

THE CITY OF COSTA MESA  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
FAIRVIEW PARK CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

November 6, 2013

*These meetings minutes represent an “action minute” format. A copy of the meeting audio tape can be obtained at the Public Services Department front counter located on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Costa Mesa City Hall.*

The Fairview Park Citizens Advisory Committee of the City of Costa Mesa, California met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 6, 2013, in the Neighborhood Community Center Victoria Room at 1845 Park Avenue, Costa Mesa, California.

1. **Call to Order: Chairman Mehren**

The pledge of allegiance was recited. Member Ramos read the Fairview Park Citizens Advisory Committee (FPCAC) Mission Statement.

2. **Roll Call**

Voting Members Present: Chairman Richard Mehren  
Vice Chairman Steve Smith  
Member Ron Amburgey  
Member Brett Eckles  
Member Dennis Popp  
Member Lee Ramos  
Member David Stiller  
Member Anna Vrska

Voting Member Absent: Member Terry Cummings

Officials Present: Mayor Pro Tem Stephen Mensinger, City Council  
Liaison  
Council Member Sandra Genis, Alternate City  
Council Liaison  
Commissioner Robert Graham, Parks and  
Recreation Commission Liaison

Staff Present: Ernesto Munoz, Public Services Director  
Fariba Fazeli, City Engineer  
Bart Mejia, Parks Project Manager  
Yolanda Summerhill, Attorney  
Alfa Lopez, Management Analyst  
Denise Cedillos, Administrative Secretary

### **3a. Fairview Park Citizens Advisory Committee—Youth Sports Data**

Member Vrska stated she would like to add to the Committee's Mission Statement to keep the Fairview Park Master Plan the same. She contends that more sports fields, parking lots, and lighting are not needed and that the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) is compiling information and will prepare a report in 2014. She prefers if the FPCAC not do any assessments before these reports are complete. Member Vrska reported citizens have enjoyed Fairview Park in its current state and plans calling for active usage have historically been met with opposition. She supports a community assessment as there is no concrete data of field usage. She also commented on mixed messages in terms of the mission of the FPCAC and that the process is moving too quickly, and spoke on the Committee membership.

### **3b. California Cultural Resource Preservation Alliance**

Dr. Steve James, an archeologist and professor at California State University, Fullerton, presented this report on behalf of his colleague, Dr. Sylvere Valentin. Dr. James provided a Power Point presentation regarding the Native American villages that were present in Fairview Park. He stated that these sites are especially important since it is a remaining representative of all others that have been lost. He referred to ORA 855 in San Juan Capistrano and the effects of grading for an urban ball field. ORA 58 is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Native American Heritage Commission's (NAHC) Sacred Site Inventory and that there are stipulations in the Conservation Easement of 2008 for Fairview Park to be preserved in a natural condition. He stated the proposed changes to the Master Plan will have direct and indirect impacts on the archeological sites and open space. Dr. James spoke regarding archeological site monitors and a lack of compliance with current laws. He shared recent contact with Ms. Christine Medak of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in which she claims the play area will impact the watershed from the vernal pools. Dr. James suggested including the development of a management plan to work with archaeologists, Native Americans, and other interested parties in protecting the sites and extending the National Register status to other nearby sites linking to ORA 58.

### **3c. Scientific Resource Surveys, Inc. (SRS)**

There were a total of three presenters on behalf of SRS.

Dr. Paul Chase, senior investigator with SRS, shared his background and that his tasks include determining archeological resources and their importance, how to manage them, and how to mitigate adverse impacts should they occur.

Dr. Henry Koerper, a retired college professor and Editor of the Pacific Coast Archeological Society Quarterly, spoke of the artifacts that have been retrieved from ORA 58. Dr. Koerper referred to his work through the Keith Companies to define the site boundaries. He recommended capping the major cultural area. He mapped with a visual model and determined a peripheral area, after which augering was done to better delineate the boundaries. The turnaround is beyond the area Dr. Koerper determined as the core and peripheral areas. However, there must be further work at those areas and

some augering if something is found. If it is negative they will recommend an archeological monitor and a Native American monitor when work begins. Dr. Koerper shared he was the principal investigator of ORA 855, mitigated the impact of development, and does not recall the site being graded; the site was preserved with 8 feet of fill and the athletic field placed on top. He has been involved in two (2) capping projects.

