

# DRAFT

## CITY OF MANHATTAN BEACH MINUTES OF THE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

November 16, 2009  
6:30 P.M.

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### **ROLL CALL**

Present: Commissioners Cajka, Gill, Harris, Murray, Nicholson and Rosenthal

Absent: Commissioner Fitzpatrick

Others Present: Director of Parks and Recreation Director Richard Gill, Recreation Services Manager Idris Al-Oboudi, Recording Secretary Jane Grace and others (see list)

### **AGENDA CHANGES**

None

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the October 26, 2009 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting were approved as written.

### **CEREMONIAL**

None

### **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

**Gerry O'Connor** spoke about the process and ability of the Commission to collect public input. He reported that the Commissioner's e-mail addresses are not posted on the City website; he indicated that historically the three minute limit for speaking at the Commission level has never been implemented, unless necessary and proposed that the three minute limit is inappropriate at the Commission level.

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

### 09/1026-3 – Direction from City Council for the Parks and Recreation Commission to Discuss and Develop the Pros and Cons of Possible Operational Changes for the Dune at Sand Dune Park

Director Richard Gill reported that tonight we will be looking at all possible operational changes that would mitigate the problems occurring in Sand Dune Park and neighborhood and asking for pros and cons for each. He reported that the Parking and Public Improvements Commission (P.P.I.C) was also directed to look at operational changes in the neighborhood, specifically a neighborhood permit parking program

Mr. Gill reported that the Commission and the public will address the three areas of possible operational changes for the dune:

- Close the Dune
- Changes to the hours of operation
- Reservation System, limiting the number of people allowed on the dune

Mr. Gill asked that everyone be respectful of everyone's suggestions, even if they don't agree. He suggested that they shouldn't get caught up in the minutia, i.e. the fine details of a reservation system. After everyone has had a chance to discuss the pros and cons for each suggested operational change, the Commission will reconvene and make any final remarks. If the discussion of all the operational changes is completed, the discussion will continue at a joint commission meeting with the P.P.I.C. on Thursday, January 7. At that time, both commissions will discuss each of their operational issues and then forward this information to the City Council at either their last meeting in January or their first meeting in February.

## **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

**Nancy Dirado**, and others in the audience, requested that the City do an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the dune. Ms. Dirado suggested that she is frustrated that the City hasn't provided them with an EIR, including how many cars the neighborhood can accommodate, suggesting that it would be difficult to give pros and cons without this information.

**Gerry O'Connor** suggested that the reservation system being discussed tonight is more a permit system with its end goal being to limit the number on the dune.

## REPURPOSE THE DUNE

The majority of the audience didn't want the option titled "Close the Dune." They requested that staff change the title to "repurpose the dune."

### **Patricia Ware Pros:**

- Preserve the natural historical landmark
- Protect its form and beauty
- Won't be reconstructed monthly
- Stop erosion

- Environmentally ethical
- Provide potential habitat for El Segundo blue butterfly and endangered species
- Birding once again viable

(Summarized comments delivered in writing for archival packet)

**Cindy Berkhalter** - Ordering an EIR is the only responsible thing to do

**Pros:**

- No plastic bottles littering the top of the dune

**Rita Cheever** – EIR needed

**Victoria Peters** – EIR needed

**Pros:**

- No strangers wandering our streets
- No longer exploited as a world class workout facility
- Alleviate traffic

**Kathleen Spilten**

**Pros:**

- Better use of our money to address other issues rather than maintenance of the dune
- Positive environment for children
- Safer
- Alleviate traffic issues
- Protect peace and quiet
- Preserve the quality of Manhattan Beach

**Markus Mack**

**Pros:**

- No traffic
- No overuse problems
- No recycling of sand
- No parking problems
- No trash issues

**Robert Hess**

**Pros:**

- Eliminate maintenance costs
- Ability to sleep in mornings
- Safer for kids
- Less traffic
- Less dust
- No loud music
- Stair use is quiet, self regulating

