

**THE CITY OF COSTA MESA
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
FAIRVIEW PARK CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

October 2, 2013

These meetings minutes represent an "action minute" format. A copy of the meeting audio tape can be obtained at the Public Services Department front counter located on the 4th floor of the Costa Mesa City Hall.

The Fairview Park Citizens Advisory Committee of the City of Costa Mesa, California met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 2, 2013, in the Neighborhood Community Center at 1845 Park Avenue, Costa Mesa, California.

1. Call to Order: Chairman Mehren

2. Roll Call

Voting Members Present: Chairman Richard Mehren
Vice Chairman Steve Smith
Member Ron Amburgey
Member Brett Eckles
Member Dennis Popp
Member Lee Ramos
Member David Stiller
Member Anna Vrska

Voting Members Absent: Member Terry Cummings

Officials Present: Mayor Pro Tem Stephen Mensinger, City Council Liaison
Council Member Sandra Genis, Alternate City Council Liaison
Dean Abernathy, Parks and Recreation Commission Liaison
Robert Graham, Alternate Parks and Recreation Commission Liaison
Ernesto Munoz, Public Services Director
Fariba Fazeli, City Engineer
Yolanda Summerhill, Attorney
Bart Mejia, Parks Project Manager
Alfa Lopez, Management Analyst
Denise Cedillos, Administrative Secretary

3. Presentations

Costa Mesa United

Gordon Bowley, Costa Mesa United President, presented this report. Costa Mesa United is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with an all-volunteer board dedicated to improving youth sports facilities. \$700,000 has been contributed to date. Costa Mesa United chairs the Costa Mesa Youth Sports Council, which meets at City Hall the first Tuesday of each month. It brings together representatives from the City, School District, and the 15 youth organizations that play in the City. The 15 organizations play at 55 different locations, 40 of which are on Newport Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD) sites, over which they have little or no control over the schedule or maintenance which often renders the use unavailable for scheduled games. There are 4,000 participants in soccer; facilities are required to meet the needs. Youth in the City are badly underserved and Fairview Park is the last open area where there is an opportunity to provide the needed facilities. The more than 9,000 youth who participate annually request that that FPCAC includes sports facilities in its recommendation to the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Orange County Model Engineers

Hank Castignetti had a PowerPoint presentation on this item. The Orange County Model Engineers (OCME) are grateful that City Council extended their agreement for 5 years. He expressed hope that Fairview Park remains an open and natural space without development. OCME shares Fairview Park with birds, animals, joggers, and school visits on nature walks amongst others. OCME takes seriously the abundance with nature. The flora and fauna enhances the experience and turn a simple train ride into an unparalleled nature experience.

OCME is a place to learn, grow, and be mentored by highly skilled adults. Members come from all over California but community development goes directly to Costa Mesa. Members donate over 10,000 hours to the City. They offer free train rides to the public the third weekend of every month, which has occurred consistently for 25 years. Members augment the experience with private equipment for public ride days.

OCME provides 40,000 free rides annually. Mr. Castignetti listed the organizations for which they provide community service opportunities. OCME runs train rides for the Fish Fry and Civil War Reenactment events held at Fairview Park. It also participates in the annual pumpkin patch, California Fire Museum event, and annual Polar Express and Santa Train rides.

OCME admires the efforts of the sports groups present and acknowledges that Costa Mesa would benefit from more facilities. OCME would like to assist in fundraising towards it, but thinks Fairview Park is not the place for it. OCME

respectfully suggests a blue ribbon panel to establish other options to preserve the archeological, biological, and historical uniqueness of Fairview Park.

Presentation on Youth Sports Data

Brett Eckles, FPCAC member, had a PowerPoint presentation on this item. Copies of his presentation were made available to Committee Members and the public. He acknowledged City staff, Bob Knapp, and the different organizations that assisted in putting the data together.

Every user group who participates on fields in Costa Mesa goes through an application process to be permitted. Permits range from Group 1 (primarily volunteer-based organizations with Costa Mesa residency requirements), Group 2 (schools), and Group 3-6 (volunteer based organizations). The difference between Group 1 and Group 3 is Group 3 may have a more selective process.