Ms. Destiny Colocho, an Archeologist and Lithic Analyst, spoke on the scope of work for the investigation. The Phase I investigation will be performed in accordance with the Office of Historic Preservation under CEQA. The majority will involve research study, including all recommendations of the Native American contacts provided by the NAHC and recommendations for mitigation. She stated that an archeological, paleontological, and historic record search for this project has been conducted. The status of research study indicates reports of monitors present for various City projects in Fairview Park, which corresponds with SHPO and CEQA guidelines. A portion of field investigation will include a surface survey on the upper mesa conducted under CEQA guidelines by three (3) trained archeologists and alongside Native American monitors from the Acjachemen and Tongva nations. A final report will be produced at the end of investigation.

Chairman Mehren thanked all the presenters.

#### **4a. Public Comment**

Public Comment was requested by Chairman Mehren.

1. Harold Weitzberg, Costa Mesa  
Spoke in support of a needs assessment.
2. Mary Fuel, Costa Mesa  
Ms. Fuel is the President of the Costa Mesa Foundation which hosts Concerts in the Park. She advocates for the summer tradition continuing at Fairview Park.
3. Cindy Black, Costa Mesa  
Ms. Black spoke on the work SRS performed on the Bolsa Chica site and requested information from SRS on artifacts and queried why Costa Mesa selected SRS.
4. Patricia Marsh  
Ms. Marsh is a professor at California State University, Los Angeles and stated she was monitoring the progress for ORA 855, referring to the presentation slide showing grading for an athletic field. She stated that SRS has not mentioned preservation, only mitigation. The site needs to be preserved.
5. Mark Arblaster  
Mr. Arblaster is the President of local youth sports programs and has attended the Costa Mesa Youth Sports Council meetings for 9 years. He indicated that there is a shortage of fields within the community; the sports organizations don't

want to be near the grounds discussed but in the unused area by the trains; and that it would help to carve a small portion of all those acres for our kids.

6. Lea Lowe, Costa Mesa

Ms. Lowe, with the Costa Mesa Foundation, supports Concerts in the Park and the Fish Fry at Fairview Park. She also encourages monitoring the undeveloped areas and preserving the vernal pools and Native American sites.

7. Scott MaHafey

Mr. MaHafey, Commissioner for Newport Mesa Friday Night Lights, shared there are currently 104 teams, 3 fields and only 1 field is lighted. The organization has grown from 90 to close to 900 kids. He listed defunct youth sports organizations due to lack of fields. He stated there are not plenty of fields and the JUA can be eliminated. He requested out of the 250 acres at Fairview Park, 5% as an option for usage.

8. Jack Morales

Mr. Morales, President of Costa Mesa Pony Baseball, attends the monthly Youth Sports Council meetings. He spoke on new programs that start up and these users need new fields and we have to work with what we have.

9. Pilar, Costa Mesa

Ms. Pilar referred to inconsistent sidewalk and potholes on Pacific Avenue and Canyon Drive and the additional traffic impact a turnaround would add. She addressed Member Vrska's presentation and would like citizens' desires to keep the park natural to be taken into consideration.

10. Gilbert Collins

Mr. Collins stated the reports did not mention the effect capping and the construction of a parking lot area would have on the vernal pools; the City needs to involve professional geologists and hydrologists and study any archeological sites on the eastern side of Placentia Avenue before discussing development.

11. Nina Simpson

Ms. Simpson stated her opinions on children and sports. She advocates preservation for the park.

**Motion made by Member Amburgey to extend the time allotted for public comment by half an hour, Member Eckles second, motion carried unanimously.**

12. Resident

A resident and member of the Costa Mesa Historical Society stated she doesn't want history to disappear; most organizations are only interested in the area east of Placentia Avenue.

Chairman Mehren indicated the east side of the park needs to be studied as much as the west side.

13. Resident

A resident indicated he is the Director of Backbay Rugby and lives on Canyon Drive. The program started in 2006 with 10 kids and is now pushing 100. Athletic fields are needed whether at Fairview Park or elsewhere. He expressed appreciation for Mr. Robert Knapp.

