

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH PARKING AND PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMMISSION
MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 24, 2009**

A. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Parking and Public Improvements Commission of the City of Manhattan Beach, California, was held on the 24th day of September 2009, at the hour of 6:35 p.m., in the City Council Chambers of City Hall, 1400 Highland Avenue, in said City.

B. ROLL CALL

Present: Adami, Vigon, Stabile, Silverman. and Chairman Gross.

Absent: None.

Staff Present: Community Development Director Thompson, Traffic Engineer Zandvliet, Assistant Planner Danna, Lt. Harrod and Park Services Enforcement Officer Malatesta.

Clerk: Weeks.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

09/24/09-1 August 27, 2009

Commissioner Stabile modified Page 2, Paragraph 5, of the Parking and Public Improvements Commission minutes of August 27, 2009 as follows: "Commissioner Stabile commented that..."

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Silverman/Stabile) to approve the Parking and Public Improvements Commission minutes of August 27, 2009 as amended.

D. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

None.

E. GENERAL BUSINESS

09/24/09-2 Parking and Traffic Issues Related to the Neighborhood Surrounding Sand Dune Park

Community Development Director Thompson clarified that, per Council's direction, discussion is to include parking and traffic solutions for problems in the vicinity of Sand Dune Park, and not operational issues at the Park, and after obtaining input from the public and the Commission, staff will formulate recommendations to be considered by the Commission during another public hearing on October 22, 2009.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet provided background information, including measures previously taken to reduce parking and traffic problems in the area. Mr. Zandvliet provided detailed information about the idea of pairing metered parking with a resident parking permit program similar to the one near Mira Costa High School, that would include an opt-out option for residents. He explained that this is a public workshop type meeting with discussion to be focused on parking and traffic issues around Sand Dune Park, and not operational issues, and that there will be another public hearing before the Parking and Public Improvements Commission on October 22, 2009.

Prior to receiving input from the public, Chairman Gross related his understanding that neither additional enforcement in the area nor the timeline for implementing solutions were addressed by staff. Recalling Tree Section residents' previous resistance to parking signs, he questioned if signs would be essential and if parking could be completely prohibited. Chairman Gross asked for input on smart meters and on the cost of parking permits.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet advised that parking meter revenue could be used to help funding additional enforcement; that a resident parking permit program could be implemented by the end of the year, but the installation of parking meters would not be completed until approximately Spring 2010; that signs are mandatory for enforcement, but the number of signs could be minimal; and that parking time restrictions could be discussed this evening. Mr. Zandvliet clarified that smart meters provide much flexibility, including the capability of exempting residents with parking passes from feeding the meters.

Community Development Director Thompson noted that the dune at Sand Dune Park will be closed for a few more weeks for maintenance to bring it up to safety standards. He advised against discussion of permit parking fees this evening, but indicated that, as directed by the Council, they would be nominal.

Commissioner Stabile voiced his impression that both the resident parking permit program and parking meters would only be required during the hours of operation at Sand Dune Park.

Commissioner Vigon requested input on parking permits for guests. He commented on the boundaries for the resident permit parking program outlined by staff and asked if parking for beachgoers, or possible Coastal Commission restrictions, were considered.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet affirmed that a resident parking permit program could include a to-be-determined number of guest parking permits; that it is within the Commission's purview to recommend different boundaries for residential parking permit areas than those outlined by staff; and that, per Coastal Commission requirements, public parking without restrictions must be provided in all areas west of Highland Avenue.

In response to a question from Chairman Gross, the majority of the audience indicated they live below Sand Dune Park.

Commissioner Silverman disclosed that he does not live too far from Sand Dune Park but, per discussion with the City Attorney, his residence is not in close enough proximity to the Park to prohibit him from participating in the Commission's consideration of this item.

Due to the large number of individuals indicating their desire to address the Commission, the Commission agreed to a two-minute time limit for speakers.

Audience Participation

Steve Nicholson, 566 36th Street, asked staff to examine the unsafe conditions at northbound 36th Street at Bell Avenue, as well as possible unintended consequences of parking meters and/or a resident parking permit program, such as impact on the Armory.

Jane Gee, 2600 Block of Bell Avenue, voiced her concern that parking meters and a resident parking permit program would merely shift traffic from one area to another. She drew attention to the need for data to support the installation of parking meters and noted the improved conditions since the dune has been closed for maintenance.

Chairman Gross related his understanding that the purpose of this item is to discuss parking restrictions to reduce the number of patrons at Sand Dune Park, and that closing the Park is not part of this item.