**Mark Kemple****Pros:**

- Avoid cons of other options
- Dune maintenance costs eliminated
- Avoid cost of peace in the community
- Non-discriminatory way of closing the dune
- Safer for children
- Blossoming of the park – picnics, use of greenbelt returning
- Eliminate unsafe conditions during sand replenishment

**Name Unknown****Cons:**

- Public Park
- Used by Manhattan Beach residents – convenience for residents eliminated
- Kids won't be able to play on dune
- No exercising allowed on dune – unique training and aerobic experience
- Community melting pot eliminated

**Bob Vargo****Pros:**

- Would get neighborhood park back

**Bill Hory****Cons:**

- Costs involved to change, to make it an environmental habitat
- Liability to change
- Might set a precedent to close of recreational area due to increased usage
- Penalize Manhattan Beach families who use the dune
- Closing a unique, one-of-a-kind workout facility
- Decrease real estate value
- Loss of possible revenue

**David Wachtfogel** suggested that the real estate values in the area have depreciated. He feels the dune and the park cannot co-exist and if the dune continues to operate as an exercise facility, Sand Dune Park will be destroyed.

**Faith Lyons****Pros:**

- No need for big city infrastructure to manage park
- Reduce need for staff for monitoring

**Dexter Taylor** indicated that having no dump trucks in the neighborhood for sand replenishment has been cause to celebrate.

**Pros:**

- Dust reduction
- Parking available

**Sandy Francini**

**Pros:**

- Quality of life returned to residents
- No worry about traffic

**Dennis White** suggested that the workout on the dune is not unique and no different from running on the beach.

**Pros:**

- No need for additional on-site staff
- No need for increased enforcement
- No sand replenishment needed
- Maintain property values
- Won't have to pay for parking meters
- Additional revenue for other recreation facilities and programs

**Nancy Dirado**

**Pros:**

- Eliminate the attractive nuisance of the sand dune
- Money allocated for the maintenance of the dune could be given to the Chamber of Commerce or held in reserve
- Recreation facilities, i.e. volleyball court, could be returned to the base of the dune
- Eliminate confrontational issues

**Jane Tournat** thanked Mr. Richard Gill and Mr. Idris Al-Oboudi for all their work over the years to come up with a solution for the sand dune situation.

**Pros:**

- Restore neighborhood park and natural resources
- No erosion
- Restore birds/bird watchers
- No reason for parking meters
- No emissions or water waste by replenishment
- More neighborhood/family gatherings – current level of usage is acceptable
- Liability to city disappears

**Maryann Fragner** reported that she used to run the dune and supported a reservation system; however she now believes that the park is too small to support a reservation system.

**Debbie Phillips**

**Pros:**

- Only enforceable option
- Simple
- Costs nothing
- Saves the sanity of the neighbors

**Jeff Vignette**

**Pros:**

- Bring sense of peace and harmony back to the neighborhood
- No need to dodge cars and trucks on the way to the park

**Denise M.**

**Pros:**

- No more strangers around neighborhood
- No more replacement of sand

**Brent Denrie** would not like the dune used as an athletic facility, but left as it is.

**Jerry Hankins**

**Pros:**

- Save cost of water used during sand replenishment
- Consistent with city's green initiatives

(Summarized comments delivered in writing for archival packet)

**Richard Lopez**

**Pros:**

- Shows City Council's responsiveness to residents

**Steve Snivley**

**Pros:**

- No more trash, i.e. socks, water bottles
- No reason we can't repurpose the dune and make it available to children

**Cons:**

- Children no longer able to play on dune

**Rosemary Gray** suggested that her children and grandchildren are unable to use the park because of the overuse of the dune.