14. John Rubright, Costa Mesa

Mr. Rubright stated a team needs half of a field for a productive practice and that Fairview Park is for everyone including kids and sports. He also indicated he is available to speak and provide his opinions as he is a Commissioner of one of the largest youth groups.

15. Byron de Arakal, Costa Mesa

Mr. De Arkal, Chairman of the PRC, provided supplemental information to Member Vrska's presentation on the number of facilities, fields, and youth sports participants in the community. He stated that during fall, 60% of the field inventory goes offline because they are not lighted and that more fields are needed and he will wait for the Committee to determine if Fairview Park will be the answer or not.

16. Greg Ridge

Mr. Ridge stated he would rather see efforts placed on a sports field advisory committee to find places for youth sports throughout the City instead of focusing on 208 acres that have archeological resources and federally protected environmental species. Also, the census data shows an aging population in terms of growth.

17. Jay Humphrey, Costa Mesa

Mr. Humphrey agreed with Mr. Ridge and stated active use parks in the City should be assessed to find ways to utilize those more effectively rather than looking at the first piece of open land.

18. Gordon Bowley, Costa Mesa

Mr. Bowley, Costa Mesa Youth Sports Council Chairman, asked Mr. Munoz if other areas of open spaces have been looked at for sports fields. Mr. Munoz responded they have found very limiting opportunities but continue to look at every location. Mr. Bowley expressed that every speaker represents 1,000 kids that play sports.

19. Sue Lester, Costa Mesa

Ms. Lester shared that solutions are needed instead of complaints and suggested getting temporary lights that can be moved. She would like to see more options and due diligence being done across the City on other parks and school fields. She expressed concern on the selection of SRS Consulting, Inc.; that their presentation included a lot of mitigation but not preservation. She also inquired if tribe members are paid for their input and if volunteers or other interested archeologists are allowed to observe during the process.

20. Kim Hendricks, Costa Mesa

Ms. Hendricks shared she has heard a lot of misinformation and referred to comments previously made by Chairman De Arakal and the Planning Commission. It leads the public to think they have an agenda. She agrees with Mr. Ridge that another committee is needed.

21. Mrs. Drain, Costa Mesa

Mrs. Drain stated auguring is offensive to burial grounds. She inquired if there be consultants on the living things. She appreciates the work SRS has done but would like to see more recent research. She is a mountain biker and there are volunteer groups such as 'Share' that can redo trails and that it is logical to get lights for existing fields; natural open fields can only be destroyed.

22. Dr. Paul Chase

Dr. Chase addressed the public concerns stating the collection of artifacts SRS assembled from Bolsa Chica were reburied in ritual ceremonies. The Coastal Commission received applications for a permit with Phase I Archeology on the Goodhill property without any excavations. That project was conducted and the report was approved. A year later the issue was re-raised and called an excavation because bluff sidewalls were trimmed to get soil samples. It was resolved by a major concession of funds by the developer.

23. Robert Graham, Costa Mesa

Mr. Graham stated that in Huntington Beach, Fountain Valley, and Westminster there are miles of fields under Southern California Edison (SCE) power lines; there are one half of a mile of power lines in Costa Mesa along the Santa Ana River between MacArthur Avenue and the freeway; he thinks that may be an opportunity to develop fields.

Chairman Mehren requested questions of presenters from the Committee.

Vice Chairman Smith expressed concern regarding several of Member Vrska's comments regarding the make up of the Committee and has been a member of the community for 28 years. He stated that fields are needed referring to the August meeting in which City staff presented information otherwise and sharing personal experience having been a coach. He indicated that he is not saying they belong in Fairview Park but there is a need. He requested Member Vrska explain why she chose to focus on fields when other proposed changes pose a greater threat to the footprint of the park.

Member Vrska replied she is trying to find information on what the real need is but athletic fields has been the discussion of the Commission and community from the beginning. She addressed the report Mr. Munoz provided her from July 2012 to June 2013 stating it did contain good information but is not enough for the magnitude of what is being discussed. Again, she stated her opinions on the make up of the Committee.

