

Minutes of the Measure DD Community Coalition meeting July 19, 2010

The meeting was held at Lakeside Garden Center: Ebell Room at 7:15 PM

Special thank you to Rick Rickard for bicycling in early and setting up the chairs!

The meeting was chaired by Judy Johnson and Sandy Threlfall served as recorder.

1. Measure DD Coalition Attendance List:

CALM - James Vann

EBBC – Rick Rickard

EBRPD – John Sutter

Friends of the Cleveland Cascade – Barbara Newcombe

Jack London Aquatic Center – Robert Kidd

Garden Center, Inc. Anne Woodell

OEBGCI – Bruce Cobbledick

Oakland Heritage Alliance – Naomi Schiff

Oakland Parks Coalition – Judith Johnson, Barbara Schaaf

Waterfront Action – George Duncan, Bill Threlfall, Sandy Threlfall

Interested Citizens – Marian Beil, Don Beil, Noah Beil, Ronna Benjamin, Mimi Meane,
John Wilson

City of Oakland - DD Manager Joel Peter

2. Additions to the Agenda:

1. Bellevue expansion under the LM Master Plan
2. Redesign of Garden Center as relating to Gates
3. Oak to Ninth interim Bay Trail letter to BCDC
4. Volunteer Maintenance of parks

3. Minutes of the 5/17/2010 meeting

The minutes were approved by consensus with no changes.

Reminder: Agenda Committee's (Judith Johnson (Chair), Naomi Schiff, Barbara Schaaf) final meeting will be the November 15th and a new committee will need to be appointed.

4. Joel Peter's Report on DD Projects

12th Street. By the end of July there will be the final "temporary road configuration" that will serve the corridor for one year. New storm drains have now been installed as part of the 12th Street temporary road near the Kaiser Convention Center.

East Oakland Sports Center. The project has reached the 60% completion level. Council approved a \$1.2M transfer of interest funds on the DD Bonds to the project, whose contingency fund had been underfunded.

Waterfront Trail from Derby to Lancaster. The trail is now open, although the contractor is still doing some finishing work. Taggers are marking the Oakland Museum Women's Board building on a regular basis. The artists who live in the area have offered to do an "Elephant Mural" when money can be found for it.

Cryer Site. Only part of the landscaping is done; the remainder will be finished following certain steps that PG&E must perform. Then the site will be complete!

Brooklyn Basin. Joel Peter continues to work with the Port Of Oakland to develop an interim trail. His contact person at the Port is Pamela Kershaw.

Estuary Specific Plan on Council Agenda this week. Right now the proposed alternative places the waterfront trail along the shoreline in the industrial area by Tidewater.

Lake Merritt lawn areas. The Lakeshore contractor did not check on the watering regularly, so brown patches have developed where damaged sprinklers have not been repaired. The sprinklers are supposed to run from 2 AM to 4 AM so that they would not interfere with people's use of the trail. Evidently that has not been the case, so there is a plan to review scheduling, in addition to replacement of dead and missing plants.

By contrast, the Lakeside contractor has been diligent in checking the condition of the lawn and plants and it is reflected in the healthy appearance of the lawn areas.

Sausal Creek has received a River Parkways grant and the conceptual plan is on the City DD website at <http://www.oaklandnet.com/government/ceda/images/2982.jpg>. A community meeting is being held July 21.

Lake Merritt – Snow Park. D C & E have been selected to work on the design for an improved Snow Park. Ali Schwartz will be the contact person. The trail will continue from 19th St to Grand and will include a reconfiguration of the 20th/Harrison roadway medians to improve access and increase park space. The question was raised about the consideration of alternatives to the ginkgo trees listed in the Lake Merritt Master Plan. This could be a November DD Coalition agenda item.

Cleveland Cascade. The handrail lighting has cleared all City of Oakland requirements and the Notice to Proceed will be issued this week!

Dock across from the Lake Merritt Hotel. The dock will not get railings.

