

MINUTES
PALOS VERDES NATURE PRESERVE QUARTERLY PUBLIC FORUM
OCTOBER 13, 2020

CALL TO ORDER:

The Palos Verdes Nature Preserve Quarterly Public Forum was called to begin by Katie Lozano, Senior Administrative Analyst at 6:05 P.M. at City Hall, 30940 Hawthorne Boulevard, and via teleconference/virtual meeting using the Zoom platform.

Senior Analyst Lozano welcomed everyone on the Zoom call and shared instructions for participants. She reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

Staff Present: Karina Banales, Cory Linder, Daniel Trautner, Lukasz Buchwald, Matt Waters, Katie Lozano, Norma Saldana, Keith Hunter, Taylor Fox, Juan Hernandez, James O'Neill, Enyssa Momoli, Mary Hirsch, and Karen Okstad, PVPLC Conservation Director Cris Sarabia.

42 members of the public participated.

1. PRESERVE PROJECTS

Senior Analyst Lozano reviewed current and upcoming City Projects, including the Landslide Mitigation Project.

Ranger Fox gave an update on the gates and fencing at Burma Road and Rattlesnake Trailheads, including that they will be constructed by December 2020 and periodic trailhead closures may be necessary. He reported on the Blufftop Fence Replacement Project. He shared that the City is in Phase 3 of the project located at Vicente Bluffs Reserve. The project is experiencing delays due to cement powder shortages but is still expected to be complete by December 2020.

Public Works Project Manager O'Neill reported on the City's fuel modification areas, and the City's current status. Fuel modification was concluded in September for this calendar year.

Ranger Hunter reported on the Cal Water Trail damage (water main break) that took place on October 8th. The City is working with Cal Water representatives and PVPLC on appropriate repair, and Vanderlip Trail will be closed until repairs are complete.

PVPLC Conservation Director, Sarabia spoke to the PVPLC projects including weed control and active habitat restoration projects at Alta Vicente, Abalone Cove, and Agua Amarga Reserves. He provided additional information on PVPLC's most recent habitat restoration at Abalone Cove Reserve.

He shared information on PVPLC fuel load reduction projects, including a recent 40 acres of acacia removal from the Preserve.

He also shared that PVPLC has coordinated installation of the final monument entry signage for the Preserve at Ocean Trails Reserve.

Director Sarabia reported out on Volunteer Trail Crew and Rapid Response projects, and explained how they are operated under LA County Health Department guidelines. Trail Projects have focused on closing spur trails, trail repair, and maintenance. He also shared information on the PVPLC's successful Adopt-a-Plot habitat restoration projects.

Public Comments/Questions:

Miriam Varend of the Del Cerro neighborhood spoke in support of the gates at Burma Rd. and Rattlesnake Trailhead. She opposes the hours and asks that the gates be open no earlier than 7 a.m. to keep the area quieter, because people arrive as early as 4 a.m. and residents hear individuals activating car alarms, slamming car doors and trunks, talking, music, etc. There is also rowdy afterhours use as late as midnight.

Corinne Gerrard reported an increase in rattlesnakes in the Portuguese Bend Reserve. She asked if there is a plan for the rattlesnake control. She reported that a 2-year old boy and a dog have been bitten near the end of Narcissa Dr. and the dirt trail area.

Senior Analyst Lozano responded that staff will follow up with more information.

PVPLC Conservation Director Sarabia stated that the restoration PVPLC does in the Preserve should help with rattlesnake control as rattlesnakes are attracted to the habitat restoration area where they find shelter and their food supply.

Kathy Edgerton spoke in support of the gates. She said the Del Cerro residents have waited a long time (2 years) for the gates. She appreciates the City's work on this. She asks that the City not open the gates until 7 a.m. and that they be closed at sunset. She also asked that the parking hours on Crenshaw Blvd. mirror the proposed gate hours of operation (parking allowed from 7 a.m. to one hour after sunset). She has also noticed the rattlesnake population increase.

Senior Analyst Lozano stated that as part of the October 20th staff report, staff will be recommending a 7:00 a.m. opening of the gates.

Don Douthwright agrees with Ms. Varend and Ms. Egerton's comments. He reported a lot of snake issues as well. He stated that hikers continue to use illegal spur trails between Rattlesnake Trail and the stairs on Island View HOA's property, and the public continues to use the stairs illegally. He requested assistance blocking spur trails in that area.

2. UPCOMING CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEMS

Senior Analyst Lozano reported on the upcoming City Council Agenda Topics. She shared information on:

- October 20th: Del Cerro Parking Mitigation Status Report
- October 20th: Consider Adopting NCCP/HCP Coastal Sage Scrub Urgency Ordinance
- November 4th: PVPLC Comprehensive Report
- December 1st: Forrester Security Options.

She went into much detail on the Del Cerro Parking Mitigation Status Report. She shared that Crenshaw Blvd. south of Crest Rd. has seen a substantial increase in use over the past 10 years, and even more so since LA County lifted its trail closure orders in May. She indicated that this access area was not planned or designed to handle the over 240,000 visitors it sees annually. The heavy use and ineffective access/staging area is resulting in poor quality of life for Preserve neighbors in the area who are experiencing unsafe traffic conditions, difficulty accessing their homes, early morning and evening activity, noise, and more. She shared detailed information on the six directives the City Council gave staff on August 18th in order to strike a balance between public access and protecting Preserve neighbor quality of life. She indicated that Staff will be giving status reports and seeking direction on these directives on October 20th. She shared information on participating in the October 20th City Council Meeting.