Member Eckles stated the records from 10 years ago on the numbers of fields may not be available but they are clear now and the numbers have increased and that turning

other parks into active parks would cause additional uproar. He spoke on lights at other fields and more opposition. He addressed the comments of turning TeWinkle Park into a soccer field stating baseball groups would oppose and it does not solve the problem of field quantity.

Member Vrska stated it is not accurate to say there are 10,618 youth sports participants because participants could be unique or the same in different seasons. From the information she received she saw a growth but it is not across the board, which is why she would like more data. Member Vrska indicated over the next month she would like to talk to everyone. She spoke about TeWinkle Park stating she didn't hear a lot of baseball people commenting but heard a lot of soccer representatives. She heard about the lights at the last City Council meeting and felt happy that it is an option, maybe not everywhere and perhaps some residents would be upset but it is worth looking into. She commented that turning other passive parks into active parks would not cause an uproar stating they do not contain biological and archeological resources.

Member Popp stated 38% of the population would be needed to be statistically similar to the community, and stated that being a friend of Mayor Pro Tem Mensinger is irrelevant to the Committee.

Member Ramos spoke in Spanish and stated that he is there.

Member Vrska asked Dr. Koerper if it is a conflict of interest in having delineated the boundaries. Dr. Koerper replied it is not as they are tasked on focusing on the turnaround, a trail, and a playground. The whole area was looked at and he suspects not much will be found near the turnaround.

Dr. Mehren asked SRS how capping of the archeological site would affect the flow of water for the vernal pools. Mr. Munoz clarified that SRS's scope of work is to respond to the letter received from the State and make recommendations. If additional support is needed by SRS or any other consultant, that will be considered at a later time.

Mr. Munoz addressed Mr. Collins's comments stating an engineering firm has been retained to do a precise topographical analysis; it was determined that the project is outside of those boundaries. The information has been submitted to USFWS for review. Addressing Member Vrska's comments that the SRS hiring process was flawed, Mr. Munoz stated the City Attorney's office reviewed the process and opined that it followed government and municipal codes. In response to Member Vrska's comments that information was not provided by the City to the community, Mr. Munoz stated that is incorrect. The City provides all information that is requested and available. That has been done to a very extensive level.

Member Vrska retracted her comment that information was not provided to the community indicating she meant to say the FPCAC. She understands the City is not required to generate reports or compile data but has been told from the beginning that the City will help her in looking at numbers. Member Vrska began explaining the process of hiring SRS. Ms. Summerhill intervened stating the hiring of SRS was discussed and there is not an issue whether it was appropriate.

#### **4b. Correspondence from the public**

Committee members were provided copies of all public correspondence received since the date of the last meeting. Copies for the public were also made available.

#### **5a. Approval of Minutes – Meeting of October 2, 2013**

**Motion made by Member Eckles to approve the minutes as written, Member Popp second, motion carried unanimously.**

#### **6a. Old Business – None**

#### **7a. Recap of List of Proposed Changes to the Master Plan**

Chairman Mehren presented this item. He stated his concerns on activities in Fairview Park including an unauthorized trail on the south boundary, an ill-advised nighttime cross country track team meet, and the parking of cars on vernal pool 7 during events at the stadium. He opined the City has done a poor job in protecting the park's important features and now USFWS and the NAHC are involved. In response to the lack of athletic events, the park is used daily for organized track and cross country practices, and training for football and other sports. It is one of three locations in California that has vernal pools with fairy shrimp; it is important to Native Americans as their ancestors are buried there. He encouraged Committee members to visit the park before the next meeting and withdraw any proposed changes they feel are inappropriate.

#### **7b. Evaluation of Proposed Changes – Northwest Quadrant**

Mr. Mejia presented a Power Point presentation indicating this item is to start evaluating the proposed changes for the northwest quadrant, not including the mesa. He proposed a three step process: to look at the list of proposed changes to the Master Plan and eliminate those specifically marked for other quadrants, vote on considering the remaining items in this quadrant, and rank items by priority. Mr. Mejia indicated the circled items in his presentation were suggestions that were specifically marked for other quadrants.

**Motion made by Member Eckles to proceed with the un-circled items for discussion, Member Amburgey second, motion carried unanimously.**

Member Amburgey inquired if suggestions can be added to the quadrant in future meetings. Mr. Munoz clarified a member may suggest it, but it is requested to make determinations now as they have all the information.

