

MEASURE DD COMMUNITY COALITION MEETING
January 22, 2007
Lakeside Garden Center

Agenda Committee: N/A

Minutes by Kathy Raymond, Executive Director, Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation

In Attendance:

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee – Ron Bishop
Chabot Park Highlands Homeowners – Ken Benson
East Bay Bicycle Coalition – Robert Raburn
East Bay Regional Parks – Brian Wiese
Friends of the Cleveland Cascade – Jim Ratliff
Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation – Kathryn Raymond
Garden Center, Inc. Anne Woodell
Greenlink Task Force – Nancy Rieser
Jack London Aquatic Center – Robert Kidd
Oakland Heritage Alliance – Naomi Schiff
Urban Ecology – Phil Olmstead
Waterfront Action – Sandy Threlfall
Interested Citizens – John Wilson

From the City of Oakland:

Office of City Administrator – Joel Peter
Council Member Kernighan's Office – Jennie Gerard
Council Member Reid's Office – Pat Mossburg

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 P.M.

No new Agenda Committee was selected at this meeting. Ideas for future meetings will be discussed at the meeting and via email and for now Kathy Raymond will type up the agenda for the next meeting.

A Schedule was presented for the rest of the meetings for the year. The dates were fine with all present and will be emailed out to the Coalition.

PROJECT UPDATES:

The 12th St. project is coming in 26% over estimate, which equates to another \$9 million. There was only a single bid that ended up coming in for the project, a few of the initial interested bidders dropped out. Joel is going to recommend to Council to reject that bid and rebid out the project. They may possibly look at reducing the scope, they did take out the arc pier that was going to be put into the lake. The other possibility is to raise more money and on the plus side some Federal funding programs may now be available for the bridges. The process to become qualified for the Federal funding is cumbersome but now that the funding potential is into the millions it is worth pursuing. The project is currently on hold while all this is being worked out. It will be the end of the year before the project is bid out again. It is currently looking like about a year delay. Once under way it will take 2 years to build. Ron Bishop asked if this meant there may now be time to look at different paving materials, and Joel indicated that there would be if any definitive studies can be produced. It was asked if it would be wiser to go forward with the project as costs will continue to rise, however, if the \$9 million was reallocated from the other

projects in that same category many other projects would need to be cancelled, and the work is currently delayed by the tree lawsuit anyway. As other possible funding sources are available and there are still issues surrounding the design it was deemed better to wait. An interim bike path was installed and it was asked if other interim measures may be able to be done to keep the progress moving.

The lawsuit on the trees has not yet been resolved. The parties are not at liberty to discuss the details. All the projects around Lakeshore, the park landscape projects have potential for delay. Lakeside and Lakeshore most likely would have been under construction according to the plan but at Lakeshore the City is taking the opportunity of the delay to look at a less-expensive design. Currently projects are about a year behind. Nancy Rieser made a comment that the delay was caused due to the City's insufficient EIR. She believes if the EIR had been done properly, the community would have needed to file the lawsuit and some of the projects would be underway.

So far \$24 million of the first \$70 million in the first round of bonds has been spent. The next round cannot be allocated until the first round is spent.

It was asked what was going on at the Municipal Boathouse as some of the water had been drained. Joel indicated that it had been drained at this location so they could do the foundation work on the building and then it will be refilled.

The quality of the oxygen in Lake Merritt was questioned and the fact that fountains only aid in small locations with the oxygenation problem. It was asked about aerators for the bottom of the lake. Joel indicated there was a pilot project on these aerators and they are testing further. One issue with them is they tend to get mucked up by barnacles, etc. Joel said that the opening of the channel would aid in the inflow and outflow and that would help a lot. He did mention as well that aerators at the bottom of the lake cause boils on top of the water and there may be a possible visual impact with that. It was mentioned that perhaps a pilot art project could be done with wind power in the lake to aid with this problem, that we should get creative. The impact of the Bart Tube was also mentioned but apparently a study had been done on this that showed it had no significant impact.