Each group that goes to the City is allotted field permits based on registration numbers. The 2012 total for all user groups on Costa Mesa athletic fields is 10,618 participants. From 2011 to 2012 the numbers increased. For AYSO 97, 2013 numbers have increased as well.

A total of 11 utility fields and 6 baseball fields are owned, managed, and operated by the City. The fields were categorized by utilities fields- used by soccer organizations, football, rugby, and lacrosse- and baseball fields. Lyons Park – Luke Davis Field has one utility field and one baseball field- which cannot be run at the same time. Fairview Development Center is leased by the City from the State so availability and usage fluctuates with the State's needs. Due to the regulations there are not any games on the weekends. Member Eckles indicated to the lighting at each field and explained that some are permanent while others are temporary, which are moved on and off, are generator-based, and centric on what they are lighting. He added that in a few weeks it will get dark 5:30 p.m. thus reducing field usage. Smallwood Park has one baseball field but only for practices, no games.

Newport Mesa Unified School District opens up the fields through the Joint Use Agreement with the City. Baseball and soccer at Kaiser Elementary School are season-by-season. Costa Mesa High School and NMUSD recently approved funding for a stadium facility. Out of the 32 utility fields and 18 baseball fields, Group 2 users get primary access; Group 1 and Group 3 users do not get to participate on the fields until 5 p.m. Member Eckles presented a slide on his analysis on three organizations. AYSO 97 has participants from Newport Beach but he only included Costa Mesa residents in the report.

Chairman Mehren thanked the presenters and opened the floor for committee member questions.

In response to inquiries by Member Amburgey, Mr. Castignetti stated there are approximately 200 OCME members- he did not know how many are from Costa Mesa. The Use Agreement does not spell out any acreage. Usage of the park is exchanged for free rides provided to the community every third weekend. OCME entertains 2,000-4,000 people that Saturday. A member of OCME in the public indicated the total usage is 20 acres with the track covering less. OCME has exclusive use to a compound that is approximately 2 acres. The OCME member added their usage is cleared through park staff.

In response to Member Ramos's queries, Mr. Castignetti shared OCME is run entirely on donations. They have fundraising activities and do birthday parties for a donation but most sustainability has come as bequeathments from members and estates, or donations collected at the public train rides. \$750,000 has been collected in 25 years and it all goes back to the railroad. OCME is audited each year and anyone is welcome to see it.

In response to Vice Chairman Smith's question, Mr. Castignetti stated OCME would like to come back for another extension for a longer period of time. The maintenance required has a long life span and includes long terms investments. A short term year-to-year basis would make it difficult to recruit members.

Member Eckles asked if OCME foresees an expansion of the current track system and if putting a proposed athletic complex would work with it. Mr. Castignetti responded that under the Use Agreement, any changes that are required to move tracks, stations, and facilities are at the expense of OCME. It has taken 25 years to raise \$750,000. Given the current environment of ecological and archaeological concerns, they are not in a position right now to forecast what they may be allowed to do in the future

Member Stiller inquired if OCME has an idea of the money invested from members. An OCME member in the public responded, members donate 10,000 hours of labor a year; donations of estates haven't been broken down. Mr. Castignetti clarified for that it was purely voluntary and is in addition to the donation of equipment and materials that are unrecompensed. Many members use their own equipment to provide the free rides to public.

OCME does not have an estimate of the cost to make major changes to its layout. It has been ballparked to one million dollars but depends on which facilities and to what extent it will be moved.

There were no questions for the other speakers.

4a. Public Comment

Due to the high number of participants, Chairman Mehren requested public comment be limited to 2 minutes per individual and suggested adding 20 additional minutes to the time allotted.

Motion made by Member Popp to have 30 minutes of public comment, proceed with planned business, and allow time at the end for additional individuals who wish to comment; lack of second.

Motion made by Member Amburgey to extend the time for public comment by 30 additional minutes before proceeding with the meeting; Member Eckles second; all in favor; motion carries.

