09-09 Committee Meeting: Pacific Beach Parking-district Budget and Meter Oversight

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A Pacific Beach community parking-district committee meeting covered meter use, the city's handling of district budgets and reimbursements, and the committee's next steps. The committee planned to keep meeting while it pursues information and works on a revised budget.

Public comments — parking concerns and meter use

Residents described negative views of the meters and questioned whether they serve the community or generate revenue.

- **Petition outreach**: Scott Chipman said he submitted 21 signatures. He spoke with 20 people about the petition and asked about Pacific Beach parking and meters; none had a positive view, and most called the meters horrible. He said people became angry when he raised how difficult it seemed for the community to get money.
- **Meter use on Garnett**: Gordon said he drove down Garnett at 2:45 and saw fewer than half the meters in use. He also checked six meters before the meeting; four had expired, and he had not seen anyone checking whether drivers paid.
- **Nearby streets**: Gordon said the next street over, Fellsquare Street, was full through the 1200 block. He said people there could no longer park near their homes. Scott said he had also driven around at different times to get a sense of meter use.
- **Survey and city data**: Gordon proposed surveying meter use and asking whether the meters are effective and make money. He recalled earlier city figures showing about 80% use near the ocean and around 50% farther away. He also said the meters had been unpopular before they were installed, and that the stated rationale had shifted between raising money and clearing parking.

Fennell and Hornblen stop sign — approval without committee input

Greg said he received an email reporting that a public request for a four-way stop at Fennell and Hornblen had been approved. He said he saw no need for it, but stressed that the decision was not his to make. His objection was that the planning group had not been asked for input.

Greg contrasted that approval with his request to pave four blocks of Mission Boulevard between Loring and Diamond, which he said could not be funded. He questioned the city's choices and said the stop-sign request had not gone through the committee.

Minutes, financial report, and Scott's election petition

The minutes were tabled because they were not available, and there was no district financial report. Sunny said the board needed notice of Scott's nomination and time to consider it; the current agenda had said there were no nominations 72 hours before the meeting. She said the board could not vote on his election that night.

Greg questioned why the board needed to wait if Scott had submitted his petition and signatures. He also asked how the board could review the petition if it was not distributed. Sunny said she would distribute it and put Scott on next month's agenda so the board could vote on whether to accept the nomination. Scott said his phone number and email were on the petition.

Scott introduced himself as a Pacific Beach resident since 1974 who bought a house there in 1979. He described two terms as PTA president at the middle school, two terms as PTO president at the high school, service on committees at Kate Sessions Elementary, and 14 years on the planning group across two terms. He also cited community cleanups and work on an alcohol-free beach policy. He said Kevin Faulkner had asked him to join an alcohol review committee. Before Faulkner's election, Scott said, all 17 city-council candidates identified alcohol-related crime and issues as the community's top issue.

District budget — city has not approved resubmissions

Sunny said the city had denied the submitted budgets and project outlines from all of the city's parking districts. The districts had been told they could resubmit in

September, but had not been given a deadline. There was no plan to return to council until districts had rebuilt their budgets.

- **Pacific Beach revision**: Sunny said she had made one revision and given it to Katie to review. They would continue revising it together before resubmission. Other districts were not ready to resubmit.
- **City feedback**: Sunny said the initial feedback referred them to Council Policy 118. She felt the Transportation Department's response was passive-aggressive. In her view, the city wanted projects that it would administer, rather than returning parking-meter revenue to the districts.
- **Changing requirements**: Sunny said the city gave project-detail specifications, then added hurdles and changes after the district submitted its budget. Charlie recalled a deadline with about one week's notice, which he said left too little time for a board vote under the Brown Act.
- **Project handling**: Connor said the city had identified projects it preferred, but those projects were removed from the district's plate. Sunny confirmed that the district removed them.
- **Other districts' reimbursements**: Dave said some districts had paid vendors for work backed by city-issued purchase orders, then had reimbursements denied near the end of the fiscal year. He said Little Italy was still owed money from 2025 and had zeroed out parking-district funds in its accounting; its 2026 budget showed zero for the district. He said Little Italy was trying to collect on a standing purchase order through the mayor's office.
- **Possible uses of funds**: Dave said the only use he had found that the city would fund was repairing a neighborhood light within a parking-meter district. Others questioned whether that meant any residential light or only lights in the business district.
- **Other districts' status**: Sunny said she did not know the specific feedback other districts received. She said Little Italy had $200,000 at issue. Dave said Gaslamp was the only district preparing to file a lawsuit at that point; Little Italy was first trying to get the mayor's office to act.