Mark Kemple, 584 30th Street, commented on Park patrons' particularly large impact on 30th Street. He said that, should the dune be re-opened, parking meters and a resident permit parking program would be necessities, and Mr. Kemple urged the City to keep the dune closed until effective solutions can be implemented.

Eric Zoppi, 1421 5th Street, asked if residents living in other areas could be given parking passes to allow them to park for free near Sand Dune Park.

Community Development Director Thompson advised that the Commission and staff are collecting information and staff will formulate a program based upon input received this evening.

Marcus Mac, 574 35th Street, contended that residents should not bare the burden of parking and traffic difficulties with the implementation of a resident permit parking program and that parking signs would create a safety hazard for drivers. He agreed that the dune should remain closed until such time as effective solutions are found and requested input on the cost savings since the dune has been closed.

Brad Porter, 563 35th Street, related that five of his neighbors, and a majority of individuals living in the area, support closing the dune which, he said, is the root cause of parking and traffic difficulties in the area. He voiced his concern over the idea of installing parking meters in a residential area.

Chairman Gross reminded those present that closing the dune is not part of this discussion.

David Kramer, 1626 Gates Avenue, favored installing parking meters to help regulate the number of individuals frequenting Sand Dune Park. It was his feeling that residents who purchased homes in the area should have been aware of the parking and traffic problems; that, over time, the area has been negatively impacted by Sand Dune Park; and that parking meters will not resolve the problems.

Nicole Hill, Director of Beach Babies, No Address Provided, apprised the Commission of the parking difficulties for Beach Babies' employees and parents of children who attend Beach Babies. She noted additional difficulties resulting from parking restrictions for street sweeping; and expressed concern that the problems would be shifted to other streets.

Kathy Spillane, 571 35th Street, related her lack of faith relative to a resident parking permit program/parking meters in a residential area. She said that the problems arise from the international workout center at Sand Dune Park.

Ron Chavers, 420 32nd Street, stated his opinions that replenishing the sand on the dune directly affects the situation and that parking meters/a resident parking program would shift the problems to other areas.

Steve Whitsit, 445 28th Street, voiced his impression that a great majority of residents in the area feel that Sand Dune Park should be returned to a neighborhood park.

Steven Vargas, 477 32nd Street, offered input on unpleasant occurrences in the neighborhood resulting from Park patrons, particularly on the cul-de-sac in front of his home. He felt that the situation has been much better while the dune has been closed for maintenance and commented on parking and traffic difficulties in the area.

Hans Van Doornewaard, 560 Rosecrans Avenue, suggested that either a stop sign or speed bumps be installed at the end of 36th Street.

Irene White, 586 33rd Street, presented photos depicting the improved situation while the dune has been closed, as well as her concern over safety in the area due to traffic issues. She said that parking meters would only be a band aid to a huge wound and that reducing the hours of operation at the Park would resolve many problems.

Debbie Phillips, 583 33rd Street, expressed concern that parking meters would increase the number of vehicle trips, which would necessitate additional enforcement, and that Sand Dune Park is an international workout facility. Ms. Phillips related her understanding that, due to requirements associated with funding the City accepted, the dune cannot be closed.

Chairman Gross reiterated his understanding that closing the dune is not part of this agenda item and that it cannot be closed because of requirements pertaining to grant funding the City accepted.

Cheryl Vargo, 568 33d Street, discussed the importance of taking measures to improve the situation and the need for signs should parking be restricted.

Nina Tarnay, 469 32nd Street, commented on the improved situation while the dune has been closed; the inconveniences caused residents when 32nd Street is closed to replenish the sand at the dune; and the poor condition of 32nd Street.

Bill Franchini, 592 33rd Street, said that metered parking on Bell Avenue will not resolve the problems which, he indicated, would just be shifted from one street to another. He agreed that Sand Dune Park should be restored to a neighborhood park; that the situation has been much better while the dune has been closed; that the use of the dune has greatly increased over time; and that the larger context of the problems must be addressed in order to remedy the situation.

Patrick McDivitt, 566 31st Street, stated his agreement with closing the dune. He asked how often parking would be enforced and noted the need to do so often. Mr. McDivitt voiced concern over reopening the dune before any action is taken; suggested that the Park be locked after hours; recommended that there be more than a nominal parking fee; and called attention to the loitering in the area due to the large number of patrons at the dune.

Linda Nadler, 585 29th Street, agreed with the need to resolve the problems before re-opening the dune and with a smart meter kiosk. She recommended increased parking fees on the weekends and increased enforcement.

