

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MARCH 21, 2013 MISSION TRAILS REGIONAL PARK TASK FORCE

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Mission Trails Regional Park Task Force was held on Thursday, March 21, 2013 at the Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor and Interpretive Center.

ATTENDANCE

Members Present

Councilmember Scott Sherman, City of San Diego
Councilmember Mark Kersey, City of San Diego
Supervisor Dianne Jacob, County of San Diego
Supervisor Dave Roberts, County of San Diego
Councilmember Rob McNelis, City of Santee
Dorothy Leonard, Chair of Citizens Advisory Committee

Members Absent

Councilmember Ruth Sterling, City of La Mesa

City of San Diego

Chris Zirkle, Deputy Director, Open Space Division
Steve Haupt, District Manager, Open Space Division
Matt Sanford, Senior Park Ranger, Mission Trails Regional Park
Jonathan Staab, office of Councilmember Scott Sherman

County of San Diego

Evan Bollinger, office of County Supervisor Dave Roberts

City of Santee

Bill Maertz, Director of Community Services

Guests

Dick Murphy, Vice-Chair MTRP Citizens Advisory Committee
Sandy Kuntz
Mia Mortellaro
Janice Roussel
Scott Roussel
Alan Breniwamr
Stephen Houlahan
Pat Sartausey
Rose Dermody
Scott Herald
Retha Knight
Vicki Call

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Dorothy Leonard at 1:13PM pending the election of the Task Force chair.

SPECIAL ACTION ITEMS

- Election of Chair – County Supervisor Diane Jacob nominated Councilmember Scott Sherman to be chair of the MTRP Task Force. The nomination was seconded by Rob McNelis. Scott Sherman was elected chair by a unanimous vote of the members present.

Councilmember Sherman took over as chair of the meeting

- Election of Vice Chair – This special action item was postponed pending the arrival of Task Force members Mark Kersey and Dave Roberts.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: It was moved and seconded (LEONARD/JACOB) to approve the minutes of the meeting of November 15, 2012. Motion carried.

REQUEST FOR CONTINUENCES – NONE

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – NONE

MTRP CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

Dorothy Leonard reported the following for the CAC meeting held on January 8, 2013:

- Recommended approval of the San Diego River Park Master Plan and proposed changes to the Mission Trails Design District Ordinance and Design Manual – item 102 on the agenda. CAC Vice-Chair Dick Murphy will present the CAC recommendations.
- Recommended approval of the proposal to install a vending machine at the Cowles Mountain Staging Area – item 101 on the agenda.
- Recommended approval for the proposed entrance sign at the West Sycamore Staging Area – item 104 on the agenda.

Dorothy Leonard reported the following for the CAC meeting held on March 5, 2013:

- No action items to move forward to the Task Force from the March meeting.

Update on the MTRP Master Plan Update (MPU) – Information from Jeff Harkness, City of San Diego Developmental Services Division:

- It is anticipated that a Draft MPU with the Notice of Preparation of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report will be out around June of this year.

MTRP FOUNDATION REPORT

Dorothy Leonard reported the following:

- The Foundation has submitted their annual requests for TOT funds from both the City of San Diego and the County of San Diego. \$40,000 from the City of San Diego was requested, the same amount approved for FY2013. However, we received a phone call informing us that the Mayor's office would like to recommend an additional \$5,000 to be used for education programs for underserved youth. This would allow the Foundation to expand what is currently offered through SDG&E grants for programs with San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) and the YMCA's of San Diego County. The application to the County continues to be \$5,000 for marketing for the park and the annual Explore Mission Trails Day.
- The environmental education program with SDUSD is going well. The program concentrates on 6th grade students who have been unable to attend the 6th grade camp program since it was closed as a result of budget cuts. This is one of the programs funded through an SDG&E grant.

