



REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
SANTA MONICA PIER CORPORATION

Heal the Bay Aquarium
1600 Ocean Front Walk
Santa Monica, CA 90405

Monday, April 17, 2023

6:30 PM

Call to Order

Chair Nicholas Rolston called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM.

Roll Call

The following persons were recorded in attendance by the Recording Secretary:

Present: Board Members Dan Hall, Jeff Jarow, Carter Rubin, Misti Kerns, Chris Foster, Randi Parent, and Board Chair Nicholas Rolston.

Also present: Santa Monica Pier Corporation Executive Director Jim Harris, City of Santa Monica Pier & Beach Administrator Elana Buegoff, City of Santa Monica Police Officer Doug Woodhams, Heal The Bay Aquarium Director Marslaidh Ryan, Lessees Association rep. Cindy Pfeifer, Lessees Association rep. Nathan Smithson, Landmarks Commission rep. Roger Genser, BIG Outdoor rep. Kiley Kmiec, Harbor Safety Officer Kat Ahlers, and Harbor Safety Officer Henry Reyes.

1. Special Agenda Items

a. Reports of Staff Members

i. SMPC Staff and Programming Update

Executive Director Jim Harris reports there will be a Merry Go-Round rental rate increase of 20% - last done in 2014. They should go up starting July 1st, pending City Council approval.

On March 21st he was part of a productive meeting between SM event venues & City Staff to improve the event permitting process, and he has also been involved in regular meetings among many Santa Monica stakeholders with the Santa Monica Experience Management Plan, where he is on the Committee to Highlight & Leverage Cultural Happenings. Among the many ideas imagined by this committee is the idea of adding a sandcastle building contest to Pier 360 this year. SMTT has recently signed on to sponsor the contest.

Mr. Harris announced that on May 3rd will leave for Chicago for a couple of days to visit the Navy Pier where he will meet with their marketing & brand management staff to work on a way to promote Route 66, meet with staff to discuss governance, tour event facilities, meet with sales staff, learn about annual events, and learn about historical tours

On May 16th and 17th he will travel to Sacramento for the California Travel Association Tourism Advocacy Day to meet with our congressional representatives to promote tourism

The April 20th's Locals' Night will feature a Santa Monica Pier tattoo contest, custom typed poems via Santa Monica Public Library, children's activities, DJ Mozo, Horny Toad, ThetaJinx, Samohi Jazz Combo, Bach to Rock, silent disco, salsa lessons, and artists Javier Perez & Lexy Cotterell in the viewing deck

The May 18th's Locals Night, the last of the season, will feature the Rick Crocker Memorial 5k, New Police Dept. heroes, JAMS musical theater "Grease" musical review, free historical walking tours, and much more.

There is currently a lot of talk in town about a possible concert series returning that would be produced by long time Twilight Concert Series Producers Rum&Humble, Spaceland, Live Nation and Snap. It will not be called Twilight. They have only just begun discussions with the City to determine whether it is logistically possible. The Santa Monica Pier Corp. will not be co-producers; instead it will be handled via a license agreement/rental, much like last summer's Major League Baseball event. Mr. Harris noted that there are upsides to a concert series but it needs to be a positive experience for the businesses and neighbors around the Pier which was hard towards the last few years of Twilight as it had outgrown the Pier.

It's also possible the AVP Championship slated for late September may want to take place next to the Pier.

Filming, Merry Go-Round rentals, and events are heating up, including:

- April 28 & 29 – PanCan PurpleStride: pancreatic cancer walk



- April 29 –SM Chamber’s “Women’s Health & Wellness Gala” in the Merry Go-Round Building
- May 12 & 13 – LA Opera “Otello”
- May 19 & 20 – Children’s Hospital Los Angeles fundraiser

Mr. Harris then gave a slide presentation detailing what we can look forward to for the City Wide PRIDE event on June 3rd.

Board Member Kerns asked if the Merry Go-Round rental rate increase includes the services of the carousel operator and Mr. Harris confirmed it does.

Board Member Ruben commented that the organization should look into seeing if there are ways the City can help us figure out who may be the most important to target with discounts for Merry Go-Round Rentals.