Michael Henry, 3400 Bell Avenue, highlighted the improved conditions while the dune has been closed. He questioned if parking meters would be enough to accomplish the goal of reducing the number of Park patrons. Mr. Henry discussed that parking meters in the Public Works Department's parking lot could provide additional parking for residents only; that any system utilized should not over burden residents; that guest passes should be flexible; and that residents should not be charged for permits.

Bill Hory, 1300 Manhattan Beach Boulevard, disagreed with the idea of closing the dune. He was concerned over a resident parking permit program and said that hard data should be obtained before making decisions about possible solutions. Mr. Hory felt that increased enforcement and high parking violation fines would be constructive.

Jason Clark, 508 Rosecrans Avenue and 3512 Vista Drive, stated his agreement with comments made by previous speakers. He discussed the importance of better traffic controls on Rosecrans Avenue to assist with traffic safety problems in the area.

Will Arvizo, 410 23rd Street, favored closing the dune. He agreed that parking restrictions would just shift problems to other streets and suggested parking restrictions from Rosecrans to Marine and Pacific to Highland. Mr. Arvizo maintained that the only solution might be to close the dune.

Don Trucker, 1166 Chestnut Avenue, commented on the increased parking and traffic problems in the vicinity of Sand Dune Park over the years. He voiced his hope that, in order for the dune to remain open, possible solutions will improve the situation. Mr. Trucker agreed with parking passes for residents, a smart meter kiosk and charging to use the dune.

Dave Wachtfogel, 591 33rd Street, related his feeling that the dune has destroyed Sand Dune Park, which has been somewhat reborn while the dune has been closed.

Denise Mozzotta, 649 33rd Street, expressed her opposition to resident parking permits and parking meters.

Gina Chodler, 3320 Bell Avenue, recommended limiting the hours of operation at Sand Dune Park. She contended that parking meters would not deter use of the Park.

Gary Horwitz, 645 33rd Street, felt that resident parking permits and parking meters would not be a sufficient solution. He encouraged the Commission to recommend to Council that a broader solution be addressed.

Gary Osterhout, 598 31st Street, opposed parking meters and contended that there are other solutions to the problems, such as reduced hours of operation and increased enforcement. He voiced concern over the negative impact parking meters near Sand Dune Park would have on Highland Avenue and businesses there, and over parking signs in a residential neighborhood.

Jerry O'Connor, 524 Harkness Street, explained that a previous subcommittee on which he served did not identify parking restrictions as a primary path to resolving the problems around Sand Dune Park. He discussed the difficult task before the Commissioners and it was Mr. O'Connor's opinion that a solution, such as a reservation system at the Park, lies outside of the Commission's domain.

Chairman Gross reminded the audience that there will be another public hearing at the next Commission meeting, and at a future Council meeting when the Commission's recommendations are considered.

Wendy Watanabe-Winter, 570 33rd Street, discussed the increased use of Sand Dune Park over the years. She related her hope that the Commission will obtain input from the City's Park Ranger at Sand Dune Park and her support of resident parking permits which, along with other possible solutions, would reduce problems in the area.

Faith Lyons, 574 33rd Street, disagreed with a resident parking permit system, which would not deter the problems and is not the way to address them.

Shirley Phillips, 571 23rd Street, informed the Commission as to the difficulty of exiting her driveway due to the large patronage at Sand Dune Park. She mentioned the need to better maintain the Park.

Penny Hodges, 480 Rosecrans Avenue, offered input on her decreased use of the dune because it is eroded. She was concerned that parking meters would not help; but, said that resident parking permits would be effective and a start to finding a good solution. Ms. Hodges felt that the dune should not be closed.

Christine Daviduk, 562 33rd Street, explained that the turn about at the bottom of Bell Avenue and 33rd Street has created a "sling shot" effect. She commented on safety issues caused by the lack of sidewalks or physical barriers and indicated that parking restrictions would not resolve the problems.

Speakers addressing the Commission for a second time were as follows:

Mark Kemple, 584 30th Street, noted that any steps taken must be robust and that the compassion speakers have shown during this meeting must be related to the Council. It was his contention that the use of Sand Dune Park as an international workout facility is inappropriate.

Jerry O'Connor, 524 Harkness Street, related his understanding that the idea of installing parking meters arose as a possible source of enhancing revenue during the Council's review of the 2009-2010 Budget and, at that time, was not considered as a solution to the parking and traffic issues in the neighborhood.