Vice Chairman Smith recommended postponing the process to the next meeting to allow more time for members to review the information. Member Stiller agreed with Vice Chairman Smith.

**Motion made by Member Popp to reconsider the motion made by Member Eckles, Member Eckles second, motion carried unanimously.**



Member Eckles suggested an interim meeting before the scheduled December meeting to discuss the item. Chairman Mehren expressed concern with sufficient public notification and reserving a location.

**Motion made by Member Ramos to continue the item until the next meeting in December, second by Member Popp, seven members voted in favor, Member Eckles abstained.**

**7c. Consideration of Change to Committee Meeting Schedule Per Work Plan for December 2013 and January 2014**

**Motion made by Member Vrska to meet in December, be dark in January due to the holiday, and meet in February, Member Stiller second, motion carried unanimously.**

**8. Committee Member Reports**

Member Eckles expressed concern regarding Member Vrska's comments on friends of the Mayor Pro Tem. He also stated that attacking staff and the Mayor Pro Tem takes the meeting off track and offends others. He agreed with Mr. Rubright in having all groups represented in the park. Addressing comments about alternate sites for athletic fields, Member Eckles stated the Youth Sports Council has been there for more than 10 years and the issue has been looked at; the numbers of participants keep rising and the City is at full capacity. He welcomed others to join him when he appeals to the PRC for lighted fields in eastside Costa Mesa.

Member Popp stated that at the next meeting he would like to receive a brief overview of what is already planned in the quadrant when considering the proposed changes. He indicated he understands what it is like to be in the gender minority but never particularly felt like an outcast because of it.

Member Vrska opined that women are underrepresented and spoke on public records request and documents that were redacted.

Ms. Summerhill commented that staff spent over 40 hours on Member Vrska's public records requests and meetings with her. Typically committee members are provided 4 hours but this was done otherwise because the request was through the City Clerk's office.

Member Vrska thanked staff but expressed concerns about the committee's resources.

Member Amburgey stated Member Vrska's report is biased and she casts dispersion on the integrity of committee members, staff, and the Mayor Pro Tem.

Member Vrska invited Members to view her research. She feels certain issues need to be addressed.

Member Popp commended Mr. Munoz and staff for a fantastic job stating he has called every staff member and has had a prompt response with excellent support and factual data. He is impressed by the quality of the study done.

Member Ramos added he has asked staff for reports twice. He asked Mr. Mejia for a personal tour of the park and was completely impressed; Mr. Mejia has been very cooperative. He commended Member Vrska on her report and suggested she research to see the number of kids that were turned away.

Member Vrska stated she would like to wait for the reports from the PRC in Spring 2014 and spoke on meeting with AYSO.

Mayor Pro Tem Mensinger stated the Chairman of the Youth Sports Council welcomed Member Vrska and they have given her all their time.

Member Vrska clarified that Mr. Bowley, Youth Sports Council Chair, has been very nice.

#### **9. Public Services Director Report**

Mr. Munoz responded to a request made by Member Stiller at a previous meeting to address the lighting of the parking lot at Fairview Park. Those steps were addressed at a previous meeting: the project was adopted in the budget by the City Council, there is funding to move forward with the design and a consultant is on board. The City will be conducting environmental work. Once that work is completed, the design will be brought to the FPCAC for a recommendation and it will be forwarded to the PRC.

Member Stiller clarified the information he was looking for was the provision in the Fairview Park Master Plan for six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) worth of lights in the parking lot west of Placentia Avenue.

Mr. Munoz stated it is not in the Master Plan but is what was proposed with this project. He explained the vetting process that requires projects to go through various departments, get conditions, be taken to the PRC, and forward the recommendation to City Council. There is a policy in place for amending the Master Plan which this project has to go through, including the environmental work.

Member Stiller inquired if Council Member Genis had any objections to which she replied she did not.

#### **10. City Attorney Report**

Ms. Summerhill had nothing to report.

#### **11. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:22 p.m. to the next regular scheduled meeting on Wednesday, December 6, 2013, at 6:00 p.m., at the Neighborhood Community Center, Victoria Room.

Submitted by:



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**ERNESTO MUNOZ**  
Public Services Director