**Don Trucker**

**Cons:**

- L. A. County Grant precludes closing the dune because of potential litigation
- It doesn't appear that closing the dune has returned the park to a family destination

**Gary Osterhout**

**Pros:**

- Most fair/equitable solution

**Gerry O'Connor**

**Pros:**

- Increased use of park by neighbors
- Neighborhood stability – decreased turnover of housing

**Patricia Ware**

**Pros:**

- Realizing mission statements of Parks and Recreation – Protect Environmental Resources; Strengthen Safety and Security; Enhance Community Image and Sense of Place

**David Wachtfogel** suggested that there are other parks where use has been abated because of overuse and this would not be that unusual.

**Mark Kemple**

**Pros:**

- Promote beauty
- Avoid litigation if dune left open
- Return to original mission of the park
- Avoid cost of operating a 9,000 use exercise facility
- Not as much vomit on the streets
- Promote city's reputation
- Brings cohesiveness to the neighborhood

**Cons:**

- Children won't be able to interact with all races with the dune closed

**Jacob Rome**

**Cons:**

- Won't be able to take action photos of the dune

**Don Trucker**

**Cons:**

- Sets a precedent – if neighbors don't like other facilities. they might take action

**Nancy Dirado**

**Pros:**

- Sanitation of sink near bottom of dune
- One stall bathroom will not take such a beating

**Dennis White**

**Pros:**

- Less neighborhood crime

**Victoria Peters**

**Pros:**

- Less neighborhood crime
- Sets positive precedent

**Lynn Harris** suggested opening up the dune occasionally for a “kids’ day” type event’

RESERVATION PERMIT SYSTEM – limit the number on the dune at any one time

**Bill Francini**

**Cons:**

- Additional staff and enforcement needed

**Debbie Phillips**

**Cons:**

- Can’t control traffic in neighborhood

**Kim Riley**

**Cons:**

- How do we know that enforcement will take place?

**Faith Lyons**

**Cons:**

- Unenforceable
- Too expensive to properly enforce

**Jacob Rome**

**Pros:**

- Generates revenue
- Maintains access for exercise and children
- Will reduce usage

**Robert Hess**

**Pros:**

- Will bring after-hour activities back into the park

**Cons:**

- Unenforceable



**Jerry Hankins**

**Cons:**

- Sand replenishment will still be necessary.
- Still have erosion, loss of dune surface, dust

**Cindy Berkholder** thanks the staff for their patience during this frustrating situation.

**Cons:**

- Double the cost for enforcement and sand replenishment
- Too early to make a decision until we know costs and impact (need EIR)
- Unenforceable!

**Steve Snively**

**Pros:**

- Potentially balances exercise and park usage

**Cons:**

- Cannot implement reservation system without institutionalizing overuse of the facility and neighborhood over use

**Bill Hory**

**Pros:**

- Reduce usage
- Increase revenue
- Decreased expenses – reservation should be non-refundable

**Maryann Fragner**

**Cons:**

- Trash, noise
- Even if you control the numbers you can't control the quality of people who use the dune

**Jane Tournat**

**Cons:**

- New cost of educating public about reservation program
- Increase cost for starting up new system
- Ongoing costs for maintaining system
- Children can't make reservations

**Dennis White**

**Cons:**

- Continued trash, noise, speeding cars, medical emergencies
- Cost of web page, software
- Staff and enforcement costs
- Unenforceable

**Mark Kemple**

**Cons:**

- Liability
- Residents don't want it
- People waiting to use it
- Tension if unable to make reservation
- Non-legitimate process of picking number of users
- Enforcement loaded with problems

**Gary Osterhout**

**Cons:**

- Unfairness due to hours of access
- Workout facility incompatible with concept of casual neighborhood park
- Fence is unaesthetic and unfavorable image
- Reservation system not comparable to tennis court reservations
- Doesn't make sense to keep open for just a few; no cost benefit

**Don Trucker**

**Pros:**

- Many Manhattan Beach residents would like to use the dune – “ We do want it”
- Historically (40 years) has been used as an exercise facility

**Dexter Taylor**

**Cons:**

- Use of dune for exercise is an unintended consequence of its location

**David Wachtfogel** reported that going down the dune on cardboard, etc. has been outlawed which is an abatement of the use of the dune.