1. Harold Weitzberg, Costa Mesa

Member Eckles mentioned 7,000 participants in youth sports in 2012 but didn't show how many were unique or if kids are playing 2 seasons at a time.

2. Jay Humphrey, Costa Mesa

Mr. Humphrey expressed concern with changing the natural habitat in lieu of doing needs assessments of parks that have fields. We need to keep the diversity of having active fields but also the natural setting of Fairview Park.

3. Bob Brooks, OCME member

Mr. Brooks related a story of a grandson bonding with his father in Afghanistan over the train ride. Special needs adults and children come to the park to experience nature and train rides. Please keep the park open for the diversity of park users.

4. Harry Tulman, Costa Mesa

Sports groups are talking about changing an area that is open to an entire community to regimented diced up sports fields. Parks are not to change freedom for regimentation. Mr. Tulman is also a proponent of OCME.

5. Paula Restis (spelling)

Ms. Restis is a Cherokee Indian and asked that the committee understand the meaning of artifacts, not destroy what is there, respect Native Indians, and leave the land alone. It has Federal and State laws that protect it.

6. Tom Pollack, Costa Mesa

Mr. Pollack stated playing sports were important experiences in his life and the lives of his sons. If we have less opportunities than surrounding cities, people coming into the city will pick somewhere else to take their children.

7. Cindy Brennaman, Costa Mesa

Fairview Park is not meant to be a sports field. From the OCME trains you can see beautiful areas of the park.

8. Troy Hall

Mr. Hall is an advocate for the ladies in the downtown recreation league, the most underserved basketball community. Their success is related to the reduction of obesity and delinquency. He advocates for additional youth sports facilities.

9. Susan Meyer, Costa Mesa

Ms. Meyer is opposed to adding sports facilities to the park. Her son's team found other places to practice during the summer. His interest in science and engineering was sparked by OCME and the nature at Fairview Park.

10. Jim Gray, Costa Mesa

Mr. Gray is on the Board of Directors of the National Scholastic Skateboarding League. The skate park was left off Member Eckels's presentation but is the field most used. If the committee does consider recreational uses, he wants to make sure skateboarding is added.

11. Colin McCarthy, Costa Mesa

Mr. McCarthy is the Secretary of Costa Mesa United. He lives on the Upper Birds streets and is an avid train user. If Fairview Park were originally sports fields and OCME came to add trains, Mr. Bowley would have agreed. He would like the committee to consider a way they can all live together in peace.

12. Ludas Hangro (spelling), Costa Mesa

Mr. Hangro is involved in a youth high school sports and agreed on crafting a plan that can meet the needs of all residents.

13. Bill Gilbert, Costa Mesa

Mr. Gilbert lives next to the park; it is not NIMBY situation. Imagine the children present enjoying the sunset from the bluffs. It is not a sports park. Perhaps there could be dirt to cover the archeological ruins area so it is not seen as a big blank lot.

14. Scott Matthie

Mr. Matthie runs Newport Mesa Friday Night Lights and Dirt Dogs Baseball Club. It started in 2011 with 91 kids and is now near 900; he had to turn away 200 kids because of space. They need to double up or move to other cities for space. The park can be utilized by the entire city, not just one small group.

15. Cindy Black, Costa Mesa

The Master Plan was designed to keep Fairview Park as a nature preserve. The non-structured environment and natural space teaches the value of nature. Stop using children as the tool to achieve self-serving goals.

16. Jenny Wood, Costa Mesa

Her teenage sons utilize the park to learn about geology, ecology, and relieve the tensions of high school. Her sons have played AYSO soccer for years and learned to play for the love of sports, but do not wish to add fields to the park.

17. Kobe Wood, Costa Mesa

Mr. Wood shared that walking on the bluffs at Fairview Park provides what he needs to play at an optimum level and feel calm and relaxed on the soccer field. He asked that the open land please not be taken away.

18. Jim Kulman, Costa Mesa

The City needs as many sports facilities as necessary to accommodate the children but he would like to look at alternatives besides changing the nature of Fairview Park.

Motion made by Chairman Mehren to add 20 additional minutes to public comment; Member Eckles second; 7 members voted in favor, Member Popp abstained; motion carries.

