

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF  
COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICT NO. 15  
HELD AT THE OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT

March 24, 2021  
11:30 o'clock, A.M.

Pursuant to the call of the Chairperson and upon written notice of the Secretary setting the time and place of a special meeting and mailed to each Director at least 24 hours before the meeting, a special meeting of the Board of Directors of County Sanitation District No. 15 of Los Angeles County was held at the office of the District, 1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, California, on March 24, 2021, at 11:30 a.m., for the purpose of:

1. Public Comment
2. JOINT CLOSED SESSION with Districts Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 29, and South Bay Cities Sanitation District - *Conference with Legal Counsel Pursuant to California Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(1)* - Existing Litigation, One Case – County of Los Angeles v. Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, et al., Orange County Superior Court Case No. 30-2020-01153422; Puente Hills Landfill Park Development

There were present: Roger Chandler, Director from Arcadia  
Margaret Finlay, Alternate Director from Duarte  
Jessica Acona, Director from El Monte  
Cory C. Moss, Director from Industry  
H. Manuel Ortiz, Director from Irwindale  
Charlie Klinakis, Director from La Puente  
Tom Adams, Director from Monrovia  
Kimberly Ann Cobos-Cawthorne, Director from Montebello  
Yvonne Yiu, Director from Monterey Park  
Victor Gordo, Director from Pasadena  
Sandra Armenta, Director from Rosemead  
Denise Menchaca, Director from San Gabriel  
Susan Jakubowski, Alternate Director from San Marino  
Rechelle Arizmendi, Director from Sierra Madre  
Gloria Olmos, Director from South El Monte  
Letty Lopez-Viado, Director from West Covina  
Cathy Warner, Alternate Director from Whittier  
Richard G. Barakat, Chairperson, Alternate Director from Bradbury

Absent: Emmanuel J. Estrada, Director from Baldwin Park  
Tom Chavez, Director from Temple City  
Hilda Solis, Director from Los Angeles County

Also present: Kimberly S. Christensen, Secretary to the Board  
Wes Beverlin, District Counsel

RE: PUBLIC COMMENT

were no public comments or questions to address the Board on any matters.

The Chairperson announced this was the time for any questions or comments by members of the public. There

RE: SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT  
PUENTE HILLS LANDFILL PARK  
DEVELOPMENT - LOS ANGELES  
COUNTY V. SANITATION DISTRICTS  
OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL  
COUNSEL-EXISTING LITIGATION - DISCUSS

annually to fund operation and maintenance.

A dispute has arisen regarding the financial responsibility for development and maintenance of a park on the closed Puente Hills Landfill, as well as the permissible locations for park improvements. On February 27, 2020, the County filed a Complaint with the Court against the Districts requesting, among other items, award of compensatory damages in the amount of \$283 million to develop the park plus \$4 million

The Chairperson announced this was the time for any questions or comments by members of the public.

The Secretary stated that written comments received via email were emailed to the Directors and posted on the Districts' website.

The following individuals addressed the Board:

1. Anisha Hingorani, member of the Park Equity Alliance and worker at Advancement Project California, a civil rights organization focused on racial and economic justice, greeted the Directors. She stated that she grew up in the shadows of the Puente Hills Landfill and was excited for the closure of the landfill and plans for the Park development. She was disappointed that the Districts turned its back on obligations for funding the Park. She stated that this is an urgent matter of public health. The proposed \$468 million payment towards pension is a misuse of public funds. She urged the Boards to fully fund the development of the Park.
2. Machiko Yasuda stated that she is a lifelong resident of Los Angeles County, currently residing in the unincorporated area of Altadena in District No. 17. She serves on the National Parks Conservation Association, LA Young Leaders Council. She grew up in Rancho Palos Verdes, which is home of the South Coast Botanical Gardens (SCBG). It is built atop a closed landfill. The SCBG is affordable and just as beautiful as the Huntington Botanical Gardens or Arboretum. She urged the Boards to ensure that the Districts fulfill its promise to build the Park.
3. Marilyn Kamamura greeted the Directors and introduced herself as a resident of Avocado Heights for 49 years, having been the Director of the Workman Mill Association, part of the Neighborhood Watch Group, and one of the founders of the Clean Air Coalition of North Whittier and Avocado Heights. She asked for support in funding the development of the Park for the community that was impacted by the burdens of large trash and transfer trucks, foul garbage odor, fugitive dust, and diesel emissions from the landfill. The Puente Hills Materials Recovery Facility just replaced the landfill with different waste. As a resident, she has seen how the impacts of the landfill lessened the quality of life of the community.
4. Anna Grubin introduced herself as the Program Director of the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust. She stated that her organization focuses on bringing equity and wellbeing to neighboring communities who have little or no green space. She supported the full implementation of the Park Master Plan to develop the Park. She stated that the issue has to do with environmental justice and the equity issue to challenges of adverse health and environmental effects throughout Los Angeles County. She urged the Directors to make good with the Districts' promise to fund the Park.
5. Bryan Matsumoto introduced himself as a resident of Temple City. He urged the Directors to help the Districts realize its obligation to the public for the development of the Park. He stated that before he was born, the Districts made a commitment to fund the development of the Park for the underserved community. He was personally involved with the planning process and worked with children who are now five years older than the ages they were when expecting the Park. He stated that \$37 million is clearly not enough to fulfill the development of a regional park.
6. Elizabeth Reid-Wainscot introduced herself as a representative of the Center for Biological Diversity. She urged the Directors to fully fund the development of the Park. She described the purpose of her organization.
7. Steve Messer introduced himself as the President of the Concerned Off-Road Bicyclist Association. He fully supports the funding of the Puente Hills Landfill Park. He stated that his organization worked closely with Los Angeles County and has put a lot of effort and energy into the development of the Master Plan. There is a need for more outdoor recreation opportunities.
8. Francisco Romero, Program Manager of Community Transformation for Promesa Boyle Heights, introduced himself. He stated that he surveyed resident leaders, and all were in support of the Park. He asked Directors to urge the Sanitation Districts to stick to its promise of the development of a regional park to serve thousands of public members of the community.
9. Elizabeth Quiroz addressed the Directors in Spanish. She spoke in support of development of the Park.
10. Elva K. Yanez introduced herself as the Director of the Health Equity and Prevention Institute, a national public health organization. She stated that this is an environmental justice and health

