of five members appointed by the Mayor. The following will occur to consider the nomination: site visit, decision of eligibility, second meeting to approve, planning and land-use management, review by City Council and approval. This process takes about six to eight months.

Most of the nominations meet only one of the criteria and it's a rare case that Griffith Park meets all. In 1958, the 5 Freeway was built through the park. The early factors of historical significance happened by 1958.

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It is up to The GJG Trust to provide copies of the nomination to the public for review. The following are the staff of the cultural commission:

1. Ken Bernstein
2. Lambert Giessinger
3. Edgar Garcia
4. Janet Hansen
5. Glen Dake

Elements that matched the criteria were included in the nomination. However, altered elements such as the Autry, Los Angeles Zoo, 5 Freeway, Roosevelt Golf Course, and Tregnan are considered as non-contributing or non-historic features of the park and were mentioned in the nomination. Even though the Central Service Yard Administration Building was built prior to 1958, it was not considered as historical but it's a contributing factor.

If Griffith Park is adopted as a historical cultural monument, any changes, expansion or upgrades to be made to the park must go through a public review process to ensure that there's no negative effect on the historical significance of the park. Maintenance of the park should not be a part of the public review process. Any existing projects within the park will not have a problem as long as it is done with sensitivity. An update on the Echo Park's designation as monumental will be asked from RAP's Planning Division.

Los Feliz Improvement Association (LFIA) has posted the whole nomination document on their website. The LFIA Board of Directors and the households unanimously approve of the nomination.

It is Mr. Hans' opinion that the concept of "cultural landscape" will protect and preserve Griffith Park, and will involve the public more than they are now. The designation will do some of the same things the Master Plan will be doing if implemented, since the Plan's recommended Community Advisory Board provides public process and review for some of the park activities.

It is not certain that once a facility is named as a historical cultural monument that it may not be withdrawn despite of natural causes such as fire. There have been approximately 20 monuments that were burnt down but are still on the list. As a conclusion of the presentation, Ms. Israel thanked Ms. Darden and the presenters for the information.

Ms. Soter distributed a list of parks and open spaces with description that are currently Los Angeles Historical Cultural Monuments. She is to e-mail the Executive Summary to Ms. Iwata to forward to the Working Group members.

An attempt to move and approve a motion for the Working Group members to support the designation of Griffith Park to be a cultural historical monument did not pass. According to Ms. Swan, this cannot be voted on due to the groups and neighborhood councils some of them represent. This vote is tabled until the August meeting. Mr. Kessler will be out of town and will send a proxy to vote for him.

Due to the Fourth of July holiday, the July meeting has been canceled. The next Working Group meeting will be held Monday, August 4, 2008. The June 2, 2008 Working Group meeting concluded at 8:10 p.m.

Public Comments include the following:

- Hopeful that the Working Group members and the groups they represent support the nomination.