Board Chair Rolston asked Mr. Harris why he wasn’t able to include the option of discounts in his updates to the Merry Go-Round Rental Rate updates to which Mr. Harris answered that he would prefer input from the board on it, which the timing didn’t allow this time, but he will be happy to do so in the near future.

Board Member Hall commented he suspects Council Member’s will encourage there be discounts for Locals’ apart of the Merry Go-Round Rental Rate Increase and asked if maintenance costs of the carousel have been taken into consideration when figuring out how much the increase will be. Mr. Harris responded the Carousel/Merry Go-round runs almost all day for the public at the operator’s expense but some day it will need some maintenance. Pier & Beach Administrator Elana Buegoff added that the rentals themselves help pay for maintenance of the Carousel/Merry Go-round.

ii. Office of Pier Management Update

Pier Administrator Elana Buegoff reported that there are a number of Board Member Training Sessions the City requires that are all taking place soon and Board members must check/use their City Email to sign in and attend.

iii. March 2023 Budget and Financials

Executive Director Harris reports that the SMPC continues to be in good standings as the balance sheet shows in the financial report. March had a good number of film permits and Merry Go-Round rentals but no Deck rentals and promotional activations were a bit down.

He added that partnerships for Pier Corp-produced events are progressing slowly but we expect them to pick up for Pier 360 and already staff is seeing opportunities for Locals' Night partnerships for next season. Ultimately, Mr. Harris said, the organization is looking for year-round over-arching sponsorships.

iv. Santa Monica Police Department/Harbor Patrol/Code Enforcement

Police Officer Doug Woodhams praised Harbor Safety Officers Kat Ahlers and Henry Reyes as the both saved a suicidal victim who had jumped off the Pier the past week.

Sgt. Woodhams further reported that he's seen an increased trend of strong arm robberies starting at sundown until 11pm in the daily phone call logs.

He is also looking into where/how best to mount security speakers donated by Pacific Park.

On October 4th there will be a Pier -wide mass evacuation training exercise. There will be more to announce soon, and volunteers will be needed.

Harbor Safety Officers Kat Ahlers and Henry Reyes reported in the last month they had 89 calls for service, 14 major medical calls, and 22 minor medical calls. One major rescue was a sinking boat with 5 people on it. HSO dewatered the boat and was able to save it from going down. There was also a second suicidal subject who required CPR and made a full recovery.

Chair Rolston moved Item 6. a. up on the agenda.

Item 6. Public Hearing

a. Updates from Santa Monica Police Chief Ramon Batista About Public Safety on the Pier

Chief Batista reported that all recommendations after the May 31st, 2020 incident have been recognized and improved on if not taken into consideration. There will be another community meeting for public input in mid to late May. He also brought to the Board's attention to the fact that Harbor Safety Officers saved over 80 people who have jumped off the Pier last year and they deserve more recognition for all their hard work. He believes that the Pier wide mass evacuation training exercise that Sgt. Woodhams mentioned previously will be very helpful and important as the Pier is one of the biggest hotspots in SoCal and will only grow in the coming years.

Chief Batista went on to note that the passage of concealed carry in California and with more people having that option they inevitably will leave their weapon in the car which will lead to them possibly being stolen easily. This will be a concern in this



new era not due to our communities decision but by a Supreme Court Justice's ruling out of New York that affects us all down to a community level.

He announced that the DART has responded to over 670 calls and nearly 600 of them were themselves initiating the call. They've responded to over 70 encampment calls. Their work consists usually of giving a warning + having a conversation and 9/10 times folks will move along.

The Police Force is usually staffed at 221 Officers but is currently understaffed due to an Injury List of Officers that were unable to be on Duty. When the Chief started it was around 35 Officer and is now whittled down to 14. They either come off the list and go back or retire which is good as it opens up a spot. Last year they hired nearly 30 folks. This year they are shooting for 40. They want to make sure they meet their marks and stay up to date as the Olympics and World Cup Soccer are on their way.