Gary Osterhout, 598 31st Street, expressed his agreement with Mr. O'Connor's portrayal of how the idea of installing parking meters in the area came about. He stated the following: his impression that access to City parks cannot be restricted to Manhattan Beach residents; his disagreement with installing parking meters; his concern that problems would not be resolved, but shifted to other streets; his opinion that residents should have the ability to vote on a resident parking permit program, should it be adopted by the Council; and his support of speed bumps, but only with the concurrence of residents who they would impact.

Will Arvizo, 410 33rd Street, voiced his concern that the problems would just be shifted with a resident parking permit program. It was his viewpoint that the dune should not be reopened until the problems are resolved.

Shirley Phillips, 571 33rd Street, suggested that a full-time Police Officer, instead of a Park Ranger, patrol the Park.

At the Commission's request, Park Services Enforcement Officer Malatesta shared information about the increased attendance at Sand Dune Park this year compared to the last four years; the busloads of people who visit the Park; the Code requirement that no groups larger than 15 are permitted in the Park at any one time; the media attention and increased use of the Park resulting from the attention which, in his opinion, would outweigh the effectiveness of parking restrictions; his lack of knowledge as to the maximum capacity at the Park; the cyclical use of the Park; and the demographics of Park patrons. He indicated that the majority of problems at the Park appear to be caused by non-residents and that they occur between 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Responding to questions from the Commission, Parks and Recreation Director Gill provided information about the number of patrons at Sand Dune Park during different times of the year; the existing parking conditions/restrictions in the area; how the large number of patrons might be impacting the dune; and his personal knowledge as to the demographics of Park patrons. He examined the photographs presented by Irene White during input from the audience; estimated the "suitable" amount of attendance at the Park; and affirmed the improved situation in the area when the dune is closed for maintenance. Director Gill clarified that parking meters were originally considered to raise revenue to offset costs associated with the dune; and that meters, along with a resident parking permit program, would improve parking and reduce use. He clarified that and that groups over 15 must have a reservation to use the Park only between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. and related staff's opinion that permit parking would discourage patronage.

Lt. Harrod discussed the Police Department's willingness to increase enforcement at Sand Dune Park; however, additional staffing would be necessary. He indicated that crime in the Park has been minimal over the years.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Adami introduced the idea of studying the environmental impact of the increased use on the dune.

Chairman Gross entertained the idea of directing staff to examine the possibility of adding enforcement, which could be funded with parking citation revenue.

Community Development Director Thompson suggested the Commission identify solutions that would work in terms of restrictions, and that staff report back on what can be accomplished. He highlighted the City's commitment to develop a successful program to help alleviate the problems.

Parks and Recreation Director Gill explained requirements accompanying the City's acceptance of Los Angeles County grant funds for Sand Dune Phases I and II, including keeping the Park open and the ability to charge for use of the dune as long as the Park remains open to all Los Angeles County residents. He voiced his lack of knowledge as to whether it would be necessary to repay only a portion or the entire amount of the grant funds if the Park was to be closed.

RECESS AND RECONVENE

At 9:20 p.m., there was a recess until 9:30 p.m., when discussion of Agenda Item No. 2 (Parking and Traffic Issues Related to the Neighborhood surrounding Sand Dune Park) continued with all Commissioners present.

Lt. Harrod related Parking & Animal Control's willingness to assist with enforcing a program to reduce problems at Sand Dune Park. He noted the educational process associated with the issuance of parking citations.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet confirmed for Commissioner Silverman that a resident parking permit program could be restricted to peak hours.

Commissioner Silverman inquired about the possibility of issuing parking permits to residents not living near Sand Dune Park and he voiced his concern that some of the possible solutions could over burden residents.

Community Development Director Thompson advised that a commitment by the City for a multi-departmental approach when the dune reopens will help reduce impact on the neighborhood near Sand Dune Park.

Commissioner Vigon related his understanding the specific reason for this discussion is to help reduce the number of patrons at Sand Dune Park. He recommended that parking citation fees be a minimum of \$100.00.

Commissioner Stabile observed that a great majority of residents living near Sand Dune Park would like it to revert to a neighborhood park. Should the Park remain an international workout facility, he felt that parking restrictions would help regulate usage and, therefore, the first thing the Council should address is the type of place they would like the Park to be.

Community Development Director Thompson explained his perception that the Council would like to reduce the number of patrons at Sand Dune Park without changing the use and that they requested the Commission to look into a parking program. He emphasized the importance of moving forward in a timely manner.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet affirmed that this matter originally arose to raise revenue to help with Park operations and that, due to responses from the public, the Council thought it might be possible to regulate the use at the Park as well.