STAFF REPORTS

- A. Water Department's Lake Murray Report – *Gayle Havens, Lake Murray Reservoir Keeper:*
 - NONE
- B. City of Santee Community Services Department – *Bill Maertz reported the following:*
 - With the temporary closure of the Cowles Mountain trail at Golfcrest Drive and Navajo Road, we will be putting information on the City website about parking at the Big Rock and Mesa Road trailheads.
- C. Park Staff/ Ranger's Report – *Matt Sanford reported the following:*
 - The park has been very busy lately, especially on the weekends. Spring is in the air, and it's a great time to be out on the trails, particularly with the Ceanothus in bloom.
 - The Cowles Mountain Trail at the corner of Golfcrest Drive and Navajo road will be closed for repairs from March 25th to May 17th. The project had been in the works for a long time, and the repairs are badly needed. Many unofficial trails have formed on the mountain, and significant erosion has occurred in some sections. Two Urban Corps crews will be working with park staff and experienced trail volunteers on closing off the unofficial trails, and placing materials down on the most heavily eroded sections of trails. The trail will be closed during the project. The alternative trails to the Cowles summit – the Big Rock Trailhead, the Lake Murray Boulevard Trailhead, the Mesa Road Trailhead, and the Barker Way Service road will all be open during the project and are in good shape.
 - As previously reported, the majority of the West Sycamore acreage, approximately 1000 acres, has already been deeded over to the City. This land includes the majority of the new trails we now manage. We're still waiting on the remaining acreage, approximately 50 acres, to be turned over. There are

some cleanup issues related to the previous land owners. The developer, Brookfield Estates, constructed the new park staging area at the end of Stonebridge Parkway, and recently completed the remaining punchlist items. The staging area land is within the acreage that hasn't been turned over to the City yet, so the staging area will remain closed until this issue is resolved. Park staff have been installing 6-pack rules signs, additional fencing, additional trail markers, and other components around most of this area.

- Landscaping crews working for the City Brush Management Department thinned approximately 1.75 acres of brush around the Visitor Center to create a better defensible space.
- A contractor working for the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) installed new ordnance warning signs at trailheads around MTRP where the former Camp Elliot once was.
- Park staff have been busy working with various volunteer groups – The Habitat Crew led by Ranger Mika meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month, 8am at the flagpole. The Trail Improvement Crew led by Ranger Mel meets on the 3rd Saturday of each month, 8am at the flagpole. The Park Beautification Crew led by GMW Tom meets on the 4th Saturday of each month, 8am at the campground day-use parking lot. Thanks to members of the San Diego Mountain Biking Association for their continued work on some popular riding trails on the west side of Fortuna Mountain, and a volunteer trail maintenance crew led by Jerry Bierman on their continued work near SR52 and the Portobelo Ridge Trail. His crew is always looking for volunteers so please contact me if you know of anyone interested.

COMMUNICATIONS

- An unknown guest asked if the alternative Cowles Mountain trailheads (Big Rock, Mesa Road, Lake Murray Boulevard, and Barker Way) will be open while repairs are being made to the trail at Golfcrest Drive and Navajo Road, and if information about these alternative trailheads will be made available to the public. Sr. Ranger Sanford answered that the alternative Cowles Mountain trailheads will be open, and that information about the alternative trailheads will be posted on the park website. Volunteers and park staff will also be at the Cowles Staging Area throughout the project to provide information about the other trailheads around Cowles and other areas of the park.

ACTION ITEMS

101. Proposal to install a vending machine at the Cowles Mountain Staging Area at Navajo Road and Golfcrest Drive – *Natasha Collura, Director of Strategic Partnerships, City of San Diego*

- One vending machine, providing water and Gatorade only, is proposed for the staging area. It will be installed on the south side of the restroom building, using electricity from the building. It will be a credit card only machine. 5 cents of each transaction will be donated to the MTRP Foundation.

- Maintenance of the machine, including any vandalism related issues, will be taken care in a timely manner by Canteen.
- Park staff will monitor the impact, trash & vandalism for example, on the staging area grounds and along the Cowles Trail throughout the summer. Natasha and Greg from Canteen Vending will attend the September CAC meeting to discuss any concerns of park staff and the CAC.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded (LEONARD/JACOB) to install a vending machine at the Cowles Mountain Staging Area. The machine will offer only water and Gatorade, and will only accept credit cards for payment. Five cents of each transaction will be donated to the Mission Trails Regional Park Foundation. Motion carried.

Return to SPECIAL ACTION ITEM – Election of Vice-Chair

Dorothy Leonard nominated Dave Roberts to be vice-chair of the MTRP Task Force. The nomination was seconded by Mark Kersey. Dave Roberts was elected by a unanimous vote to serve as Task Force vice-chair.