**Bill Francini** suggested that a reservation system legitimizes the use of the dune as an exercise facility.

**Denise Mazzota** (not in favor of a reservation system)

**Pros:**

- **No need for parking meters and signage**

**Gerry O'Connor** (operational guidelines if Council chooses to implement permit system, even though it doesn't appear to be the popular path)

**Pros:**

- Permit would provide flexibility for target usage
- Provides user identification and accountability
- Ability to rescind access with grounds

**Cons:**

- User costs and inconveniences as well as City costs
- Complexity could be beyond staff ability to effectively implement

## HOURS OF OPERATION

**Kim Riley** - If dune is kept open, Ms. Riley would prefer 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., closed May through September.

### **Nancy Dirado**

#### **Cons:**

- Complicated to define times
- Will create confusion
- Exclusionary
- Doesn't address parking, trash, bathroom, sand replenishment

**Dexter Taylor** would like to dune closed seasonably – January through December

**David Wachtfogel** suggested that the dune remain closed and the park revived.

### **Jacob Rome**

#### **Pros:**

- Able to target the hours that suffer from greatest impact.; target hours that Manhattan Beach residents use it most.

### **Mark Kemple**

#### **Cons:**

- Limiting the hours would exclude non-residents, producing a possible legal problem
- Safety issues not addressed – sand still has to be replenished
- Traffic issues still in play

### **John Rendler**

#### **Cons:**

- City would open themselves to serious liability issues if the dune is open after dark. Due to safety issues, the dune hours should be changed to closed at dusk.

### **Bill Francini**

#### **Cons:**

- Changing the hours does not address the number of people and overuse of the dune

### **Gerry O'Connor**

#### **Cons:**

- Dune overuse will shift to remaining open hours and possibly worsen

**Gary Osterhout****Cons:**

- Workout facility still incompatible with concept of neighborhood park
- Ratifies the use of the park as a workout facility
- Friction between those that want to use it as a park and those that want to use it as a workout facility
- If the dune is closed seasonally, it will be difficult to adjust to a neighborhood park again
- To be workable, it will have to be open year round, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., which will be intolerable to the neighborhood

**Faith Lyons****Cons:**

- Still have all the environmental impact on neighborhood

**Jane Tournat****Cons:**

- Change of hours is not a solution

Mr. Gill reported that the Parks and Recreation Commission will be meeting jointly with the P.P.I.C. on Thursday, January 7, 6:30 p.m. At that time, both commissions will discuss each of their operational issues and then forward this information to the City Council at either their last meeting in January or their first meeting in February.

Dennis White suggested that the City Council will need cost estimates of all the dune options discussed in order to weigh the pros and cons.

**COMMISSION ITEMS**

Commissioner Harris reported that the subcommittee to discuss the consideration of a request from Manhattan Beach Little League to rename Marine Park and install a commemorative wall within Marine Park that recognizes our youth and adults who have contributed to youth sports in Manhattan Beach has met twice and will report to the Commission at the December 14, 2009 Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. Commissioner Gill reported that A.Y.S.O. has donated \$3,000 for preliminary designs.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m. to Monday, December 14, 2009.

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

NOVEMBER 16, 2009

Gerry O'Connor  
Nancy Dirado  
Kathleen Spilten  
Victoria Peters  
Mark Kemple  
Bill Hory  
Dexter Taylor  
Dennis White  
Maryann Fragner  
Jeff Vignette  
Denise M.  
Richard Lopez  
Rosemary Gray  
Gary Osterhout  
Bill Francini  
Cindy Berkhalter  
Denise Mazzota

David Wachtfogel  
Patricia Ware  
Markus Mack  
Robert Hess  
Bob Vargo  
Faith Lyons  
Sandy Francini  
Jane Tournat  
Debbie Phillips  
Brent Denrie  
Jerry Hankins  
Steve Snivley  
Don Trucker  
Jacob Rome  
Kim Riley  
Steve Snively  
John Rendler