Chairman Gross related his understanding that the Council's very thorough discussion included keeping the Park open, a determination that the dune is an athletic facility rather than a park and implementing parking restrictions before taking any drastic measures. He pointed out that staff could compile quantitative goals in terms of what the Commission is trying to achieve.

Commissioner Adami stressed the number one issue of safety and the need for data (such as violence, traffic accidents, etc. in the area) prior to making a determination. He felt that the parking meters and a resident permit parking program would be the best solution; that athletics being a part of the Park should not be ignored; and that the environmental impact on the dune should be explored. Commissioner Adami expressed impression that the amount of violence at Sand Dune Park has been minimal and that use of the Park can be restricted, but it cannot be closed.

Commissioner Vigon supported providing Council with what they asked for in a timely manner and he noted that harsh measures would inhibit the use of the dune.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet advised that, from a parking meter/permit standpoint, at this time the conditions present in the area surrounding the Park could justify many actions. He recommended against delaying the process to collect data.

Chairman Gross noted the importance of taking residents who do not live close to the Park into account; the idea of residents using the Public Works Department parking lot, as discussed by a member of the audience; and the effectiveness of parking restrictions in decreasing patronage at the Park. He suggested that staff be directed to determine some quantitative goals and that use of the Park be reduced by at least 50%. Agreeing with Commissioner Vigon's idea of raising parking citation fines, Chairman Gross recommended that staff examine the maximum fines/restrictions that can be imposed within the limits of the law.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet verified staff's willingness to look into issuing parking permits to residents who do not live in the neighborhood and he affirmed that parking restrictions must be designated with signs. He related staff's opinion that patronage at the Park could be reduced by making parking more difficult.

Commissioner Vigon entertained the idea of issuing placards to residents who use the Park but do not live in the immediate area. He suggested that the potential impact of parking restrictions on commercial areas be examined.

Commissioner Stabile related his understanding that it is not the Commission's function to decide how much to reduce use at Sand Dune Park and he noted possible legalities associated with allowing only Manhattan Beach residents to park in the area.

Community Development Director Thompson confirmed staff's intent to provide the Commission with additional information about parking restrictions at the next meeting, including parking for employees of the nearby school. He highlighted the importance of a program that could grow in order to reduce impact on the commercial area.

Chairman Gross clarified that residents would have the ability to opt out of a resident parking program. He related his impression that the permit parking in the Downtown area was expanded.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet explained that the idea of expanding the permit parking program in the Downtown area will be part of the update to be provided to the Council on the Downtown Parking Study and that more detailed recommendations will be presented for the Commission's consideration at the next meeting.

Community Development Director Thompson related staff's recommendation for a more flexible program than the one previously implemented in the Downtown area.

Commissioner Silverman advised those present of the Commission's intent to work to improve the situation around Sand Dune Park and to put the information provided this evening into the context of what the Council asked the Commission to do.

The Commission unanimously agreed to move forward with a program such as the one outlined by staff this evening, with additions and deletions according to Commission discussion, and to direct staff to report back at the Parking and Public Improvements Commission meeting on October 22, 2009.

A motion was MADE and SECONDED (Gross/Adami) to continue Agenda Item No. 2 (Parking and Traffic Issues Related to the Neighborhood surrounding Sand Dune Park) to the meeting on October 22, 2009.

F. COMMISSION ITEMS

08/27/09.3 Parking Meter Revenues and Traffic Violations Revenues Report

1. Chairman Gross observed that the parking citation revenue in the Traffic Violations Revenues Report appears to have greatly increased. He related his disappointment that the income from parking has not increased because the rates were rolled back.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet indicated that a follow up to the Downtown Parking Study, which will include the parking meter rates, will be provided for the Council's consideration in the future.

Assistant Planner Danna related staff's intent to clarify if the parking citation revenue shown on the Report is the net or gross amount.

2. Chairman Gross read aloud a request from a member of the public asking the City to explore issuing citations for parking on sidewalks.

Traffic Engineer Zandvliet advised that procedures for enforcing parking on sidewalks will be discussed at a meeting to be scheduled with the Police Department, Parking Enforcement, Public Works and Traffic Engineer Zandvliet.

Commissioner Vigon noted liability issues related to parking on sidewalks.

G. STAFF ITEMS

1. Traffic Engineer Zandvliet and Assistant Planner Danna reviewed items to be considered by the Commission in the near future.

2. Traffic Engineer Zandvliet shared information on the Council's recent consideration of the El Porto Parking Lot, including their decision not to pursue it any further at this time.

H. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 p.m.