5. James Vann - Consideration of Coalition position statement regarding Lakeshore parking.

Up until recently there has been no parking allowed on Lakeshore on weekend afternoons. This prohibition goes back to 1985 when cruising was a problem. Council members from District 2 (Kernighan) and 3 (Nadel) were receiving a lot of complaints as the people were being ticketed. In March Kernighan and Nadel send out a survey to 390 people. They received 310 responses in support of allowing parking on weekends. On June 1st the Council voted to remove restrictions and post signage allowing 3 hour parking. The signage should be posted by July 28th. There is a similar plan for signage around the Lake.

One of the attendees pointed out that a concern of the Lake Merritt Master Plan was to improve access for pedestrians and bicyclists around the Lake. By allowing parking on weekends, the bicyclists will be forced to use the trail with all the people. How is that an improvement? Bicyclists can continue to use the Class 2 bike lanes on the street, as well as the multi-use trail – weekend afternoon parking will not obstruct bicycles.

6. Bruce Cobbledick – Garden Center configuration improvements proposed

Bruce brought in a design plan for the Garden Center area which will improve and appearance and building access and provide a new garden entrance. In addition, there will be the addition of directional signage that will be repeated throughout the Garden. These improvements are not yet funded. Shaun Lovell was approved by Council for the garden Gates design. She will receive a \$5,000 check to get started. The funds will be taken from the Measure DD Bond allotment of 1.5% for art.

7. Sandy Threlfall - Oak to Ninth interim Bay Trail letter to BCDC

Sandy provided an update about preliminary discussions with BCDC staff regarding the Coalition's request for an earlier interim Bay Trail implementation. It was agreed that a drafting committee would prepare a letter to formalize this request and a copy of the draft would be sent to the attendees present.

8. Marian Beil – Reconfiguration of Bellevue Avenue

Marian presented a large document delineating her proposals for improving safety and traffic flow on Bellevue Avenue. It is incorporated into these minutes as an appendix.

The document generated considerable discussion with a number of people. The issue of diagonal parking was just one – as that form of parking is very hazardous for bicyclists. Joel Peter indicated that the Fire Marshall advised that a single lane with diagonal parking on both sides was against code.

Joel expressed interest in a number of the goals of Marian's proposal. The reconfiguring of Bellevue is listed in Measure DD as a Series C project, probably happening in 2012. In Series B, which we are currently working in, there is \$100,000 set aside for design work. When we are ready to move to this project the ideas of Marian and others will be explored.

One thing that can be done immediately is the repainting of the existing crosswalks. There was encouragement given to call the Public Works office to make the request for safety. The number for the Public Works Call Center is 510.615-5566. If you have difficulty with that line, the PW Agency number is 510.238-3961.

The Chair summarized the group consensus as:

Crosswalks need to be repainted around Lake Merritt and concerned citizens should report the issue.

9. Possible items for the Future meetings:

September 20: Volunteer Maintenance – may request that Susan Montak (Oakland Parks Coalition) send a rep to the meeting.

November 15: Snow Park Design presentation DC&E.

10. Next Coalition Meeting:

Monday, September 20, 2010, 7:10 PM at the Lakeside Garden Center

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM. Thank you all for helping stack the chairs!

Submitted by Sandy Threlfall

**Statement from Marian Beil
Regarding Proposed Work of Measure DD “Bellevue Avenue Reconfiguration”**

First I would like to introduce myself, my name is Marian Beil and I have lived in Oakland next to Lakeside Park since October of 2008. I love the park and the fact that it is such a marvelous resource to so many citizens of the city.

Over a year ago I began to do some volunteer weeding — cleaning up small areas in the park that were in need of some TLC. My efforts have expanded over time so that I am now gardening approximately 2 hours every day in the park.

While gardening I have observed with alarm that at all times of the day traffic moves much too rapidly on Bellevue Avenue through the park — certainly much faster than the posted 15 mph speed limit — creating an ongoing danger to the many pedestrians who are constantly using the park.

Recently I learned that one portion of Measure DD called for the widening of Bellevue Avenue through the park which I found to be quite alarming as it would not only result in the loss of park green space, but would do nothing to remedy the problem of speeding on this road that is meant solely for access to park facilities.