Public Comments/Questions

Del Cerro HOA President Kathy Edgerton indicated that she feels before the City opens up more parking for the Portuguese Bend Reserve, the City should develop a holistic parking strategy that includes opening up additional trailheads in other areas of the City, for example a parking area off of Palos Verdes Drive South. She spoke in favor of a parking permit/fee solution to resolve traffic issues on Crenshaw Blvd. She spoke to unsafe traffic conditions on Crenshaw, including a recent accident in which an individual was hospitalized. She would like the parking restrictions on Crenshaw Blvd. continued until an effective parking mitigation plan is implemented on Crenshaw Blvd.

Pamela Nathan lives in Manhattan Beach near the water with many members of the public passing through her neighborhood to access the beach. She shared that parking is difficult in her neighborhood as well. She hikes Portuguese Bend Reserve regularly with a group of seniors, and she feels the Preserve must be shared, and that parking north of Crest Rd. is not safe. She stated that the Preserve should be open to the public as is the beach in Manhattan Beach.

Rancho Crest HOA President Louis Smolensky commented on the parking at Rancho Del Mar School. He requests that the Polliwog Bog Trail be closed because of its proximity of neighbors' backyards due to concerns with privacy, noise, fire danger, liability, decreased homeowner value, and crime. He also recommended that signage be posted letting the public know that parking north of Crest Rd. is free to encourage the public to park there for free.

Recreation and Parks Director Cory Linder thanked Mr. Smolensky for their recent meeting, and indicated that if the City were to get permission and guidance to use

Rancho Del Mar School as additional parking, staff would recommend focusing circulation along the sidewalk, and not Pollywog Bog Trail.

Douglas Butler, a resident on Valley View Rd. stated that if the parking will be offsite at Rancho Del Mar school, please keep parking further from homes and implement the same parking hours proposed for Crenshaw Blvd. He also requested that Pollywog Bog Trail not be used due to its proximity to homes.

Island View HOA President Don Douthwright feels a primary solution is opening up Gateway Park as an alternate parking location and he stated the perceived benefits. He indicated that reducing parking on Crenshaw Blvd. does not fully solve the traffic issue. He does not support a reservation system, and prefers eliminating parking on Crenshaw Blvd. south of Crest Rd. and indicated that alternate parking is available north of Crest Rd. He also spoke of the negative impacts of the public illegally access the stairs on Island View property, and he is looking forward to a new fence on Island View HOA's property and its ability to deter the illegal activity/trespassing. He requested the City's help with closing spur trails and additional signage.

GP Suddeth lives near Polliwog Park in Manhattan Beach. He empathized with neighbors negatively impacted by visitors behaving poorly. He indicated that Manhattan Beach does not attempt to mitigate crowds at Pollywog Park by using red curbing. He indicates that there must be some give and take. He described his experiences at Wilderness Park and that red curbing in the Del Cerro neighborhood could make others feel unwelcome. He requested solutions that are considerate of people who live outside the area.

Linda Varner stated that she has been a PVPLC Trail Watch volunteer for many years and seen a lot of Preserve activity. She feels the Preserve should be open to all and is a natural resource to be shared. She indicated that Portuguese Bend Reserve is most popularity because of its miles of connected trails, and that the focus should be on driving visitors to Portuguese Bend reserve and making it more accessible for everyone. She disagrees strongly with the red curbing and asked for it to be removed.

Miriam Varend indicated that her neighborhood supports Preserve visitation, as it's a wonderful place. Many neighbors contributed financially to the creation of the Preserve. She feels Portuguese Bend is large enough to support large numbers of visitors, but that the parking and access area is not. She mentioned traffic safety issues. She felt Manhattan Beach is not a fair comparison to the Portuguese Bend Reserve due to the different parking and access situations.

Suzanne Sobel lives in the Island View neighborhood. Her quality of life is negatively impacted by the high visitation to the Portuguese Bend Reserve access on Crenshaw Blvd., including traffic safety issues. She feels the issue is particular to Crenshaw Blvd. south of Crest Rd. She also asked the City to remove the flashing temporary parking sign, wish she feels is an eyesore.

Gregory MacDonald lives in the Del Cerro area. He supports opening Gateway Park to provide additional parking for the Portuguese Bend Reserve and lessen impacts to the Del Cerro neighborhood. He mentions people standing in the street on Crenshaw Blvd., south of Crest Rd., dangerous u-turns, and dangerous traffic conditions. He shared the benefit of the City providing off-street parking for the Reserve. He thinks that so many people appreciate and experience the amazing asset of the Preserve, but he feels the access point is an issue.

Bob Moore supports the red curb on Crenshaw Blvd. This has helped make the situation better. The focus should be on creating a parking area that can accommodate the 240,000 visitors annually. He supports implementing the Gateway Park concept or other areas for off street parking.

Terry Scott does not live in the Portuguese Bend area. She feels the solution is an alternative parking area such as Gateway. She wishes that City not take away parking, until more can be opened up elsewhere.

3. PRESERVE OPERATIONS

Senior Ranger Saldana provided the 3rd Quarter Preserve Enforcement report, which is available on the City's Preserve webpage, at <http://rpvca.gov/701/Enforcement-Quarterly-Reports>

PVPLC Conservation Director Sarabia reported on Volunteer Trail Watch Reports. He said the group of 53 volunteers are out in the Preserve educating the public and serve as eyes and ears for Preserve managers. He also shared information on PVPLC native plant sales available on PVPLC.org

Public Comments/Questions

None

The meeting concluded at 7:55 p.m.