

SPECIAL MEASURE DD COMMUNITY COALITION MEETING  
FEBRUARY 7, 2005  
LAKESIDE GARDEN CENTER

Discussion of Fire Suppression Expenditures recommended for Lakeside Park  
Minutes by Kathy Raymond, Executive Director, Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation

In Attendance:

Ace Architects – Lucia Howard

Beat 15x NCPC – Jim Ratliff

Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee – Ron Bishop

Children's Fairyland – C.J. Hirschfield

Friends of the Cleveland Cascade – Jim Ratliff

Friends of Studio One – Patrick Daughton

Coalition of Advocates for Lake Merritt – James Vann, John Klein

Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation – Kathryn Raymond, Judy Johnson, Tom Guarino

Greenlink Taskforce – Nancy Rieser

Lake Merritt Institute – Liz Borowiec, Stana Hearne

Lake Merritt Rowing Club – Jerry Denham

Oakland Parks Coalition – Jennie Gerard

Oakland Resident – Steven Shum

Waterfront Action Coalition – Sandy Threlfall

Also:

From the City of Oakland:

CEDA – Kerry Jo Ricketts-Ferris

City of Oakland Fire Department – James Williams

Council Member Quan's Office – Sue Piper

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 P.M. by Kerry Jo Ricketts-Ferris. The attendees introduced themselves. The meeting was called due to a request by some Council Members, Jane Brunner and Desley Brooks, and some concern of a few of the coalition members about the expenditure requested of \$745,000 from the Lake Merritt Systemwide Improvements money to be spent on this new fire suppression system at Lakeside Park.

Nancy Rieser and Ron Bishop provided a handout about the fire code and aerial photos of the site, showing current fire hydrant locations.

Deputy Fire Chief Williams explained that as part of the State mandated law that when improvements to an area are made they also need to be brought up to current fire code standards. Because of the plans for renovation at Lakeside Park, including an amphitheater with a roof at Fairyland, new restroom facilities next to the Garden Center and the remodeling of the Sailboat House this triggered the Fire Department's review of the current code standards. Lakeside Park is not up to code in a number of ways, there is not adequate access throughout the park, as the Fire code requires 20 ft. access for the width of the road. Also due to the public assembly element at the park at these locations, distance of the hydrants and a number of wooden structures there needs to be adequate mitigation to protect the area from a fire. Currently there are 5 red-topped hydrants in the park, apparently they are also tied into the

irrigation system. If a fire were to occur they would want an independent water supply. Based on a test of the system from Fire Station 15 that was connected to these hydrants, when they pulled a line and created a 2<sup>nd</sup> line there was a drop in residual pressure of 10 to 20%, according to his reports. While testing the available flow they determined that after two you couldn't do more than this and you would normally use two at a minimum. Nancy Rieser indicated that she was there during one of the tests and that there had only been a 10% drop.

There are also green hydrants on the street, these are controlled and tested by East Bay Mud, according to Deputy Fire Chief Williams. They do provide more pressure but are not adequately close to the structures.

It was asked if you disconnected the red-topped hydrants from the irrigation if this could provide more flow and be a cheaper alternative to a new system. It was noted that the red-topped hydrants were old and due to life safety they would not be recommended for use period. The issues came down to:

1. The red-topped hydrants were close enough but had inadequate flow.
2. Few access roads and not 20 feet wide, so this needs to be mitigated by having more water available.

It was asked what was the trigger for needing to meet current code requirements, as not all remodeling would bring this on. It apparently is due to the new structures being built. It was also asked if Fairyland would incorporate sprinklers in the amphitheater as part of the mitigation or if there were funds from these other projects that could go to help pay the cost. Fairyland staff said that there was no current plans to install a sprinkler system in the amphitheater project. Currently all the projects are underfunded, so this didn't appear to be an option.

James Vann and John Klein observed that not all remodeling seemed to trigger the code upgrades. They mentioned that there had been past construction at Fairyland that seemed more extensive that did not trigger these code upgrades. It was mentioned that new construction might trigger these codes over just what may be deemed as repair work.