equity issue. The surrounding communities are some of the most park poor in the nation. These communities suffer from the highest rates of illnesses associated with having no green space, and also deal with extractive industries in the neighborhoods. They urged the Directors to fulfill the Districts' promise and commitment to develop a park.

11. David Diaz, Executive Director of Activist GP, Board member of the El Monte Union High School District, Chair of the Oversight Committee, and a resident of El Monte, stated that he supports the Park Master Plan and that the project is overdue. This is an environmental justice issue. The minority community is negatively impacted. He called for the Directors to consider the development of the Park. He was personally involved in leading the community engagement effort in planning for the Park. He urged Directors to approve funding for the Park and make it a reality.
12. Daniel Rossman introduced himself as the California Deputy Director of the Wilderness Society. He recommended that the Sanitation Districts fully fund the commitment to the Puente Hills Landfill Park. He stated that this is an issue of environmental justice. He mentioned the importance to improve the ecological habitat.
13. Richard Kamamura introduced himself as a resident of North Whittier. He stated that he put up with pollution and discomfort from the landfill for 49 years. The residents still have to deal with the Puente Hills Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) and green waste going to the Puente Hills Landfill. The Park was promised to his community; he wants to hold the Districts to its commitment. He stated that trash is still going to the MRF. He would appreciate the Districts sticking to its commitment.
14. Ruben Rios introduced himself as a Districts' Solid Waste employee with 40 years of service. He urged the Directors to support the Districts' position on the Park issue. The issue is not about the funding for the Park. The Districts is in favor of construction of the Park. He stated that Solid Waste staff works at the landfill every day to ensure protection of public health and safety of the environment. The Directors' decision will impact operations and longevity of employees.
15. Scott Martin introduced himself as the President of the Hacienda Heights Improvement Association (HHIA). He stated that the HHIA was formed in 1955. Hacienda Heights has been waiting since November 2013 for a park. He urged the Directors to do the right thing and not allow the County to construct an amusement type park. There is no need to assault the hills with slides, a pedestrian bridge, gondola lift, a zipline, bike rentals, parking lot for food trucks, etc. Passive development should only include other park amenities that have been proposed such as multi-use trails, running mile markers, grass lands, and habitat enhancements. He stated that full implementation of the Park plan involves six stages over 75 years. Phase IA development is estimated at approximately \$45,926,000. Supervisorial Districts 1 and 4 will be required to provide \$5 million in project funding. The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation has delayed park development and now demands that the Districts pay the full cost for their version of an elaborate park.

The Chief Engineer and General Manager stated that most of the speakers' statements implied that the Districts is not in favor of a park. The Districts is, in fact, in favor of the development of a park and people should be enjoying outside activities on the site now, especially since continuing to deal with the pandemic. When the PHLF closed in 2013, the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks and Rec) and the Districts had completed a planning and feasibility study for the Park. There was more than enough money to fund the Park. The local community supported the plan for the open space park with multi-use trails. At that time, everything was in place for the development of the Park. Unfortunately, the development of the Park has not begun because Parks and Rec's changes to the plan do not comply with the County's permit requirements (which the local community does not support) and requires a cost which is 35 times more than initially planned. Yes, the Districts shares in the disappointment that there is not a park that is open and accessible. The funding and the landfill are available any time when the County is ready to start work on the Park. The Districts has a long history of funding parks and other community programs including funding the Puente Hills Habitat Preservation Authority. They manage over 4,000 acres which includes trails and habitat protection adjacent to the landfill. The Districts is eager to do the same on the landfill property.

District Counsel advised that it would be in the interest of all the Districts to meet in joint closed session pursuant to Section 54956.9(d)(1) - Existing Litigation, One Case – *County of Los Angeles v. Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, et al., Orange County Superior Court Case No. 30-2020-01153422* of the California Government Code *Conference with Legal Counsel-Existing Litigation* to confer on the matter of the Puente Hills Landfill Park development.

Upon motion of Director Finlay, duly seconded and unanimously carried by a roll-call vote, the Board of Directors of County Sanitation District No. 15 of Los Angeles County met in joint closed session with the Board of Directors of County Sanitation District Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 29, and South Bay Cities Sanitation District of Los Angeles County at 11:58 a.m. to confer on the matter referred by District Counsel.

Upon motion of Director Olmos, duly seconded and unanimously carried by a roll-call vote, the meeting reconvened in regular session at 1:37 p.m. District Counsel advised that no action was taken that requires disclosure pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.1.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairperson.

RICHARD G. BARAKAT  
Chairperson

ATTEST:

KIMBERLY S. CHRISTENSEN  
Secretary

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