

BANKERS HILL COMMUNITY GROUP MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

Monday, January 20, 2020
Bankers Hill Clubhouse, 3030 Front St.

BHCG Chair Amie Hayes called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. The following Steering Committee members were present: Chair Hayes, Secretary John Lamb, John Percy, Becky Veen and Peter Raymond. There were approximately 41 people in attendance.

Hayes welcomed attendees to the BHCG's annual Roundtable meeting and encouraged attendance at the February meeting for a San Diego City Attorney candidate forum. She called for volunteers for upcoming Bankers Hill Clubhouse monthly luncheons.

Treasurer's Report

It was reported that BHCG has \$4,656.16 in the bank.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

No public comments.

Government Representatives

No government representatives commented.

Annual BHCG Roundtable Event

The annual BHCG Roundtable discussions then commenced. Topics represented at each table were: Quality of Life, Maple Canyon Restoration, Balboa Park's West Mesa, Bankers Hill history and the Bankers Hill Neighborhood Parking Committee, the community arm of the Uptown Community Parking District. Discussion leaders were asked to provide synopses of the conversations that occurred, which follow:

Quality of Life table — SDPD Officer Marlo Woods and Sgt. Lorraine Tangog, discussion leaders

— Interest was expressed to start a Neighborhood Watch program in Bankers Hill. Suggestion to obtain a copy of program requirements and circulate to BHCG members, possibly organizing a group for a discussion to begin process.

— Package theft was discussed.

— How to find local crime statistics? www.sandiego.gov/police/services/statistics. Officer Woods also said he could be contacted for additional information.

— Concern raised about airport parking in Bankers Hill neighborhoods.

— NextDoor information said to be helpful, but crimes should be reported to San Diego Police so they can be tracked.

— When asked about safety tips, it was suggested that people be aware of others who may follow you into parking garages who don't belong there.

— Officer Woods said, upon request, he can offer safety presentations to homeowner associations and other groups.

— 72-hour parking limitations.

— A discussion of the power that community groups can sometimes wield.

— Need for affordable housing.

— Considerable time was devoted to discussing homelessness and related issues, including: abandoning personal items on streets and private property; sleeping in Balboa Park; people living in vehicles; and Homeless Outreach Team contact information (619-446-1010) for non-criminal matters, such as homeless mothers on the street with small children.

Balboa Park's West Mesa table — Bruce Dammann, discussion leader

- Many questions about the actual boundaries of the West Mesa, the trails included and their condition.
- Significant support for a “specific plan” that would define objectives and goals for West Mesa, and questions why the city has yet to create one.
- Most people were unaware of the role of the West Mesa Subcommittee of the city’s Balboa Park Committee. Dammann said he didn’t have a good explanation either, other than an event noise study that was conducted. People also wondered why the subcommittee held so few (two or three) meetings in 2019.
- The Cabrillo Bridge was discussed extensively, with most people saying they use the bridge for access to Balboa Park. Attendees said enforcement needs to be increased for speeding vehicles on the historic bridge due to narrow sidewalks. It was suggested that the sidewalks could be changed to one way each side because of the congestion. By a wide margin, attendees agreed that the bridge should be closed to automobiles on weekends. One or two said they’d prefer to drive because they can’t walk easily.
- Lack of lighting off the bridge to 6th Avenue was also discussed.
- A suggestion was made to make the bridge one way into the park and add bike lanes.
- A concern was raised that a new mayor will resurrect the Plaza de Panama plan.
- Speeding on Balboa Drive was mentioned as a concern, with more enforcement requested.
- Attendees supported the idea of converting Balboa Drive from two lanes to one lane and adding diagonal parking. Safety and poor lighting were also discussed.
- New West Mesa restrooms with continued maintenance were supported. Attendees said if they had used the current bathrooms once, they never used them again because of their poor condition and constant presence of homeless individuals.
- New plans for restrooms (with outward-facing stalls and outside sinks) were generally well received by attendees. Question raised whether new facilities will be lighted at night.
- It was suggested that the restrooms should be closed at night.
- Maintenance of the West Mesa in general was discussed.
- Homelessness is a big issue in the park and requires a solution.
- Police presence needed on West Mesa. An attendee wondered what happened to police on horseback in the park.
- The Bridge and Chess clubs were discussed regarding lighting at night. Some people thought the Bridge Club once housed a police substation.
- Attendees supported metered parking along Sixth Avenue on the park side where no meters currently exist. Concern also raised that construction and office workers were using all the parking. A four-hour parking limit proposal was supported.
- Attendees noted the importance of access to Balboa Park from the residential area west of Sixth Avenue. Adding a crosswalk at Sixth and Nutmeg Street was stressed, since it’s a considerable distance between crossings between Laurel and Quince streets. Dammann said he thought one has been proposed.
- There was wide support for a people mover to get people from the area west of the Cabrillo Bridge into the park.
- Some concern was raised about all the high-rises that could be built west of the park and whether there’s some way to protect the area from being in the shade.
- The condition of the buildings in the park was also mentioned in some attendee comments, and most said they supported a bond issue specifically for Balboa Park but were concerned whether the city could be trusted to do a good job managing such work.

Meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by John Lamb, Secretary.