



**WATERFRONT COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
DRAFT MINUTES**

**Community Center
1249 Marin Avenue
Monday, July 14, 2008 – 7:30 P.M.**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Parker at 7:35 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Brian Parker Steve Granholm Francesco Papalia
 Bill Dann Clay Larson Eddy So
 Kathy Diehl
Members Absent: None
Staff Present: Ann Chaney
Others Present: Fern Tiger Associates

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3-1. Approve minutes from June 9 meeting (attached)

Minutes approved as amended. Motion by Larson, seconded by Papalia, all in favor, So abstained.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mackenzie Summer, prefers keeping the Albany Bulb as-is, and not improving the appearance or enhancing recreational accessibility.

5. DISCUSSIONS AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING ITEMS, WHICH COULD INCLUDE REPORTS AND/OR PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS IF ANY:

5-1. Presentation by Fern Tiger Associates – update regarding status of waterfront visioning process

Fern Tiger provided an update. 50 interviews have been completed and Fern is getting approval from those interviewed to share a list of the interviewees. Some of those interviewed include the City Council, Planning Staff, local environmental leaders, and those who have contacted Fern Tiger directly. Fern Tiger has been reviewing historical documents, studies and other materials relating to the waterfront. Fern Tiger also intends to have a presence at the Solano Stroll.

Interviews suggest there is an interest in complete, neutral and factual information with third party review as necessary, and an interest in educating the community to enable a thoughtful planning process. Specific categories identified as important for the community to understand include:

- Site/surroundings: geography, current uses and issues, environmental constraints, status of ongoing projects, and land ownership information.
- Accessibility to the site: weather patterns, buildable site areas, potential hazardous material and Brownfield areas.
- Land use/legal issues: Measure C, CEQA, land use law, and role of different public agencies overseeing land use.
- Funding/cost: current and projected revenues of GGF, how revenues impact schools, library, city; analysis of spin-off aspect of GGF visitors and whether they visit other city retail.
- Economic issues: explanation of City budget, analysis of tax income, impacts on existing commercial areas and school system, and transfer tax review. Cost for land acquisition, demolition and refurbishing of the land. Cost for public/open space and available funding.
- Opportunities at the site: quality of life, civic good of public land, definition of open space – definitions and opinions have been varied.
- Potential impacts to the waterfront: list of potential impacts that would need to be studied at the time that a physical project may be proposed. A list will be generated during this planning process, including a study on the potential liability that the City could incur.

Fern Tiger listed a number of challenges including how to engage a busy community, empower the majority to voice their opinions, and ensure that their input is heard. The goal is to establish a unifying process that creates community trust in the information developed, with results of the process being transparent and quantifiable. Timing is also a challenge, particularly with distractions such as upcoming elections. Fern Tiger intends to come back to the Committee in September with a plan for how to launch the planning process.

Papalia expressed his appreciation for the thorough update. Avoiding politicization of the process is an important issue to research. He agrees that there could potentially be a majority and minority report. Larson asked about the third party review, and prefers the information be presented without this review. All review should be conducted publicly.

Parker supports the third party review process, and thinks there is potentially a role for this review process.

Diehl asked whether Fern Tiger was planning on obtaining any subconsultants, such as land economics. Fern Tiger replied they are currently researching their staff capacity.

Parker asked whether the landowner has been engaged as of yet.

Fern Tiger replied that they are aiming to meet with the landowner including the corporate side of GGF.

Public Comment

Allan Maris: Complimented Fern Tiger for the thorough update. Concerned with transparency and prefers all reviews be conducted publicly. Understands this is a regional issue, but wants a focus to be placed on Albany community preferences.

Mackenzie Summer: Believes this is a regional issue, encourages involving surrounding areas in the discussion.

Brian Parsley: Concerned with politicizing the issue during the upcoming election. Does not see how this issue will not be involved with the election. Asked if further interviews will be held with newly elected officials or appointees.

Amy Smolens: Member of Strollers and Rollers. Asked about bicycle access along the waterfront, particularly the bay trail gap along the GGF property. Regional bike users have concern over this accessibility.

Sherry Reineman: Member of Strollers and Rollers. Asked about eminent domain in relation to the bay trail area.

