

PROS COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT

December 20, 2010

Ranger House, Friendship Auditorium Parking Lot, Griffith Park

Presiding: Laura Howe, Interim Co-Chair of the PROS Committee

1. Update on PROS Committee Chair selection

Jessica Kornberg, GGPNC Secretary and Outreach Committee Member spoke to the PROS Committee about the importance finding a permanent PROS Chair. Between July 20 and December 20, the GGPNC Outreach Committee was tasked with the sole responsibility of finding PROS' new Chair, but was unable to locate the right candidate. Jessica announced that the GGPNC Board has decided that finding a permanent Chair should now be assigned to and become the responsibility of the PROS Committee and that, if at all possible, it is preferable that a new Chair come from within Committee ranks. The requirements for chairmanship and the operating requirements for committees were outlined. Jesscia ended by saying that she hoped to hear a strategy from the committee on how it intended to find a Chair.

2. Status report on Prop A Bond Projects in Griffith Park

Joe Young, PROS Committee Member, produced a spread sheet showing allocations from Prop A funds for projects in L.A. City parks that were "rolled over" by vote of Councilmembers at the last meeting of the Arts, Parks, Health & Aging Council Committee Meeting. Among the items on the spread sheet, is some \$200,000 earmarked since 2000 for trail signing in Griffith Park. The Committee felt that if and when the appropriation is spent, in keeping with Griffith Park's recent designation as a City of Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument, the design and structural elements of the signs should be in keeping with the Park's historic fabric. Joe Young made a motion in this regard which was seconded by Sarah Napier.

(Since the GGPNC Board Meeting was taking place the next evening and the Prop A motion is not time-sensitive, the Committee agreed that it would not be brought to the Board until February so as to give precedence to the preparation of a resolution for the time-sensitive motion relating to the Griffith Park Draft Master Plan Working Group process. See #3).

3. Status report on Griffith Park Draft Master Plan Meeting of December 2.

Bernadette Soter, member of the Griffith Park Draft Master Plan Working Group reported on the Working Group Meeting of December 2 at 4 p.m. at the Los Feliz Branch Library.

It was the first such meeting of the Working Group panel since February 2009. The February 2009 meeting was to have been a progress report on the Department's internal review--fact-checking and proof reading--of the new Draft for a Master Plan turned into them by the Working Group in October 2008, a necessary step before releasing the Draft for public review and comment. At the February 2009 meeting, the Department did not produce a fact-checked, proofed document but instead broached the idea that the Master Plan be re-titled a "Vision Plan" in order to save what would be "hundreds of thousands of dollars in CEQA review costs" required for a finalized Master Plan. The Working Group was surprised by both the re-titling suggestion and the cost estimate, having previously been told by the Department that the Master Plan would require only a CEQA checklist and that the expenditure for the checklist plus the cost for a consultant to reformat the document for public

release would be roughly \$26,000. The Working Group did not consent to the re-titling suggestion and questioned the elevated cost estimate. The meeting adjourned without agreement on these issues, but ended on a promise to reconvene as soon as the Department had completed its still-in-process review.

The Working Group did not hear from the Department again until July 15, 2009 when this e-mail message was sent to panel members:

Attached is the red-lined version of the Vision Document. Please review and send your comments to (Employee Name at _____) by August 1, 2009. Note that the Table of Contents is not in sync with the document. Corrections will be made with final version.

The attachment was a heavily edited version of the Working Group's draft document of October 2008. Its title, "A New Master Plan for Griffith Park" had been crossed out to read, a "Vision Plan for Griffith Park." The changes on the pages that followed were numerous and in many instances diluted or reversed the meaning of the recommendations that had been made. After internal discussion and review, nine members of the eleven member Working Group panel sent a response to the Department on July 27, 2009, a portion of which is excerpted below:

We are surprised by the quantity and, at times, counter-conceptual nature of the changes to the text that was developed during our public deliberations. Their number and kind prevent us from reviewing and commenting on them within the two week window proposed by (Employee Name). More time is needed, and the failure of any Working Group members to respond within this allotted period is not to be taken as acceptance of or approval of the red-lined draft.