I am here tonight to urge that a major modification be made to the section of Measure DD entitled “Bellevue Avenue Reconfiguration.”

As written, the purpose of that portion of Measure DD is:

"Bellevue Avenue, in Lake Merritt Park, to be widened by eleven feet.
This would allow for diagonal parking on both sides of Bellevue Avenue,
replacing the spaces lost at the Sailboat House parking lot."

As Bellevue Avenue now goes through the park, it is a two-lane, one-way street, not meant to be a through street. It now provides access to the various offerings within the park. And with that in mind I would like to urge that rather than widen the street by 11 feet in order to add additional diagonal parking space, that we reduce the street from two-lanes to one lane of traffic, and convert the second lane into diagonal parking where space permits.

This change in the “Bellevue Avenue Reconfiguration” will accomplish the following:

1. Preserve valuable green space for recreational use.
2. Preserve valuable trees that would have to be removed.
3. Allow for the desired diagonal parking on both sides of the street, thus increasing the number of parking spaces in the park — the goal of “Bellevue Avenue Reconfiguration” project,
4. Make it necessary for drivers to slow down — to the 15 mph speed limit.
5. Eliminate cars passing one another — an unnecessary and dangerous practice on this in-park street.
6. Increase the safety of all.
7. Increase user-friendliness of the street — as was Lakeshore Avenue when it was reduced to one lane in each direction.
8. Eliminate the costly need to relocate various utility services.
9. Eliminate the need to rebuild the street, curbs, and gutters.
10. Save a significant amount of money.

What to do with the unused money?

In addition to this change to the Measure DD “Bellevue Avenue Reconfiguration,” I have other suggestions for that area. Use the money saved by not widening Bellevue Avenue through the park to increase both the safety of pedestrians, and the accessibility to park facilities for those who are handicapped, as well as adults travelling with children in strollers. These suggestions are:

1. Install Speed Limit Signs

The speed limit along Bellevue Avenue in the park is 15 miles per hour. There are not enough speed limit signs in the park and they are grouped at the beginning and end of the street. Signs should be posted regularly along the entire distance of the Bellevue Avenue in the park.

2. Install Solar-powered Speed Monitoring Sign

One permanent solar-powered speed monitoring sign should be installed halfway through the park to remind motorists of the legal speed limit.

3. Install Speed Humps

Three well-marked speed humps (referred to as the “kinder, gentler traffic calming system”) should be installed along Bellevue Avenue in the park to provide a wake-up to drivers who ignore the speed limit signs.

I understand that at some time in the past a similar proposal was made, and then rejected because the humps would possibly be a hindrance to runners who put on occasional races starting at the boathouse. To this argument I say “Are you willing to continue to endanger the hundreds of small children who come to play each day at the park, to accommodate runners in occasional races who traverse all kinds of terrain in their sport, whether it is on the road, sidewalks or paths in the wild?”

For easy to install, brightly marked speed humps available on the Internet, see:

<http://www.speedbumpsandhumps.com/products/Speed-Bumps-Speed-Humps/3-Traffic-Calming-Speed-Hump.cfm>

4. Refresh Current Pedestrian Crosswalks

The crosswalks in the park are in sore need of a new coat of paint — or vinyl or whatever is used these days. And while the work is being done I would urge that all of the crosswalks have zebra striping added to their current appearance in order to make them more noticeable.

The crosswalks on Bellevue Avenue in the park that need to be improved are at:

- The intersection of the service road that leads to the crew garages, in front of the Bowling Club,
- In front of the second gate into the Gardens (across from the entrance to the Boat House,
- Just to the east of the entrance to the Junior Art and Science Center.
- On the east side of intersection of Perkins Street and Bellevue Avenue.

5. Install Sidewalks on Bellevue Avenue

Currently the sidewalk on the lake side of Bellevue Avenue in the park extends sporadically only about a quarter of the way along the park. It now runs from Grand

Avenue to in front of the Garden Center, then from half-way across the Boathouse parking lot to the Nature Center.