*Additional Comments: Incorporated by Nancy Reiser*

*a. Fire codes:*

*In regard to the 20-foot service road width requirement, Nancy Rieser pointed out to the Fire Marshall that he asked for his own engineer to send her the wording of codes that impacted the current situation. No such codes regarding the width of a service road were sent to her.*

*b. Red hydrants operational around Fairyland:*

*Rieser was present at the testing of ALL FIVE red hydrants in the park as well as the testing of the green EBMUD hydrant adjacent to airyland. The fire department staff testing the hydrant, in the Fire Marshall's presence, and indicated that the fire hydrants at either end of Fairyland were fully operational and had an expected 10% drop in pressure. The nearby EBMUD green hydrant had a drop of 5% drop in*

pressure. According to Rleser. Chief Bird indicated that the hydrant of first choice would be EBMUD green top as it had twice the water pressure. He indicated that attaching a 1200 foot hose to that hydrant would easily reach the structures in Children's Fairyland. At no time during the testing procedures did Captain Bird indicate that there would be any life safety issues for his men using the red hydrants.

c. The number of fire hydrants needed and the projected location of the new fire hydrants:

Kerry Jo asked the group where the number of "three" fire hydrants came from as no exact number was ever specified by her to the group.

Also Fire Marshall Williams was asked where he planned to install the new hydrants. He answered that he didn't know at this time where they would go.

There was concern among the coalition members if this could be an issue in other projects as well and take money out of the budget that was allocated to other items. Kerry Jo indicated that this was really only an issue when building buildings or new structures and they know what all of these other projects were. The Municipal Boathouse will have a sprinkler system, as will Studio One. The East Bay Sports Complex will need to have this looked at as part of the design and other fundraising efforts. There may be a few new restrooms but this shouldn't pose an issue. Other than this most of the projects involve trails or parks so it wouldn't trigger these code requirements. Lakeside Park is unique to this issue.

It was noted that since October the Coalition had been provided with the Lake Merritt Systemwide Improvements listing, originally they had allocated \$300,000 towards this fire suppression line item hoping to raise the \$900,000 estimated that was needed through other sources. Then when they revisited this matrix at the following Executive Meeting in January, it was decided by the staff that these other funds would not be available and that safety should be a first priority so they reallocated \$745,000 to the project, hoping they could do it for this, not the estimated \$900,000 that they had previously budgeted. This was shown to the Coalition in January. There was basic acceptance on the proposal by the coalition then but there were a number of coalition members that asked for further investigation on if this expenditure was really needed, based on the current number of fire hydrants, the potential for drafting of the lake, etc. These concerns prompted this meeting with the Deputy Fire Chief to further explain the code requirements. The projects that got moved around due to the reallocation of funds were a combination of the Athol Park project being partnered with some other funds and taking away the potential fencing and gate around the Garden Center. *This matrix concerned allocations from Series A funding.*

There was some confusion at the meeting as well, because it was originally stated at the meeting that it was \$675,000 that had been allocated, but this was just a misstatement, that was corrected at the end of the meeting, it was really \$745,000. Kerry did indicate that of course if they could end up doing any of these projects for less than estimated that they would and then come back to the group on how to spend the remaining funds.

The question on whether or not you could draft the lake instead did come up. Deputy Chief Williams explained that drafting is always a last resort due to time constraints.

If there was some sort of seismic activity that disrupted the other water sources then drafting could be used. They hadn't used this method since 1991.

It was asked how much these projects at Lakeside Park totaled; Kerry believed it was around \$11 million. It was also noted that currently there is not a design in place for the fire suppression system, they have estimated these costs based on distance so they do not yet know the needed number of new fire hydrants that will have to be installed.

The Coalition attendees optioned not to officially vote on the "fire suppression" issue due to the fact that the allocation is already included in the budget for "Systemwide Improvements." which has been regularly reported to and accepted by the Coalition though at the time the expenditure was not as high and the budget language did not specify fire hydrants, per se. Since no recommendation was presented to rescind the Coalition's previous actions, it was accepted by the attendees (with Nancy Rieser voicing objection) that it was not necessary to affirm again what the Coalition has previously accepted.

There was also concern that tonight's last minute gathering was not an "officially noticed" meeting of the Coalition, and that a formal vote might be questionable under the "Sunshine Ordinance." Nancy Rieser and Ron Bishop stated that they wanted to be listed "on the record" as not supporting the fire marshal's proposal because they believe clear evidence has been collected and was presented which demonstrates that sufficient fire suppression resources are already in place at and around Fairyland, and that new hydrants are not needed.

The group still plans to hold the regular March meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Jennie Gerard requested that Jonelyn Weed from Environmental Services be invited as well as the Salvation Army to talk about the requirements for the grant proposal for the East Bay Sports Complex. It was noted that there is already a pretty full agenda on the table from the last meeting but to email the Agenda Committee and they would see what they could do.

The meeting was adjourned around 8:30 p.m.