

Griffith Park Master Plan – Working Group Meeting Summary – August 7, 2008

The Griffith Park Master Plan Working Group convened their meeting on Monday, August 7, 2008 at 6:55 p.m. at the Griffith Park Ranger Station Auditorium.

Present: Working Group: Bernadette Soter, Clare Darden, George Grace, Gerry Hans, Jeff Gardner, Richard Bogy, Susan Swan and Valerie Vanaman

Council District 4: Renee Weitzer

Recreation and Parks: Marilyn J. White and Christina Iwata

Absent: Craig Kessler, Jose Sigala, Louis Alvarado and Lynn Brown

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:

- May 5, 2008: Discussion and approval held for the September 2008 meeting
- June 2, 2008: Document to be e-mailed to the Working Group and to be discussed at the September 2008 meeting

An announcement has been made that due to the holiday and scheduling conflicts, the next meeting will be held on Monday, September 22, 2008 at the Friendship Auditorium.

A stronger and more direct-to-the-point Executive Summary draft, together with comments from some of the Working Group members, were presented and discussed. In a previous discussion, it was decided that an implementation timeline be added. Mr. Bogy presented three suggestions. The first one was not to include the number of species on the draft to keep it a living document. Second is to mandate management in acquiring or attempting to acquire open space within or surrounding Griffith Park, whenever they become available. Most of the Working Group members agreed to both suggestions. Lastly, is to open the discussion of the necessity of mentioning the Melendrez Draft on the Working Group's document. Most of the Working Group members would like to keep Melendrez Draft on the document to educate people that the Griffith Park Master Plan Working Group was brought about by the Melendrez Master Plan Draft.

The Council Office has taken a stand still in acquiring Cahuenga Peak and waiting for a decrease in price. There are still issues that need to be resolved in acquiring this property. Within RAP, the Advanced Planning Division is in charge of seeking open space to acquire and turn into parkland.

It was suggested that the redesign of Central Service Yard (CSY) and the eastern section of the park be moved under the Recommendation Section. It is not certain if RAP Advance Planning is considering to redesign CSY. For now, due to financial reasons, RAP is keeping CSY the way it is. The Working Group members are not looking into evicting City staff from CSY but merely consolidating functions and using part of CSY as parkland.

The Working Group members had a discussion on the implementation timeline. Suggestions and changes in language were heard.

There is an existing study of restoring a stream along Toyon Landfill for it to be a free-flowing stream. However, this project would cost up to two million dollars and there is no funding for this. There are two

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ways in restoring the stream. However, both require a large amount of funding. The contaminants found in the landfill are being considered in the stream restoration. This study was suggested to be added in the implementation timeline.

With Prop O monies, the Zoo lot will be resurfaced to be a permeable surface lot, and this should be recommended to be done in the park. A meeting is scheduled regarding the Zoo Parking Lot restoration on August 20, 2008 at 6:30 p.m. at the L.A. Zoo's Children's Discovery building. Recommendation of resurfacing parking lots in City parks be added to the implementation timeline was shared.

The Department of General Services, Real Estate Division seeks privately owned-land. They work with RAP's Advanced Planning Section.

There was a unanimous decision of taking of the 10-15 years in the implementation timeline. Establishing a community advisory panel and scheduling regular meetings must be part of the first priorities on the Timeline. Immediate steps should not involve funding but merely a change in decision or procedure by management. The format of the Timeline was borrowed from the Elysian Park Master Plan. A more specific language will be available for the next meeting.

Everyone is invited to the Historical Cultural Commission meeting scheduled for August 21, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. at City Hall, 10th Floor. To request parking, the Working Group members were asked to call CD 4 at least a day before the meeting. They were also asked to carpool to the meeting if possible.

There is a long process before the finalization of the designation of Griffith Park as a Historic Monument. The nomination has to go through various agencies. According to Ms. Vanaman, the Working Group members should have a stand on supporting the nomination since it is consistent with the draft that was written by Working Group members. According to Mr. Chris Laib, a Friends Of The Observatory board member, the designation of the Griffith Observatory served as a tool for seeking funding of the facility renovation.

Letters were sent to RAP and Council office to show support by different organizations surrounding Griffith Park. The Working Group members and the organizations they represent unanimously support the nomination of Griffith Park to be a historical monument. This nomination fulfills the long overdue tribute to Colonel Griffith and his family.

CD 4 still has questions regarding the nomination. Councilmember LaBonge has not stated his position on this issue. As part of the nomination, Quimby Fund was discussed. It was stated that the first priority of Quimby Funds is to purchase park land, then to renovate or improve existing parks. The restoration of Echo Deep was given as an example of being part of a historical designated facility such as Echo Park. However, it was clarified by Ms. Israel that Echo Deep was indeed refurbished but it is not part of Echo Park. Echo Shallow, on the other hand is part of Echo Park, but is inoperable.

Ms. Israel suggested that private-public partnerships be looked into by the Working Group members for the implementation timeline.

Ms. Israel received a few inquiries regarding the \$25,000 that CD 4 assigned to be spent on the Griffith Park Master Plan draft. The money has been transferred into a RAP account by CD 4. There is no truth to the allegations that the money or parts of it has been spent on other projects. It is on hold and intended for funding the environmental checklist and formatting the document. RAP would like the document be turned over to them by September 22, 2008. The draft will be submitted to RAP Advanced Planning for review, prepare an environmental checklist and move forward for a CEQA study. After which, the document will be presented to RAP Board of Commissioners for approval, then

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to be presented to the public for review and comments. There was a discussion and disagree on the steps to be taken however, everyone agreed on the next step of turning the draft over to RAP Advanced Planning. The Working Group members will continue to meet to receive updates and progress from RAP Advanced Planning staff. It is unknown if the Melendrez Draft went through the process that was discussed which involved going through RAP Board of Commissioners, the City Attorney's Office, and public review.

The deadline of September 22, 2008 is too soon for the Working Group members to have a draft ready for RAP. They requested to present the final draft in the October 2008 meeting. The hard work and time the members have put into the Master Plan document were acknowledged. RAP Advanced Planning will be represented at the September 22, 2008 GPMPWG meeting.

A sub-committee must work on the appendices for the draft prior to the September meeting. Cartifact has given the Working Group permission to use the maps they have created for the City.

The October meeting has been tentatively scheduled for Monday, October 27, 2008. The next Working Group meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 22, 2008 at Friendship Auditorium. The August 7, 2008 Working Group meeting concluded at 8:44 p.m.

Public Comments include the following:

- According to Mr. Angela Mooney-Darcy of City Project, there was not much update on the six month study of renovating CSY. They will present to the Working Group once completed. The City Project, a Los Angeles based policy and legal advocacy and environmental justice organization, is submitting a letter supporting the nomination and will be attending the meeting
- With the designation, repairs needed at Griffith Park, such as sewer line, gas line, water line, etc. will be signed off over the counter. There will be no problems approving such repairs.
- Appreciation to Ms. Darden and the Griffith J. Griffith Charitable Trust for putting in the nomination was extended.
- Appreciation to the Working Group members for outstanding job in the efforts to protect and preserve the park for future generations.
- It's a mistake to cut down the recommendations from ten to three items. Would like to see the justifications for the bullet points. Major recommendations should be expanded at greater length.
- Commended the Working Group members and the organizations they are associated with in voting to support the nomination.
- This is the first time that a layer of bureaucracy is welcomed by the public. This layer is working for the public and welcoming the public to give their input. This is a great thing for the park.