19. Kim Hendricks, Costa Mesa

Ms. Hendricks's son plays basketball- for which there is only one facility- but is against fields in Fairview Park. As a teacher at NMUSD and having spoken with the office manager at TeWinkle Park, there is no scheduling problem. The numbers presented will need to be investigated further. Keep with the goal to keep the Master Plan passive or she will see you in court.

20. David Hoffman, Costa Mesa

There are other sports fields but only one Fairview Park that allows diverse wild lands. It has a natural, cultural, and historical significance.

21. Erica Norgard, Costa Mesa

Natural space provides children cognitive, emotional, and physical benefits. Her family has experienced the benefits Fairview Park offers and as a special education teacher she has seen the positive impact.

22. Devon Lucas, Costa Mesa

Based on Census data there are 40,000 households, 28% of which have children under the age of 18. Neighboring cities maximize their natural land. No one is saying get rid of, destroy and turn it all into sports fields, but there is room for the entire community.

23. Angela De'Arcy

Ms. De'Arcy is the Executive Director for the Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples Based on her conversations with Acjachemen and Tongva peoples, none have received their legally entitled consultation notice from the City. The City has an obligation to consult with and receive consent from tribal nations before making decisions. Ms. De'Arcy referred to legal regulations that need to be abided by.

24. Norm Friger (spelling), Costa Mesa

Mr. Friger shared that it cost \$20 million dollars to build four soccer fields in Orange County Great Park. When talking about modification there is an obligation to think whether they can pay for it. Costa Mesa United has raised \$70,000 but that is a long way from \$20 million. We should find better avenues to work with NMUSD.

25. Greg Newman

Mr. Newman, Pop Warner Football President, understands the importance of the natural portion of the park and the train people, but thinks they can figure out a way to include fields that he believes are very important for kids' future.

26. Megan, Costa Mesa

Open space is scarce and will only get scarcer. Natural open space can serve a wider variety than a sports field. Put some resources into enhancing the native ecosystem and providing structure so it doesn't get trampled.

27. Jack Morales, Costa Mesa

Here is an area that is an inefficient use of space. There is a way to fit fields for kids there. He represents the Youth Sports Council and sees the man-hours that are spent for the kids through coaches and volunteers.

28. Yumi Carson, Costa Mesa

Ms. Carson has 3 children who have played sports within the City. She agrees in finding ways for sports fields to coexist in Fairview Park. Countless hours go into maintaining the youth sports organizations.

29. Chuck Perry, Costa Mesa

Mr. Perry thinks fields can coexist in Fairview Park. Placentia Ave. distinguishes the park: the east side is raw land and the west side is a park. Part of the train facility can be reconfigured to have something for everyone.

30. Sue Lester, Costa Mesa

Ms. Lester supports the importance of soccer in guiding kids but does not support fields in Fairview Park. She would like to know what has already happened to the damaged areas to make sure to protect what we have. When the City knocks down motels, perhaps they can bring fields there.

31. John

Mr. John, an AYSO commissioner for Costa Mesa, stated the trains should be kept; sports people want to coexist in that area. It is already developed and has bathrooms and tracks; let's make it look nice instead of weeds and dirt.

32. Brett Wilson

The fields would occupy a small piece of the park but make a big dent in the problem of turning kids away. They understand they are asking OCME to do a lot of work but if they can work with them it would be greatly appreciated.

33. Lisa Manfredi

Ms. Manfredi's children have participated in Pop Warner and Friday Night Lights. They get so much from wide open space, almost more than from sports. Fairview Park is a dawn-to-dusk nature park and she wonders how late practices will go.

34. Michael These, Costa Mesa

The area with the trains is an integral part of Fairview Park for a lot of people. There were hawks soaring above that area this weekend.

35. Bruce Skiby, Costa Mesa

Mr. Skiby thinks that at some point Fairview Park will get developed. He would like something to be done now to coexist so residents don't have to worry about it later.

36. Mike Doug, Costa Mesa

Mr. Doug would like to see the space go to people who would use it to incorporate the largest amount of people in the community. He has been extremely involved in youth sports. It brings lifelong friendships and ancillary benefits.