Board Member Parent asked how long it takes once an Officer is hired to get them on the streets, to which Chief Batista replied that the timeline is about a year, with background checks, training, ride alongs, field training, and much more to determine whether they can go out and work by themselves.

Board Chair Rolston commented that special attention to the DART team's enforcement of open flame, as it is a wooden Pier, and illegal dumping, as we are above the ocean, is very important.

Chief Batista responded with open arms in keeping this conversation alive and welcomes the support in keeping the bullying vendors off the Pier.

In public comment, Heal The Bay Aquarium Director Marslaidh Ryan expressed gratitude for the quick and caring response from the HSO's and PO's the previous morning during a break-in at the Aquarium.

Item 1. Special Agenda Items (Continued)

a. Reports of Staff Members

v. Santa Monica Pier Lessees Association

SMPLA Representative Cindy Pfeifer reported there was a good amount of business over spring break although it was hard to staff and get ready for the crowds with such a late rainy season. The Ferris Wheel will be lit up for earth day once again.

vi. Landmarks Commission

Landmarks Commission representative Roger Genser had nothing to report.



Chair Rolston moved Item 4.b. up on the agenda.

Item 4. Continued Items

- a. Presentation of Proposed Digital Way-finding Kiosks by BIG Outdoor's Kiley Kmiec (continued from March 20, 2023 Board Meeting)

Kiley Kmiec presented to the Board BIG Outdoor's proposed plans for installing one digital kiosk in front of the Police Substation and another in the Grand Entrance area.

Highlights from the Way-finding Kiosk presentation include:

Initially awarded the contract for 25 kiosks and the possibility to double,
Still receiving feedback from the community before deployment,

Highlights from the Way-finding Kiosk presentation include: Continued

These are able to display promo for Pier Events, major discounts for SM businesses to post ads, provide free Wifi within 300ft + informational guides + security cameras, they are able to be used as an Emergency Call/Announcement System, and they are customizable by location.

Board Member Hall asked if there is the ability to charge phones off of these and Kiley Kmiec answered that there is not.

Board Member Rubin asked if they can pull metrics + hypothesizes they would drive the most traffic in the whole City, generating the most ad revenue for the City, and Kiley Kmiec responds they can and widely obtainable.

Board Chair Rolston asked how the ad revenue will possibly be divided into the City and Kiley Kmiec responds it's an iffy question but BIG Outdoor just cuts a check to the City and it's up to them how to distribute.

Board Member Parent wonders if they will provide bike path maps as that will help locals and Kiley Kmiec responded with most definitely.

Officer Woodhams asked how loud the speakers on the kiosks are for possible emergency announcements and Kiley Kmiec responds that they are quite loud.

Officer Woodhams then asked if it's a pro or a con to have kiosks as we all have phones now and Kiley Kmiec responds by asking Board Member Kerns the statistics on tourists with data plans in the States and they responded that very few do and the Wifi will help them with their travels and find their way around town as it can be hard.



Board Member Rubin thinks there should be a future discussion on the possibility of having the kiosks every couple of hundred or so feet so emergency announcements can have full range.

In public comment, Pacific Park's Director of Marketing & Brand Development Nathan Smithson warned that the Pier is where electronics go to die as the weather/environment eats everything up. He knows from experience as Pac Park has spent a lot trying to maintain lots of their own equipment. He also thinks it's worth having a conversation about the kiosks appearance and making sure it fits in with the Pier and doesn't make it look like a mall. Nathan also points out that having the ability to geotag certain ads off in certain areas would be helpful to the businesses near the kiosk and Kiley Kmiec says that is possible.

2. Consent Calendar:

- a. Approval of Minutes of March 20, 2023 Santa Monica Pier Corporation Board Meeting

Board Member Jeff Jarow moved and Board Member Chris Foster seconded a motion to approve the March 20, 2023 Minutes. The Motion carried unanimously.