Nancy Reiser questioned the opening up of the channel for boats as it would really only be able to be used by boats, maybe kayaks. And that it would be just as easy to walk around the dam. Nancy brought pictures illustrating only small row boats and kayaks could pass under the impediments of the two rail road trestles, airfuel lines and EMBUD sewer trunk lines. Joel said that the opening was also to allow big fish to be able to enter the lake as well as for oxidation issues besides just the boats. John Wilson brought up the concern of changing the ecological balance of the food chain in the lake, should an opening be created that would enable larger fish and mammals (sharks, stingrays and seals were examples) to be introduced into the food chain equation. Naomi Schiff suggested that perhaps someone from US Fish and Game attend to speak about this at a future meeting.

Nancy also brought up that there is a place around Laney College that is perfect for Marshland restoration. Joel said that this is already a part of the Channel Project and there are pictures on the City's Web site of the plan.

The Council approved \$181,000 request for Fairyland. The money will be used from the Sailboat House and then that would be backfilled by the interest.

It was noted that the Pergola project is complete and it was asked if we should have some event around this.

EIR:

The EIR process for Measure DD is being rewritten. A draft will be done in Summer then it will go to the planning commission. The Comment period was already past at the time of this meeting and many members of the Coalition expressed unhappiness that they were not well informed about this process. The Coalition attendees noted that they hope solid comments are provided yet hope that the process won't get held up so much that nothing gets accomplished. It was also noted that if there was anything this group could do to encourage progress and an acceptable resolution to the tree lawsuit the group would like to know. One note was that even though rules exist on how trees should be protected during construction, such as making sure they're sufficiently fenced off from the work, examples were provided on how many times these rules aren't enforced.

ESTUARY:

The Kiosks and guard rails proposed for the bay trail area were discussed. Elois Thornton is the person to direct comments towards. It was noted that she will be taking this to the planning commission but it is not scheduled as yet. However, she will accept comments at any time. There was a lot of consensus among the attendees that they did not like the vertical kiosk and that the money could be much better spent. The kiosk cost will be about \$30,000 per kiosk. Naomi suggested that something like a horizontal marker. The Coalition decided that it should draft a statement on our position and try to put constructive comments on what they feel would be a better use of that funding. It was suggested priorities should be set around this area, such as funding for the 3 bridges at the estuary. Naomi Schiff will write up a draft statement that will be reviewed at the next meeting. Kathy will put pictures on the web site of the kiosk and guard rail sample.

Joel indicated that they opened bids for Alamenda Ave. the first waterfront trail piece other than Union Point Park. This bid actually came in below estimate.

OAK TO NINTH:

Naomi gave a brief update on the 3 lawsuits. On the Referendum lawsuit there will be depositions called for next week.

The two CEQA suits met with judge to arrange case. The trial was not set until the end of June. No substantial settlement discussions that she knew of have been had.

The RFP for the Ninth Ave. Terminal is due Feb. 15th. Naomi indicated there was some interest but that it really should have been an RFQ as so much is still unknown.

Previously to the meeting an article that had been done on DD had been sent to the Coalition participants. Joel Peter had been interviewed; this had been for the Berkeley Daily Planet. There were some in the coalition that felt they had learned more from that article than they had from the Coalition or the EIR scoping meetings recently and hope information gets disseminated better.

COALITION ADMINISTRATION:

Sandy Threlfall brought up the topic of the coalition administration and if this was a good use of funding. Is the Coalition as a whole doing a good job of getting the word out and how could we do this better. It was mentioned that Friends of Oakland Park

and Recreation has not had a contract in place since July of 2006 and they were continuing currently because it had been indicated that the group wanted to continue the arrangement. It was noted that some of the original items in the agreement had been modified and that both Friends and the City are open to renegotiating the terms if necessary. In the end it was really about how to get more interest in the public. It was noted that you'd never get a lot of people to attend meetings. It was suggested going to where people are to get the word out, could a Mobile Board with graphics on project status be created to take out to Farmer's Markets, etc? It was noted that the best way to capture interest is to have a big celebration of a project at a public opening event.

The next meeting will be held February 26th, due to President's Day being on the third Monday of the month. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.