

MOUNT SAN JACINTO WINTER PARK AUTHORITY

Minutes of the study session of the Mount San Jacinto Winter Park Authority held June 21, 2023 at the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, Palm Springs, CA.

Authority Members:

Bary Freet
Sandra Magana-Cuellar - Via Teleconference
Jerry Ogburn
Jeff Ohlfs
Nancy Stuart

Staff:

Nancy Nichols, General Manager
Jim Whitmore, Executive VP
Tara Meinke, VP Finance
Gary Aberg, VP Technology
Marjorie De La Cruz, VP HR & Risk Mgmt.
Greg Purdy, VP Marketing & Public Affairs

Absent:

Brian Conley
Brian Nestande

Guests:

Kelly Elliott, California State Parks

Legal Counsel:

Robert Hargreaves
Craig Hayes

CALL TO ORDER – OHLFS

Meeting called to order at 10:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL – PURDY

STUDY SESSION

Ohlfs requested Item 3.2 the Long Valley Management Plan be moved to Item 3.1 on the agenda if there were no objections. There were no objections.

LONG VALLEY MANAGEMENT PLAN - Nichols

Nichols presented the Long Valley Managements Plan map. She stated had consulted with State Parks Inland Empire District Superintendent, Kelly Elliott, to discuss the various projects listed in the plan.

Elliott stated after consulting with her staff would like to focus on building a new Adventure Center away from Long Valley Meadow (an environmentally-sensitive area) near the corral area and include new public restrooms/storage in same building. She stated the corrals/stables appear to have historical significance and would like them to become an interpretive feature with exhibit panels. This would also allow a snow play in the center (between the corrals and a new adventure center). Also, move the existing amphitheater/campfire center from a sensitive area and allow vegetation to return. She stated the intent was to move most, if not all, activity to north of the trail to the Ranger Station and away from environmentally-sensitive areas.

Elliott stated keeping budget in mind and how challenging any work would be at the Mountain, it was decided it was better to move some items out of the meadow area and re-route the trail providing interpretive signage for anything of historic significance. Rerouting the trail would add a new feature and allow visitors to stop at the Adventure Center first before the Ranger Station.

Discussion followed on historical corrals and moving the Adventure Center versus building a new Adventure Center. Elliott stated could designate the current Adventure Center as historical if deemed so and place an interpretive panel on it and build a new Adventure Center. Ohlfs questioned, if the current Adventure Center was removed, has consideration been given to removing the underground utilities? Elliott stated that was yet to be determined. Ohlfs asked what would be the next step? Elliott stated, technically, it would be a complete proposal approved by the Authority and then given to State Parks Service Center for review would be appropriate.

Nichols stated, if no objections, staff would begin with preliminary planning such as researching consultants. Freet asked if State Parks had any recommendations? Elliott stated the State does have architects who have specialties to make sure aesthetics are appropriate for the area.

Ohlfs stated the consensus of the Authority was for staff to move forward with preliminary planning.

PROPERTY AT BASE OF TRAM WAY – Chino Cone Subcommittee

Whitmore stated had provided a report to the Authority as requested by the sub-committee. Freet stated would not reread the report and Ogburn would provide what were the possibilities if Authority acquired property at Hwy. 111 and Tram Way from the Chino Cienega Foundation. Freet stated because of Ogburn's expertise and design abilities has provided some concepts for use of the property.

Ogburn stated the recommendations were:

- 1) Agree to participate as a stakeholder giving input and feedback to the Chino Cienega Foundation for their specific plan process. They are the property owners of 33-acres at Hwy. 111 and Tram Way. They need to put together a specific plan showing proposed uses of that property for the City of Palm Springs' review, which can take up to 2 years,
- 2) Agree to provide direction for 3 up to 12 acres of their property for possible future Tram use. This needs to be included and space reserved in the specific plan, but is only a designation for the land use and does not require acquiring the property at this time. If the time comes and the Authority wishes to acquire land, negotiations would then take place.

Freet stated the Chino Cienega Foundation would pay for the entire cost of the specific plan and any reviews needed, and that the subcommittee was not proposing the Authority participate financially.

Ogburn gave a presentation showing the Chino Cone area and a design concept should the Tram want a remote parking area. The design concept included paving materials that do not cause

water run-off, potential shade structures that can be used as solar collectors and natural landscaping, as used at The Springs Preserve in Las Vegas. He reviewed the 33-acres the

Foundation owned and their plan to make an eco-tourism park and where the 3-12 acres the Tram might use were situated.

Discussion ensued on building in an environmentally sensitive area, public concerns, concept presented being best solution for an environmentally sensitive area and remote parking would free up space near the Tram station for another use, if needed.

Stuart stated concern that we were presenting a concept plan that may be interpreted as something more than a stakeholder. Ogburn stated the concept was not a commitment and the Chino Cone subcommittee would only attend stakeholder meetings periodically and that was all the involvement at this time.

Discussion followed on buses that could take the grade of Tram Way, property owners in close proximity and property values.

Freet disclosed he holds a position on the Tribal Planning Commission.

Ohlfs stated the consensus of the Authority was the subcommittee along with staff would continue to attend Chino Cienega Foundation stakeholders' meetings and provide to the Foundation the Tram remote parking area concept plan without any commitment.

TRAMWAY UPGRADE PROJECT - Nichols

Nichols stated, based on our manufacturers recommendations, the Tram needs to be upgraded along with some of its components within 8-10 years. She stated this would not compare to the 2000 upgrade, which included widening towers, docks or rock removal in the canyon. This would be for the tramcars, controls and other components. She stated, because of the towers' load capacity, the tramcars weight could not be increased, so not looking for larger capacity tramcars. Meinke reviewed current status of reserved and unreserved funds. Bartsch stated the estimate of \$7,700,000 by Doppelmayr was in today's dollars and was based upon their most recent upgrade and not a specific bid of our project. Nichols stated, factoring in a 3% inflation rate, Meinke had estimated we would need \$13-\$14 million to complete this project in ten years.

Discussion ensued on new tramcar installations elsewhere and any manufacturer's recommendations.

Nichols suggested that a set-aside fund for this upgrade be established and that a committee be appointed in a year or two to guide this project.

Ohlfs stated consensus was to start budgeting and staff to move forward.

OTHER PROJECTS

Ohlfs questioned if there were any other major projects required at the Valley or Mountain Stations? Whitmore stated any upcoming projects were general maintenance items.

Stuart questioned if any new attractions could be added as part of the Tram experience at the Valley Station? Discussion followed about available space and staff would research further.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.


(Attest: Secretary)