37. Chris Codhill, Costa Mesa

Mr. Codhill is for youth sports but against development of Fairview Park. It is great to have trains which bring out 5,000 people in one weekend and is free; he doesn't think there will be that many for a soccer game. It would be easier and cheaper to light the current fields or on the golf course.

4b. Correspondence received from the public

Chairman Mehren stated correspondence is read and the Committee appreciates the communication received.

5. **Approval of Minutes**

MOTION made by Member Popp to approve the minutes of the September 4, 2013 Fairview Park Citizens Advisory Committee meeting as written; second by Member Ramos; carried eight to zero.

6. **Old Business**

No items

7a. **Review Master Plan – Southeast Quadrant**

Staff presentation

This item was presented by Mr. Mejia. The Southeast Quadrant covers 45 acres and is bordered by the golf course to the east, Placentia Ave. to the west, Fairview Channel to the north, and Placentia Ave. to the south. It contains approximately 1700 ft. of user defined trails and 5 entryways. OCME's footprint is about 25 acres.

The elevation where the trails are is about 77 ft. above sea level; the area at Placentia Ave. where the channel crosses the street is about 20 ft. above sea level. The upper mesa is relatively flat, the soil is predominately sandy silt and the water drains towards Fairview Channel. It has not experienced the type of erosion as the bluffs on the Westside, perhaps due to the grasses and plants growing there providing protection for the slope, although they are non-native. LSA Associates confirmed 3 vernal pools along the western boundary and found the presence of burrowing owls, as part of their migratory pattern.

Archeological Presentation: Bonterra Consulting

Patrick O. Maxon, RPA, spoke about the archeological sites at Fairview Park – numbers 58 and 506. They were given separate numbers but can be thought of as one large site. Archeological sites are over the entire area except the lower areas to the north.

CA-ORA-58 is the site that has had most of work done in the past; Koerper (1993) did a boundary study of the site. It was occupied by at least 1500 BC – 500 AD and until late 19th century. It is 18.5 acres in size, has estuarine conditions, and was a residential base. It was listed as a historic place in 1972 by the NRHP. Up to 200 burials were excavated and through SERA/WPA excavations there were about 100 more burials. The site is very important, has immense research potential, and is part of a larger site complex. Most of other sites have been mostly destroyed. Site capping is recommended.

Joyce Stanfield Perry, an Acjachemen member, presented a report on the Payomkawichum, Acjachemen, and Juaneno. The term Juaneno or San Juaneno

is a political identity. There are 5,000 to 6,000 Acjachemen people. Juaneno and Gabrielino share the territory known as Costa Mesa. Ms. Perry recognized Sam Dunlap, a representative in the audience.

Ms. Perry listed the related laws include and indicated this project has not followed these laws. The sites at Fairview Park have already met the 4 significance criteria and a reasonable effort must be made to avoid the sites. If not, then mitigation and some excavation would be necessary. Preservation is preferred and can be accomplished by avoidance, incorporating it into open space, conservation easements, and capping, which has been done on the site but not correctly. Consultation is required with Native American groups Mr. Maxon added one issue is the site may be larger and further south now than previously thought in the 1993 studies.

Mr. Mejia thanked Mr. Maxon and Ms. Perry.

Current Master Plan recommendations for this area include: a parking facility to the west and to the north; a multipurpose trail parallel to Placentia Ave.; a landscaped median; 2 signalized entryways; a place for a museum or multipurpose building; for the trains. The Master Plan also calls for a play area; a small picnic area; ADA compliant switchback trails; and replacement of non-native plants with native grasses, shrubs and bushes. Already completed projects include the pedestrian bridge and multipurpose trail. The parking lot and multipurpose building are elements that have yet to be addressed. The City has not received funding to implement them. There are no current projects.

Constraints include Placentia Ave., Fairview Channel, and narrow gauge railroad. Archeological and biological resources need to be addressed and recognized. Opportunities include trail linkage to different areas of the park, viewing opportunities, narrow gauge railroad, parking, children's play area, museum, and CA-ORA-506.

