



AIA San Diego
URBAN DESIGN COMMITTEE

Minutes from Meeting @ SANDAG Conference Room - 5 March 2010

1. In Attendance: Phil Bona (PB), Robert Daniel (RD), Chris Dell'Acqua (CD) Jim Frost (JF), David McCullough (DM), Paul Schroeder (PS) Jerry Shonkwiler (JES), Jay Shumaker (JS), Mike Stepner (MS), Stefan Vance (SF), John Ziebarth (JZ)

Guests: Richard Nowicki (AIASD Advocacy Commissioner), Tom Ford (Planner); Chad Johnson; Vicki Estrada (Estrada Land Planning), Stephan Vance (SanDAG).

Absent: Jack Carpenter (JC), John Hinkel (JH),

(PB) called the meeting to order at 7:45 AM

2. Minutes: March 2010 meeting minutes were approved as written.

3. Main Topic: Balboa Park and Plaza de Panama

- a. Vicki Estrada explained that the Plaza de Panama has been intended as a central pedestrian plaza to Balboa Park since its inception.
 - 1) The only currently approved master plan with some amendments for Balboa Park and the Plaza de Panama is the 1989 Estrada plan.
 - 2) Florida Canyon has its own master plan
 - 3) There has been a proposal for a Parking structure in the Alcazar Parking lot
 - 4) There has been an ongoing debate about closing the Plaza to cars
 - 5) Stormwater management continues to be an issue due to the significant amount of paving.
 - 6) The 1992 City Approved Precise plan shows a fountain in center of plaza; it also shows traffic as one way into the park from the bridge in the morning and one way out of the park over the bridge in the afternoon.
 - 7) The proposed master plan improvements is \$450 million for central portion of the park.
 - 8) The proposed master plan improvements is \$250 million for the East Mesa portion of the park.
 - 9) The plan shows 4800 Parking spaces underground in the park with options in several locations.
 - 10) The Cohen's control the valet parking and the decisions about the Restaurant.
 - 11) There have been proposals by the City to provide a public shuttle bus or use historic street cars with rubber tires; it is also possible to have a BRT (bus rapid transit) connection to the park.
 - 12) Another scheme calls for a possible loop road around the park and linking to Highway 163.
 - 13) Due to lack of funds and political will, the City has never followed the Approved Implementation Plan.
 - 14) The Balboa Park Alliance is supportive of the approved implementation plan.



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- 15) The Balboa Park Central Committee is supportive of the approved implementation plan.
- b. Mike Stepner explained some of the concerns and politics that exist around the Plaza de Panama and Balboa Park.
- 1) Balboa Park Committee Agenda February 4, 2010 discussed the future of the park.
 - 2) Recently Mayor Sanders requested that the City look into closing the Plaza to cars and to parking in the spirit of the 2015 100th anniversary of park.
 - 3) Fred Kent has been informally contacted to look into the park's layout and specifically the Plaza de Panama.
 - 4) Three years ago, Civitas / Jones & Jones proposed a plan update but it was not approved by the City.
 - 5) Roger Showley wrote an article last year promoting a celebration of the park in remembrance of the Panama Canal expedition used to introduce San Diego to the world; He suggested that this is a chance to rethink the park and its future. He values an approach where the city would celebrate its history for this Centennial in a major way since there was no celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Nolan Plan (like Chicago did for Millennium Park).
 - 6) He discussed why he believes that the park is important as a community asset and the political message is vital to the future of the region and the quality of the Built Environment.
 - 7) He indicated that what is most crucial is to get all the Park Advocacy and business groups on the same page! One way to do this is to introduce a major public process to elicit consensus around the Plaza.
 - 8) It is anticipated that \$5-6 million should be allotted as a budget
- c. Mike Stepner and Phil Bona indicated that the NewSchool of Architecture and Design AR403 Urban Design Studio will be hosting a Plaza de Panama Charrette in June.
- 1) The Charrette will show How the park might expand back into the community and recreate linkages to other valuable community assets.
 - 2) From a broader prospective, an effort should be made to restore Florida Canyon.
 - 3) CCDC has a park program view that should be revisited to gain a different perspective.
 - 4) Mike recalled that the UDC had Eric Epstein re-plan the east area of park some years back and in August 2009 the University of Oklahoma and NSAD studied some opportunities to re Masterplan the park.
 - 5) David McCullough suggested Parking sponsor events that would draw attention to the various park issues.
 - 6) Don't reinvent the wheel but clean up the park and prepare it for the 21st Century. Planning Forums should stress the importance of upgrading the quality of the Built Park Environment.



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- 7) John Ziebarth suggested that the Charrette be based on the implementation plan and one outcome produces a phased improvement plan and this is important to do to address constituent concerns and answer technical questions about the various approaches.
- 8) Restaurant concession is a major issue to be contended with as well as Maintenance and infrastructure upgrades.
- 9) Roger Showley should be strategically involved.
- 10) A Balboa Park Charrette Subcommittee should include:
 - a) Dave McCullough
 - b) Mike Stepner
 - c) Phil Bona
 - d) Vicki Estrada
 - e) Roger Showley
 - f) Tracy Delaney (Public Health)
 - g) Todd Gloria (Courtney Thomson or Steve Hill)

4. Housekeeping/Old Business

- a. Urban Design Awards program was mentioned by (PB)
- b. Candidate Forum: was discussed and it was agreed that such a forum would be more appropriate in the fall for the November election.
- c. Big Tent Event Planning would meet with the San Diego Architectural Foundation.

5. New Business:

- a. none

6. Announcements:

- a. There would be an open mike forum for Uptown, Golden Hill and North Park on the 25th of April.
- b. There would be a Council of Design Professionals meeting on 20 April.
- c. There would be an Urban Design planning meeting on 21 April.
- d. Next Urban Design Committee meeting will be on 7 May 2010.

Notes respectfully submitted by Phil Bona, AIA.