

**CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION/  
PARKING AND PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMMISSION  
DRAFT MINUTES OF JOINT MEETING  
JANUARY 7, 2010**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

The joint meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Parking and Public Improvements Commission of the City of Manhattan Beach, California, was held on the 7th day of January 2010, at the hour of 6:35 p.m., in the Joslyn Community Center, 1601 Valley Drive, in said City.

**B. ROLL CALL**

Present: Parks and Recreation Commissioners Cajka, Fitzpatrick, Gill, Harris, Murray, and Chairman Nicholson.

Absent: Commissioner Rosenthal.

Present: Parking and Public Improvements Commissioners: Adami, Vigon, Stabile, Silverman, Gross.

Staff Present: Interim City Manager Thompson, Parks and Recreation Director Gill, Traffic Engineer Zandvliet, Recreation Services Manager Al-Oboudi, Management Analyst Madrid, Park Ranger Malatesta, Lt. Harrod, Sgt. Mason, Battalion Chief Chiella, Building Attendant Merrill, and Recording Secretaries Chamberlain and Kennedy.

**C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

None.

**D. CEREMONIAL**

None.

**E. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

None.

**F. GENERAL BUSINESS**

**10/0107 - 1. Discussion of Advantages and Disadvantages of Various Operational Issues and Neighborhood Parking Related to Sand Dune Park.**

Parks and Recreation Chair, Steven Nicholson welcomed the public, staff and commissioners to the Parks and Recreation Commission/Parking and Public Improvements Commission (PPIC) Joint Meeting. Chairman Nicholson expressed that the purpose of tonight's meeting was to discuss Sand Dune Park and listen to public input in regards to Sand Dune Park. Chairman Nicholson introduced PPIC Chair, Paul Gross, and he explained the meeting format, and that after the discussion and receiving public input, each Commissioner will be asked to express their opinion on this matter.

Parks and Recreation Director Gill briefly summarized a timeline of all the meetings and public workshops that have taken place regarding the sand dune since its temporary closure in August 2009. Director Gill outlined the four options being presented to the Commission. Option A is the status quo (keeping the dune open) which would require implementation of a permit parking program and meters on Bell Avenue. Option B is closing/repurposing the dune which would not require permit parking or meters. Option C is limiting the hours of the dune, which would require a permit parking program, and meters would be optional. Option D would be a combination of a reservation system with limited hours. This option would not require permit parking or meters on Bell Avenue. Traffic Engineer Zandvliet provided additional information on a permit parking program and metering along Bell Avenue.

Commissioners held discussion with staff clarifying the following questions and concerns: number of users on the dune; operating costs; revenue from parking meters; initial cost for parking meter installation; permit program verses reservation system; long-term savings; need for permit parking and meters; staffing of the dune after hours; the size and annual budget for each City park and how they compare with one another; if staff was confident that limiting hours and users would reduce the operating budget; user fees associated with a reservation system; the maximum number of people for a reservation; reservation fees for residents versus non-residents; details regarding the reservation system; and projected revenue.

Parks and Recreation Director Gill and Traffic Engineer Zandvliet responded to questions and concerns from the commissioners.

**Public Comment**

**Mark Kemple, 30<sup>th</sup> Street**, voiced his concerns about trash, enforcing limited access, determining the appropriate number of users, noise levels, safety concerns and the lack of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Mr. Kemple favors closing the dune because it would save the City the most money.

**Jane Tournat, 500 Block 31<sup>st</sup> Street**, discussed her concerns with the amount of money needed to maintain the dune and the environmental impacts. Ms. Tournat recommended a geological study be conducted and the dune be repurposed.

**Shirley Phillips, 500 Block 33<sup>rd</sup> Street**, asked if crime has been reduced since the dune's closure and wanted to see an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and more research conducted.

**Christy Barnes, 500 Block 31<sup>st</sup> Street**, shared her concerns regarding unsupervised children, problems with people exploiting a reservation system, and the amount of money spent each year to maintain the dune. Ms. Barnes observed that families have reclaimed the park since the dune's closure, and favors closing the dune permanently.

**Mike Jenkins, No Address Provided**, explained that the dune is a valuable community resource, he urged commissioners to consider an incremental approach with permit and metered parking, and perhaps closing the dune one day a week. Mr. Jenkins believes it is a park and should be open for recreational use by all.