Chairman Mehren requested questions from committee members.

In response to Member Vrska's questions regarding Ms. Perry's opinion on development in the area and if she was compensated for her presentation, Ms. Perry stated her preference is to keep it as natural as possible but in the past they have compromised to cap sites. Ms. Perry added she was paid for her presentation but usually does it as a volunteer.

Member Popp inquired if planting and watering native grasses until they become viable would interfere with the archeological site. Mr. Maxon reported plant grass is compatible as long as a cap of a few feet is put on prior to planting. Ms. Perry added they would typically prefer an 8- to 10- ft. cap. Mr. Dunlap stated a letter to the native people would need to be sent first. An assessment would need to be done to bring the information to the native people so a decision can be made.

Member Amburgey inquired if it is better to put what is there in a cultural center or cap it. Ms. Perry replied to leave it in its place; Mr. Maxon concurred.

In response to Vice Chairman Smith's query, Mr. Maxon stated that some of the items that have been dug up are in Bowers Museum, but as far as they know they are not all in one location. A member of the public added some recovered artifacts were given to the local high school and were being dumped in the trash during a remodeling a few years ago.

In response to a question from the public, Mr. Maxon stated there is some evidence of artifacts further south than current site boundaries so the site could be larger than previously thought. Mr. Munoz added the City has retained an archeologist to look at the validity of those claims and make determinations; it will take 6-8 weeks.

Member Vrska asked if the native peoples also have to be in agreement of the selection of the archeologist. Mr. Munoz stated he doesn't believe so. In response to Chairman Mehren's question, Mr. Mejia stated the company retained is SRS Consulting. Mr. Dunlap protested to this.

Attorney Yolanda Summerhill requested that public comment be limited as that item has passed. Member Vrska shared she was very uncomfortable not having a member of the public speak, especially since he is Native American. Chairman Mehren requested Mr. Dunlap make a public comment at the next meeting or write a letter.

Addressing Chairman Mehren's inquiry, Mr. Munoz stated the City requested proposals from 4 firms, City staff reviewed responses, rated them, and selected the most qualified candidate.

In response to Chairman Mehren's questions, Member Eckles stated during 2012 Fall there were 5,620 participants. TeWinkle School is being used for soccer practices. Monte Vista School would be considered a utility field example since it does not fit full-size soccer field. A utility field can be used for soccer, football, lacrosse- a sport other than baseball. Full fields are not needed for practice facilities, except for the safety issue. AYSO 97 is having multiple teams practice. Too many kids on one field at a given time tears it up and it looks terrible.

In response to questions posed by Member Ramos, Member Eckles stated Monte Vista is not currently all soccer. The high school uses it for lacrosse and for soccer until 5:00 p.m. The earliest AYSO 97 get on there is 5:00 p.m. It is dark, there are no lights. Mayor Pro Tem Mensinger added the City owns 16 portable lights. Chairman Mehren inquired if they have investigated the possibility of using other schools for night lighting to which Member Eckles replied Monte Vista being one of them, it is just not working.

8. Committee Member Reports

Member Vrska requested adding a presentation to the agenda for the November 6 meeting. She has been visiting each field individually and getting usage data. Mr. Munoz requested Member Vrska contact him should she require additional information from City staff.

9. Director's Report

Mr. Munoz introduced Attorney, Yolanda Summerhill who spoke regarding the Brown Act memo provided to committee members. She advised committee members to submit to the City Clerk or committee secretary any e-mail regarding Fairview Park that they receive and that they be cognizant of communications they have with the public. Committee members may refer to the City's handbook for Commission/Committee Board Members or contact her with additional questions.

Ms. Munoz provided an update on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services letter. Response time will be extended because of the government shutdown; we have not heard until how long it will be.

The City's website contains information relative to Fairview Park. If anything is missed please contact City staff so that it can be placed on the site.

10. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 p.m. to the next regular scheduled meeting on Wednesday, November 6, 2013, at 6:00 p.m., at the Neighborhood Community Center, Victoria Room.

Submitted by:

ERNESTO MUNOZ
Public Services Director