I propose that that sidewalk on the lake side of Bellevue Avenue be extended for the entire length of Bellevue Avenue from Grand Avenue at Fairyland, through the park and then until Bellevue Avenue again meets with Grand Avenue. Such a sidewalk will provide a smooth, safe walkway for pedestrians, but will also provide new access to the resources of the park to the handicapped, the elderly, and adults with children in strollers.

On the opposite side of the street, there is only a small portion with a full sidewalk and that should be added as well since individuals will be parking on both sides of the street.

Add curb cuts where needed.

6. Add Another Sidewalk on Perkins Street!

I propose that a sidewalk be constructed in the park along the west side of Perkins Street from Grand Avenue to Bellevue Avenue. For years people have walked along that path. The soil is packed and eroded and often muddy — both in the rainy season and the dry season when the area is watered.

The roots of the redwoods at the corner of Perkins and Bellevue are exposed and receive daily abuse from walkers because of the erosion and wear. So the sidewalk should be built with an elevated wooden “boardwalk” over the redwood roots so that pedestrians no longer walk on them. Again, curb cuts should be constructed where needed.

Additional Changes for the Safety of Park-goers on Bellevue Avenue from Perkins East to Grand Avenue

7. Reduce Bellevue Avenue to One Lane from Perkins East to Grand Ave

There is currently parallel parking on both sides of this stretch of Bellevue Avenue. I suggest a change to diagonal parking on the lake side and leave the parallel parking on the other side.

This should be done for the sake of the safety of those accessing the park, and their automobiles parked along the street in this area. Here again there is absolutely no reason to have a passing lane on this residential street that has a 25 mph speed limit.

8. Add Additional Speed Limit sign

To reduce the speeding on Bellevue Avenue from Perkins Street east to Grand Avenue, add another 25mph speed limit sign.

9. Add Additional Crosswalks

Every day hundreds of people — including many adults with children in tow — walk to Lakeside Park from their homes in the neighborhood and need to cross Bellevue Avenue between Perkins Street and Grand Avenue to the east, yet there is only one existing crosswalk — connecting the east side of Perkins to the park.

Additional crosswalks with zebra striping and accompanying curb cuts need to be installed at the following locations:

- A. Crossing Bellevue Avenue coming from the west side of Perkins Street.
- B. Crossing Perkins Street where it meets Bellevue Avenue.
- C. Crossing Bellevue Avenue coming from the west side of Elita Avenue.
- D. Crossing Bellevue Avenue coming from the east side of Elita Avenue.
- E. Crossing Elita Avenue where it meets Bellevue Avenue.
- F. Crossing Bellevue Avenue coming from the west side of Staten Avenue.
- G. Crossing Bellevue Avenue coming from the east side of Staten Avenue.
- H. Crossing Staten Avenue where it meets Bellevue Avenue.

10. Install Stop Signs at the Intersection of Bellevue Avenue and Staten Avenue

New stop signs are needed at this intersection on both streets for two reasons:

- A. The speed limit increases from 15 mph through the park to 25 mph on the section of Bellevue Avenue from Perkins east to Grand Avenue; but many drivers exceed this speed as they come down the street and go around the curve to Grand Avenue.
- B. Because Staten Avenue has a traffic signal at its intersection with Grand (and Bellevue at Grand Avenue does not have a signal), many drivers barreling down Bellevue choose to leave the park by turning left on Bellevue and whip around the corner without exhibiting any caution for either cars coming down Staten or pedestrians crossing Staten at Bellevue.

Stop signs in both directions at this corner will slow traffic in both of these situations.

In conclusion

I would like to quote the very first item in the Lake Merritt Park Master Plan:

“Provide safe street crossings for all pedestrians (especially kids and seniors) accessing the park.”

Let us make the park as safe and accessible as possible for all the thousands of children and adults who visit it every day of the year, as well as provide more parking spaces for those who must drive to the park.

None of these proposed safety/access modifications are complex jobs, and should be able to be completed quickly.

They will not only increase the available parking in the park, but also will add valuable safety and access features that will be a great benefit to the people of Oakland.