We are requesting that discussion of the proposed changes takes place within the established Griffith Park Draft Master Plan Working Group open meeting process. Instead of submitting our comments as individuals, we would like scheduled an agendaized Working Group at which panel members and the public can be briefed on the red-line comments in person by their author. This will afford us the opportunity to ask questions, receive clarifications, discuss the proposals as a group and reach a consensus. It will also allow the organizations we represent and the general public to maintain their seats at the table which is vitally important, given the continuing controversy surrounding the secretive development of the Melendrez Draft which we were created to address. The Working Group's decisions have been transparent and we would like them to continue in the same manner. Proceeding otherwise will send a message that will reflect unfavorably on all of us. Furthermore, unless there is some objection, we recommend that the red-line draft be circulated to members of the public who are following this process and we are willing to help in that regard.

We propose that this meeting be scheduled one evening in September (2009) on a date agreeable to all, which will give us the additional time we need to read and absorb the red-line draft in preparation. We recognize that it is important for the Department to hold down overtime, and would abide by the earlier start time that may be necessary to accommodate this need. We look forward to hearing from you with suggested dates on when we might meet.

Seventeen months after this request, the Working Group were contacted to schedule a follow-up meeting which took place ultimately on November 2, 2010. Members were told that the meeting was to be "closed door," involving only the Working Group, the Department, and CD4 representatives and would take place in a City office downtown, (although two days before the meeting it was learned that one organization was inviting its membership to attend). The CD4 aide tasked with setting up the meeting did not inform three members of the panel of its date and time and as a result one panel member could not attend while another was forced arrive late. A new red-line document had been sent to panel members the week before the meeting and the Department employees conducting the meeting phrased its acceptance as an ultimatum, asserting that there was no more money to continue the process and that in any case, hundreds of thousands of dollars would be required for CEQA review. Panel members expressed the generally held opinion that changing the document's name to a "Vision Plan" diluted its authority and that a Master Plan not accompanied by project design plans was required to undergo CEQA review, and reiterated its request that the Department explain its redline-changes to the panel and the public and recommendations in an open meeting format.

The Committee agreed to ask the GGPNC Board to approve a resolution supporting the Working Group process, the substance of which follows:

On November 3, 2010, the Recreation & Parks Department and Council District 4 called a meeting of the Griffith Park Draft Master Plan Working Group to discuss the Draft Master Plan that was submitted by the Working Group to the City in October 2008. The meeting was held from 4:10 to 5:25 p.m. at the Los Feliz Branch Library.

Due to the brief duration of the meeting, the Department was unable to present and answer questions on its numerous and, in some cases, controversial redline changes to the October 2008 Draft, including the proposed downgrade of the document from a "Master Plan" to a "Vision Plan." Given the shortness of the meeting and its lack of public notification, it was also impossible for the Department to take public comment.

The Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council supports the request that has been made the Working Group that the Department hold a finite series of publicly-noticed meeting of at least two hours in duration at which a meaningful presentation and discussion of the redline changes in the Griffith Park Draft Master Plan and the issues they represent can be reviewed and discussed by the Working Group and commented on by the public. It is proposed that these meetings begin in February 2011 to allow both the Working Group and the public the month of January to review the redlined document that will be discussed.

4. Status report on Haunted Hayride event in Griffith Park

Joe Young updated the Committee on the response to Public Records Act Request made to the Department of Recreation and Parks, regarding documents pertaining to the Haunted Hayride held in Griffith Park in October 2010 and expressed disappointment that a commercial event of this magnitude, sophistication and duration yielded only 19 pages of City documents, several of which pages contained no substantive information at all. The Committee will continue to seek information on this unprecedented commercialization of the Griffith Park.

5. Update on Councilman LaBonge's Griffith Park Issues meeting of December 1, 2010 at the Greek Theatre in Griffith Park.

Some dozen members of the PROS Committee who attended this meeting compared notes on its various discussions, but no substantive motions or actions were deemed necessary at this time.