**Steven Vargas, 400 Block 32<sup>nd</sup> Street**, conveyed his concern regarding the need for sand replenishment, and continued sidewalk repair. Mr. Vargas recommended drastically shortening hours for adults, closing the dune during the weekends, and would like the park's primary objective to be for children and families.

**John Arendorf, 500 30<sup>th</sup> Street**, shared that noise and traffic levels have both dramatically decreased since the dune's closure. Mr. Arendorf is in favor of closing the dune because he believes the other options are faulty. He also suggested that perhaps only children should be allowed to use the dune.

**Tim Keller, 700 Block 33<sup>rd</sup> Street**, voiced his concern regarding the level of noise but believes the dune is one of the greatest assets in the community and would like to see it preserved for kids and respectful dune users alike.

**Thomas Gray, 36<sup>th</sup> Street**, remarked that it is shameful the City is considering closing the dune when child obesity is so high. Mr. Gray pointed out that parking in the sand section is more difficult, the park is quieter than a school, many of the non-locals are great people, and the park should remain open for all to use.

**David Watchfogel, No Address Provided**, conveyed his concern regarding the permit parking solution and the money that is required to maintain the dune. Mr. Watchfogel recommended closing the dune for recreational purposes.

**Victoria Peters, 400 Block of 28<sup>th</sup> Street**, cited environmental responsibility and good people with bad behavior as her reasons for supporting the dune closure.

**Jerry Henkins, 500 Block 33<sup>rd</sup> Street**, relayed his concerns about inappropriate land usage, dangerous erosion, and the negative impacts upon the surrounding neighborhood.

Mr. Henkins suggested that the issue should not be deciding who gets to use it and when, but the physical structure of the dune. The method of replenishing the sand is actually causing further erosion by creating a steeper dune, which causes sand to slide down faster. This requires more frequent sand replenishment, so it becomes a self-defeating process.

**Michael Henry, 3000 Block of Bell Ave**, explained that a reservation system would be difficult to enforce, and was only a slightly better option than keeping the dune open. Mr. Henry recommended the dune be closed or open with very limited hours.

**Jacob Rome, 400 Block of 28<sup>th</sup> Street**, recommended an alternative reservation system or permit system and shorter hours coupled with accountability and easy enforceability would allow the park to remain open.

**Jim Shaw 600 Block Rosecrans**, recommended keeping the dune open. Mr. Shaw expressed that closing the dune is unfair to dune users. He has not observed any of the bad behavior suggested by others, and he welcomes people from outside the community.

**Lou LeRoy, 500 Block 27<sup>th</sup> Street**, inquired about the cost of keeping the dune open and if the information provided included expenses for the Police Department, Fire Department and fixing the fissures at the top of the dune. Mr. LeRoy is in favor of closing the dune to all except children.

**Don Trucker, Chestnut Ave**, explained that the 150,000 square foot park is not a small pocket park, he supports limiting the hours of the park but keeping the dune open for all.

**Ricky Bush, 36<sup>th</sup> Street**, recommended a combination of limited hours of operation, a reservation system as well as parking restrictions. Mr. Bush does not want to see the park closed and suggested the City make the parking expensive to deter many from using the dune.

**Steve Snively, 500 Block 33<sup>rd</sup> Street**, conveyed his belief that keeping the dune open or limiting hours would be dedicating the park as a workout facility to the detriment of the neighborhood. Mr. Snively believes the surrounding neighborhood has lost, the continued overcrowding is all day, every day.

**Mark Shalvarjian, 400 Block 32<sup>nd</sup> Street**, suggested an incremental approach instead of closing the dune and restricting access. Mr. Shalvarjian recommended limiting access during evenings and weekends as well as expensive and strict parking regulations.

**Gary Osterhout, 31<sup>st</sup> Street and Blanche**, recommended closing the dune, he cited undocumented and unstudied data, and the fact that it is no longer a community park.

**Robert Hess, 500 Block 33<sup>rd</sup> Street**, shared his concerns regarding the noise, trash, parking issues, and crowds that the dune creates. Mr. Hess commented that the noise in the park has changed since the dune's closure, the majority of the park users are now children and families. Mr. Hess recommended the dune be closed and turned into a nature preserve.

**Will Arvizo, 23<sup>rd</sup> Street**, observed that the two restrooms in the park are not enough to handle the volume of people that use the park, which is only getting more popular. Mr. Arvizo suggested that the City charge non-residents to use the park in order to pay for the increasing costs associated with maintaining the park, close the dune, or implement a reservation system with very limited hours.