102. Recommend approval of the San Diego River Park Master Plan, and the Amendments to the Mission Trails Design District Ordinance and Design Manual – Robin Shifflet, City of San Diego, Project Manager, Development Services Department

- The San Diego River Master Plan is a new policy document for the City of San Diego and addresses the treatment and development of the river through the City, starting at the Pacific Ocean and going up to the City of Santee.
- This document will be used to evaluate projects along the river, both public and private.
- We're amending the City municipal code so that the document will be implemented. The Mission Trails Design District Ordinance will be amended to support the policy document.
- Mission Trails Regional Park includes a substantial section of the future River Park. A trail along the river will eventually be provided from Santee, through Mission Trails, and to the ocean. Interpretation of the river and its history will be provided in a number of ways. A plan to deal with invasive plant species along the river will be developed.
- Dick Murphy stated that the idea of this master plan began in 2001 and was approved by the San Diego City Council in 2002. It's been a long process but those of us who were involved with its conception are happy to see it moving forward. The CAC unanimously recommended approval of this master plan and the amendments, and we urge this group to do the same.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded (ROBERTS/KERSEY) to approve the San Diego River Park Master Plan, and the Amendments to the Mission Trails Design District Ordinance and Design Manual. Motion carried.

103. Quail Brush Peaker Power Plant Official Position

- Councilmember Rob McNelis stated that the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) voted against the Quail Brush project earlier in the day, but he's looking for the Task Force to submit an official letter of opposition to the California Energy Commission (CEC).

Public Comment:

- Retha Knight urged the Task Force to submit an official letter of opposition to the CEC about the proposed Quail Brush Peaker Power Plant.
- Stephen Houlahan thanked Councilmember Sherman, Supervisor Jacob, and Supervisor Roberts for attending the CPUC meeting earlier in the day. He urged the Task Force to submit an official letter of opposition to the CEC about the proposed Quail Brush Peaker Power Plant.
- Sandy Kuntz stated that the deadline to submit public comments to the CEC about the proposed Quail Brush Peaker Power Plant is April 29th. She urged the Task Force to submit an official letter of opposition to the CEC.
- Vicki Call urged the Task Force to submit an official letter of opposition to the CEC about the proposed Quail Brush Peaker Power Plant.
- Supervisor Dianne Jacob thanked the speakers for their efforts in opposing this project. She stated that all but one of the CPUC Commissioners are new and were appointed by Governor Brown, and that the vote earlier that day was the first test on whether or not the CPUC was going to look more towards the citizen rate payers, or the interests of the utility companies. She added that we should be looking for more alternative energy sources so that we can become energy independent.
- Councilmember Rob McNelis thanked the speakers, and all who opposed this project.
- Dorothy Leonard stated that she will be voting to approve this motion because the project does not meet the MTRP Design District guidelines in relation to the size of the proposed smoke stacks, and the zoning of the area where it will be located.
- Supervisor Roberts thanked his colleagues for opposing this project. He stated that Cogentrix asked the Task Force to delay making their decision, but that he was not supportive of this delay. He added that he did read the letter from Cogentrix, but that now was the time to take a position on this issue.
- Councilmember Kersey stated that the San Diego City Attorney advised both Councilmember Kersey and Sherman to recuse themselves from this motion because if the applicant, Cogentrix, filed another application with the City for this project it would come back to the City Council for vote and they would have to recuse themselves from that vote. He added that land use decisions are supposed to be biased and that they would be biasing themselves if they voted for this motion.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded (MCNELIS/JACOB) to submit a letter of opposition to the California Energy Commission about the proposed Quail Brush Peaker Power Plant. The motion passed with Councilmembers Kersey and Sherman abstaining.

104. Proposed Entrance sign for the West Sycamore Area of MTRP – *Matt Sanford, MTRP Senior Park Ranger*

- This sign will be located at the entrance to the West Sycamore Staging Area at the end of Stonebridge Parkway.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded (LEONARD/ROBERTS) to approve the entrance sign for the West Sycamore area of MTRP. Motion carried.

INFORMATION ITEMS - NONE

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:18 PM.

NEXT MEETING

May 16, 2013 at 1:00 pm.