

CITY OF COSTA MESA
FAIRVIEW PARK STEERING COMMITTEE
Wednesday, June 13, 2018
MINUTES

1. **CALL TO ORDER** Vice Chair Andy Campbell called meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.
 - a. **Members Present:** Chair Anna Vrska, Vice Chair Andy Campbell; Members Cindy Black, Larry Courter, Kim Hendricks, Alex Reich, Steve Smith, Alternate Cynthia McDonald, Alternate Bill McCarty
 - b. **Liaisons Present:** Parks & Recreation Commission Chair Liz McNabb, Vice Chair Arlis Reynolds
 - c. **Liaisons Absent:** Council Liaison Mayor Sandra Genis

2. **APPROVAL May 9, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes** – Andy Campbell motions to approve minutes as amended; unanimously passed.

3. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Jay Humphrey asks if the \$2 million allocated in City budget for Fairview Park (FVP) is being applied to it. He states that the City Council is discussing the new budget for 2018/19 at the end of June and he wants people to pay attention and see that the money is being adjusted and allocated appropriately.

The father of Eagle Scout Christian Redman, states that his son conducted a project through the City to plant native sage scrub about four years ago, and that there has been no maintenance of the restored area by the City. He asks who he has to contact, so that the restored area can be maintained and watered throughout the summer.

Steve Ray, Executive Director of the Banning Ranch Conservancy, addresses passage of State Proposition 68 in early June, providing \$4.1 billion throughout the state for open space acquisition and park renovations. He states that FVP should be able to obtain money from the proposition for restoration funds. He explains that Banning Ranch Conservancy will be meeting with various leaders of the agencies handling the funds and suggests the City should look into their eligibility for FVP.

4. **PRESENTATION – MASTER PLAN ‘WORKSHOP’**

- a. **Restoration Panel Discussion** – Cynthia D’Agosta provided introductions to the evenings discussion, and to the distinguished panel. Each panelist gave a slide presentation on the following topics:
 - Barry Nerhus, Endemic Environmental: on the history and existing conditions of FVP ecosystems, excluding the vernal pools.
 - Tony Bomkamp, Glen Lukos Associates: on the history and existing conditions of the vernal pools in FVP.
 - David Hogan, The Chaparral Land Conservancy: on restoration techniques for vernal pools.
 - Travis Brooks, Land IQ: on restoration techniques for grasslands and coastal sage scrub from seed and container plants.
 - Peter Bowler, UCI: on the restoration techniques and lessons learned for wetland projects.

CITY OF COSTA MESA
FAIRVIEW PARK STEERING COMMITTEE
Wednesday, June 13, 2018
MINUTES

b. Question & Answer period

Vice Chair Andy Campbell asks the panel for their thoughts on where the restoration efforts for FVP should start, to have the most constructive impact. Mr. Hogan suggests **an overall plan is necessary as the first step and all planning should be done at once with the inclusion of Environmental Impact Reports and approval of the California Environmental Quality Act; then, he states going back to the plan when funding becomes available.** Peter Bowler states there needs to be a complete plan with a specific goal in mind for all of FVP. Travis Brooks states there is both a scientific approach to evaluating the most beneficial opportunities for FVP and public involvement is required; **then he states, laying out a plan ahead of time will allow you to go to your restoration plan when funding comes along and once you know what restoration opportunities can be matched with funding opportunities.** Barry Nerhus explains that including communication with contiguous, neighboring parks and restoration efforts is important to ensure connectivity within the region's ecosystem.

Terry Koken asks what the correlation is between mosquitoes and vernal pools, and if the panelists had any thoughts on the fact that he's seen a tire track containing fairy shrimp in it, in the previous year's rainfall. Peter Bowler states that with regards to fairy shrimp in small imprints, their cysts can be carried by birds, shoes, and tires; and that vernal pools will naturally dry up with the shrimp in them. Tony Bomkamp states that Glenn Lukos Associates works very closely with OC Vector Control; he states mosquitoes have been seen in the vernal pools, but they are very low density. Peter Bowler adds that with year round wetlands, the costs of mosquito abatement can be high; he says it would benefit the wetland ponds, to let them evaporate naturally.

Mark Cygan asks if there is a plan to keep the public out of restoration areas of FVP. Discussion precedes on using either a t-post with a rope as fencing to delineate certain areas from the public, and/or plants like cactus to strategically fence off areas, and a volunteer docent program to prevent people from going off the trails. Cynthia D'Agosta mentions that the ultimate goal is to strike balance between restoration and public uses, emphasizing enjoyment of, and education about, the natural resources at FVP.

Alex Reich, responding to an earlier mention of the Los Angeles River restoration, asks what the effect would be on local businesses near the Santa Ana River if it was widened and restored to its natural habitat. Cynthia D'Agosta states that after about twenty years of grass roots efforts to restore the river, LA businesses have now partnered with the project within urban development plans and are embracing the opportunity. Travis Brooks states that the best way to increase biodiversity in a certain area of a river is to improve the quality of the upland area.

Kim Hendricks asks how many dry and wet season surveys must be taken before it is proven that a vernal pool is not inhabited by fairy shrimp. Tony Bomkamp reply's that a

CITY OF COSTA MESA
FAIRVIEW PARK STEERING COMMITTEE
Wednesday, June 13, 2018
MINUTES

surveyor can observe a wet season and a dry season continuously, or two wet season surveys to determine fairy shrimp presence. Within that time frame, if there is nothing present, the determination is official for 5 years. Kim Hendricks asks if it is proper to recommend reclassifying or restoring a pool if the area was once determined a vernal pool and was abused for multiple years without receiving a proper survey for multiple years. Tony Bomkamp states that at that point, the condition of the watershed would be evaluated to determine if proper restoration could be done. Cynthia D'Agosta states that the meeting discussion is meant to inspire and inform the Committee and community regarding restoration as it applies to the various habitats of FVP; and that as questions become more specific to restoration efforts in FVP, the group will be able to draw down and discuss them, while exploring options within the context of the Master Plan.