**Dennis White, 33<sup>rd</sup> Street**, thanked the PPIC and Parks and Recreation Commissions for the transparent meetings and suggested that during this time of budget crisis the dune be closed.

**Gerry O'Connor, No Address Provided**, observed that Sand Dune has been a problem for the last twelve years. Mr. O'Connor served on the first and second Sand Dune subcommittees and he believes options other than closure, limited use, or permitting are unenforceable. Mr. O'Connor recommended that unless a new, limited method of access is proposed then the dune should be closed.

### **Commissioner Opinions**

Chairman Nicholson thanked the public for their comments and per Council's direction asked each Commissioner to express their personal opinion.

Commissioner Cajka (PRC) stated that two questions need to be asked: What is in the best interest of the residents that live adjacent to the park? And what is the intended use of the park? Commissioner Cajka explained that keeping the dune open in its current status was not in the best interest of the residents and it was not the intended use of the park. Commissioner Cajka suggested that if a reservation system to limit the use of the dune was enforceable, he would be in favor of that option. However, he recommended that the dune be closed, and limit the use of the dune for either educational purposes, or have it open occasionally for family use.

Commissioner Stabile (PPIC) expressed that the core problem is that the dune is overused in terms of its intended purpose and carrying capacity. The only way to effectively address the core problem of overuse is to close the dune. Commissioner Stabile would like to see dune open for work-outs but does not believe there is an effective and workable way, and is in favor of closing the dune as a workout facility.

Commissioner Harris (PRC) asked for a study related to the safety issues that arise during the maintenance of the dune. She also requested staff to compare the operating costs, size, and revenue, if any, of all City parks. Commissioner Harris recommended limiting

hours and implementing a reservation system during peak hours, she also suggested “Sand Dune Sundays” where the dune could be open for special events.

Commissioner Adami (PPIC) proposed an incremental approach that would allow all community members, both residents and non-residents alike to use the dune. Commissioner Adami suggested that the solution is not black or white, but needs to be an incremental approach by limiting permits, hours of operation, costs, parking and use. Commissioner Adami recommends the park be converted to a family park to allow enjoyment without limited restriction.

Commissioner Fitzpatrick (PRC) asked that City Council take another look at limiting hours and using a permit/reservation system to minimize use of the dune. Commissioner Fitzpatrick would like a deeper examination of each issue, in order to allow the dune to be used by children and families.

Commissioner Vigon (PPIC) commented that sand dune is in critical condition, and it cannot sustain the kind of use that was seen this summer. Commissioner Vigon recommended repurposing the dune, planting native shrubs and allowing the public to explore the dune without causing so much erosion.

Commissioner Gill (PRC) recommended closing the dune because it is destroying the surrounding neighborhood. Commissioner Gill also stated that since the City does not have \$3,000 for the teen center carnival, the maintenance cost for the dune seems unreasonable.

Commissioner Silverman (PPIC) believes that we do not have enough information to close the dune, or to keep it open. He would like to see how many people should be allowed on the dune. Commissioner Silverman is in favor of a reservation system with limited hours, and stresses the importance of a system that is enforceable and is implemented in conjunction with parking measures.

Commissioner Murray (PRC) feels that the cons outweigh the pros for options A-Status Quo and Option C-Limiting Hours. She is worried that a permit parking program would negatively impact the North Manhattan Beach business community. Therefore, Commissioner Murray is in favor of closing the dune, but she also would like to see the dune open from time to time for family or special events.

Chair Gross (PPIC) observed that the negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood is unacceptable. He suggested that the City Council pick a year, possibly 1980 or 1985, and direct staff to figure out a way to get the dune experience to be like it was in that year. Chairman Gross recommended limiting hours and creating a reservation system to limit use of the dune as a means to achieve that goal.

Chair Nicholson (PRC) commented that there is not an effective management system to get us back to the use levels of 1985 as Commissioner Gross suggested. He explained that it is not fiscally or environmentally responsible to continue to operate the dune as it

is now. Chair Nicholson recommended closing the dune with a caveat that the dune can be used for after school programs or open on the weekends for children.

**G. COMMISSION ITEMS**

None.

**H. STAFF ITEMS**

None.

**I. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.