3. Study Session – None

4. Continued Items

- b. Beach Bike Path Ramp Connection to Santa Monica Pier Response Recommendation by Large Projects Study Group (continued from March 20, 2023 Board Meeting)

Board Member Rubin gave a brief update that the public studies group started drafting a letter to city staff referencing the feedback from the board and shortly after that the public works staff managing the bike ramp announced they are drafting a proposal for the bridge to be on the north side of the Pier and taking the boards input. A letter isn't necessary now but we should continue conversations with city staff

Board Member Kerns asked if we really think this will be complete before the Olympics. She also brought up that Ocean Front Walk Businesses should also be able to give input on the matter.

Harbor Safety Officer Henry Reyes asks if the ramp will be accessible to public safety vehicles and Board Member Rubin says not cars but maybe carts.



- c. Proposal by Board Chair Rolston for a Letter from the Board to the City Manager, Police Chief, Fire Chief and City Council Regarding Future Involvement of Santa Monica Pier Corporation Board and Staff at All Meetings Related to the Pier in General. (continued from March 20, 2023 Board Meeting)

Chair Rolston presented a draft proposed letter to City Staff and Council for the Board to review and comment upon.

Board Member Hall asked if Chair Rolston or Executive Director Harris have reached out to the City Manager or Chief Batista to visit the board or develop a relationship? Mr. Harris replied that he communicates regularly with the City Manager and recently spoke with Chief Batista about what was said at the last Board Meeting, and the Chief said he will definitely remember to include the Pier Corporation in any Pier related meetings in the future. Chair Rolston responded that he has spoken with the City Manager but not as a Pier Board representative.

Board Member Foster commented we need to remember we're still coming out of the Zoom faze and a lot of staff are new so we need to be patient with reconnecting, but with summer coming it would be good to connect with City officials soon.

Board Member Kerns commented that they should acknowledge that they have Pier & Beach Administrator Buegoff at every board meeting and should use that relationship to connect more with the City as well as lean on Executive Director Harris to connecting with Council and City Staff.

Board Member Hall commented we can always get on the City Council Meeting Agenda to present to them with our allotted 10 minutes and reestablish our role and yearly work plan.

Chair Rolston wished to go on the record to point out this letter doesn't mention the leases and is only a friendly invitation for the opportunity of more conversations.

5. Staff Administrative Items

- a. Proposal from SMPC Executive Committee for a Letter from the Board to City Council and City Manager requesting collective review of current Services Agreement between City of Santa Monica and Santa Monica Pier Corporation.

Board Chair Rolston presented a slide show about the current Services Agreement between City of Santa Monica and Santa Monica Pier Corporation and his reasoning for proposed collective review of the agreement and asked the board for feedback on a proposed draft letter.



The Board was generally very receptive to the proposed review of the current service agreement, but expressed desire to study and work over the next year to determine what adjustments and changes should be included.

Pier & Beach Administrator Buegoff noted that the Large Projects Study Group just had a CIP review presented to them in March and should be able to share those results/summary with the Board.

b. Presentation of Proposed Annual Plan of Work and Budget for FY2023/2024

Executive Director Harris presented the new Proposed Annual Plan of Work and Budget for FY2023/2024.

Board Members expressed a desire for more regular programming.

Board Member Hall expressed that he is a bit concerned about the reserves being so low but have hope for it to bounce back to pre-pandemic numbers.

Board Member Kerns added that the 3-5 year plan included in the Work Plan should put some focus toward an Emergency Management Plan as well.

Board member Chris Foster moved and Board Member Misti Kerns seconded a motion to approve The Annual Plan of Work and Budget for FY2023/2024 as presented. The Motion was unanimously approved.

6. Public Hearing

Agenda item 6 was moved up and addressed earlier in the meeting.

7. Resolutions - None

8. Written Communication - None

9. Santa Monica Pier Corporation Member Discussion Items

a. Study Group Updates

Chair Rolston announced that he will be following up with modified plans for Study Groups soon.

10. Public Input: -

Board Chair Rolston requested that staff prepare and present to the Board their Marketing plan and strategy for the upcoming year within the next couple months.



Adjournment

Chris Foster makes the motion for adjournment, seconded by Misti Kerns.

The Motion carried unanimously.

Adjourned at 9:48pm

Attest:



Jeff Jarow

Secretary

Approved:



Nick Rolston

Chair