Parker responded to the questions concerning the bay trail. The Committee, CAS and CESP were active in reviewing the artificial surface track that was recently installed at GGF. The process included a commitment by GGF to allow a temporary right of way for the bay trail. There is now some uncertainty with whether GGF is still allowing the right of way. Activity to negotiate this further is ongoing. Currently, there is not any discussion about seeking eminent domain.

Fern Tiger responded to public comments:

Regional input will be invited, however the ultimate result would be up to Albany residents given that voters would approve any change in the area under Measure C.

All information will be made publicly, electronically and hard copy.

Additional interviews would be held with any newly elected Council Members.

5-2. Request for use of the Albany Cove for Peace Day Event on Sunday, September 21 (Allan Maris)

Chaney noted that requests to hold events at the waterfront and bulb are an emerging item. Chaney suggested the Committee consider developing guidelines to evaluate projects and events proposed for the area. Chaney provided the City Park and Recreation facility use application as reference to the Committee.

Larson asked for detail regarding how the We Players theatrical event was approved.

Chaney stated that this was an event held over several weeks, and that it was submitted to Planning and Zoning Commission for a use permit, as well as the Waterfront Committee for review.

Allan Maris stated that the Social and Economic Justice Commission would like to hold the second annual peace day event and provided an event description including poetry readings, non-amplified music and speakers located at the cove.

Papalia encouraged use of tables for the event.

Granholtm noted that the cove was designed for gatherings, and that this event is a compatible use.

Granholm motioned the Committee support the event. Seconded by Diehl.

So asked about proper cleanup following the event.

Allan Maris confirmed they would be cleaning up prior to and following the event.

So suggested the Park and Recreation facility use application be used.

Papalia recommended the event be advertised at the waterfront to encourage public participation.

Motion unanimously approved.

5-3. Update regarding Bond Measure AA (Norman LaForce)

Parker stated Norman LaForce was unavailable to attend the meeting. Parker noted Larson had suggested an East Bay Regional Park District staff person that may be available to attend a meeting in the future.

5-4. Review Albany's Portion of Eastshore State Park planning Document – determine how to implement recreational and facility enhancements at the Plateau/Bulb

Granholm would like to update the 1995 planning document in advance of Eastshore State Park planning for Albany.

Dann asked about ownership of the Bulb.

Granholm confirmed that the State has not taken ownership of the area, and that there are specific issues that need to be addressed including safety issues and funding issues.

Parker supports updating the document, and potentially tying this document in to the waterfront visioning process.

Larson agrees with Granholm. Larson reviewed the documents and noted that the majority of concepts are identified in both planning documents. The Plateau is probably the most clearly developable, and suggests a specific plan be conducted. EBRPD and/or a consultant could be called upon to initiate the process.

Papalia stated interest for pursuing improvements to the area, and would like to begin identifying safety and accessibility issues.

Granholm clarified that Albany owns the 80-foot right-of-way. The other areas would need approval by EBRPD.

Parker suggested forming a subcommittee to update the 1995 document and identify a list of items and recommendations to discuss further at a future Committee meeting.

Papalia and Granholm expressed interest in participating in the subcommittee. Subcommittee unanimously approved.

Public Comment

Allan Maris: Measure AA is an opportunity for Albany to get funding for park improvements.

Brian Parsley: Encourages addressing the bulb, particularly safety issues.

Caryl O'Keefe: Encourages addressing safety issues on the bulb. Recommends the document be updated, ownership be clarified, and determine future use for the bulb.

Mackenzie Summer: asked if the bulb could be made safe, but art maintained and preserved. Believes the bulb is already working as is.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS

Parker asked Chaney about the fence issue at the burrowing owl habitat.

East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) specified field fencing that is mesh. Chaney had described it as wood. Additionally, EBRPD Fire Marshall would not allow wood at this site, and wood would have been much more expensive to install. Chaney will be reporting this information to City Council.

Larson asked Chaney about recent enforcement of overnight camping at the waterfront. Chaney confirmed the Police Department has been working in the area enforcing the ordinance. The area is now more readily patrolled because roadway access has been improved.

Parker suggested the Police Chief attend the September meeting.

Parker noted that Magna stock has dropped, and that there has been some discussion about the company going private.

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

7-1. Next meeting July 28 if deemed necessary, otherwise September 8 (August recess).

Diehl suggested the September agenda include developing use guidelines for the waterfront park area.

The Committee will not be held on July 28.

8. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10 p.m.