Alex Reich motions to move the meeting beyond 8 p.m.; motion seconded by Andy Campbell with no opposition.

Mr. Redman comments on the massive amounts of mustard weed in FVP, and asks Travis Brooks what type of herbicide he uses in his restoration projects. Mr. Brooks reply's that it is beneficial to not disturb the soil while removing invasive plants because it can expose more weeds to the surface; and he states that he prefers post emergence systemic herbicides.

Parks & Recreation Commission (PRC) Vice Chair Arlis Reynolds, addresses the importance of including community in City park efforts, asking panelists if there are tasks within a restoration project that require specialized labor and perhaps volunteers simply cannot do. Peter Bowler states that volunteers are very important, that it does take time to properly train volunteers on how to identify species, and what they can properly do.

Tony Bomkamp states that in his experience, with the proper supervision volunteers can do almost anything in a restoration project. Travis Brooks expresses that there are limits to what volunteers can do and that proper preparations should be taken to benefit their experience. Cynthia D'Agosta states there are currently volunteer programs in FVP that are accessible to the public and there are others that are conducted by specialized groups working on more advanced restoration projects.

Cindy Black commented on how the baseline studies of vernal pools at Banning Ranch have drastically changed over time and because of this she believes vernal pool #7 should be included in the restoration plan at FVP. She then asks the panelists their experience on how long a seed bank is viable within the soil. David Hogan states that it takes a long time to completely rid an area of invasive plants. Travis Brooks states that annual grasses can be viable in the seed bank for many years; in sandier soils plants could last a few years and in soils containing higher clay concentrations seeds can be viable for decades. Barry Nerhus states that finding a viable seed bank in FVP is challenging because of the large presence of public use, constant migration of new seeds, disturbance of the soil, and increase of nitrogen from squirrel feces, etc.; he says the eradication of weeds must

CITY OF COSTA MESA
FAIRVIEW PARK STEERING COMMITTEE
Wednesday, June 13, 2018
MINUTES

gradually occur over time and that each plant has a different way of adapting to the soil and area causing different growth periods.

PRC Chair Liz McNabb asks the panelists involved with vernal pool restoration, if they think the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has been good stewards of the vernal pools at FVP, and how we can move forward to protect FVP in a mindful way. Tony Bomkamp states that the FWS has required more fencing around the vernal pools to ensure protection and maintain boundaries; and that currently, a plan has been submitted to FWS for the restoration of vernal pools 5 and 6, and that this could be implemented soon. He also states that FWS is consistently understaffed with a high work load which causes work to stall for periods at a time.

At this time the panel was thanked by all, and the Committee reconvened to finish the meeting.

STAFF COMMENTS

Bart Mejia states the City just received notice of a new grant approved for restoration of FVP's vernal pools 5 & 6 from the State 'Habitat Conservation Fund Grant Program'.

Cynthia D'Agosta states that the Committee's schedule for review has been adapted again, and that next month's meeting will be focused on public use within the Master Plan.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER / COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Cynthia McDonald thanks staff for preparing the list of restoration references within the Master Plan. She states the Active Transportation Plan was passed in the Bike and Walkability Committee.

PRC Vice Chair Arlis Reynolds thanks staff for preparing the panelist presentation. Ms. Reynolds states she attended two high school AP Environmental Science presentations and says there is growing interest from the students to learn more about FVP. She says communication with the public must be maintained.

Bill McCarty states that he will trust the process of rebuilding the Master Plan within the FVP Steering Committee process, but also wants to recognize that there are still trust issues between the public and the City that need to be addressed and not overlooked.

Kim Hendricks thanks staff for preparing the panelist presentation. She states she would like to have her question discussed at some point because it is very important. She says she has trust issues with the City and would like to see the City move the Fish Fry from Fairview Park to a new venue.

Alex Reich echoes the Eagle Scout's father on the need for dealing with overgrowth of invasive plants on the hillside. He states the water fountain located at the bathrooms is

CITY OF COSTA MESA
FAIRVIEW PARK STEERING COMMITTEE
Wednesday, June 13, 2018
MINUTES

still not functional. He recommends changes to air flight restrictions around protected / sensitive areas be addressed within the Master Plan. He states that based on the presentations tonight, restoration can be achieved, but actions must be implemented. He requests a sustainable, container-based nursery of native plants be started at FVP.

Chair Anna Vrska thanks staff for all the work they have done. She believes as a Committee they can build trust and move forward positively with the City. She states they must persist in order to create a positive impact.

Cindy Black thanks staff for preparing the panelist presentation. She asks Cynthia D'Agosta if the current grant she is working on encompass planning and/or implementation.

Larry Courter thanks staff for preparing the panelist presentation. He asks Cynthia D'Agosta for an update of her experiences with Medrona Marsh.

Steve Smith thanks staff for preparing the panelist presentation. He states the City should use best practices and approaches to the restoration of FVP in the future.

Andy Campbell states restoration efforts will take time and patience, encouraging the Steering Committee to reach out to the community and non-profits to work together to start the efforts with the City.

6. Meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m. by Vice Chair Andy Campbell.

Next Regular Meeting: July 11, 2018 at Costa Mesa City Hall Rm 1A.