Sunny said the city had not answered the district's questions after its meeting with the council president, and Cambria had not provided an update. She said the district kept a list of questions. Katie said the meeting had yielded little and felt like a repetition of concerns without progress. Sunny said she did not think the city was eager to make

accommodations, and she doubted Pacific Beach would see parking-meter revenue returned to the community this year.

District advocacy — options remain open

Members considered whether to keep advocating, reduce or pause meetings, publish a letter, or pursue legal action. No one chose a lawsuit or approved a public letter during the meeting.

Scott proposed an open letter to a local newspaper explaining that the city's policy did not appear to give the committee a useful role if it could not manage funds or projects. He said residents had been led to expect that meter revenue would return to the community. Katie said she had raised that point with council members, but it had not changed the situation so far.

- **Public letter**: Connor supported writing an op-ed. He said local business owners had been interviewed for a recent television segment and that media coverage had recurred. He wanted a more direct account of the committee's concerns, rather than interviews that could also serve as business promotion.
- **Letter before broader publicity**: Charlie suggested a more cordial letter first, followed by a decision at the next meeting about whether to take a more public approach, depending on the response.
- **Legal options**: Scott raised the grand jury and city ethics commission as possible avenues. He also asked whether the committee should join a lawsuit. Charlie noted that a lawsuit would cost money and asked whether Discover PB would have to pay, since the committee had no funds. Dave said Little Italy was trying to get the mayor's office to act before considering a suit, while Gaslamp was preparing to file.
- **Grand jury report**: Sunny said the report recommended that communities were misusing funds, though she did not know how that applied when districts had not received the money. Scott asked whether the report was online; Sunny said it was.
- **Committee's role**: Charlie said dissolving the committee would not remove the meters and could leave the city with the funds. He also said the committee could continue pressing the city, but he was unsure whether the city's actions were a one-year emergency or a lasting change. Katie said she was not ready to give up, because bringing revenue back to the community was a key reason the district formed.

- **Meeting schedule**: Members favored meeting next month and considering another meeting in October or November, then deciding how to proceed; Greg suggested taking December off. Sunny said the committee could meet quarterly or as needed. The committee planned to meet next month.

Sunny said the city had not sent its usual liaison or report for three or four months. Dave said staff had been moved to other departments or left the work, which had shifted into Transportation. Greg said Claudia had moved to Transportation more than four months earlier; Sunny said Claudia still emailed but no longer attended.

Meter rates, hours, and revenue — district share remains unclear

The committee discussed the city's meter changes and whether they would bring more money to the district. Sunny said Discover PB's share had fallen from 45% to 15% of revenue after city deductions. She agreed with Scott that the deductions were not transparent. Sunny said the new percentage would not apply until next year; the current year's amount had been allotted but was not yet approved.

- **Pacific Beach changes**: Greg said hourly rates doubled from $1.25 to $2.50, and meter hours in Pacific Beach were extended from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. He expected evening parking to generate more revenue than midday parking.
- **Special-event pricing**: Members distinguished the event-area rate from Pacific Beach's regular rate. Dave said the city could raise event pricing to $10 per hour. Speakers described the charge period differently: one said four hours before and four hours after an event, while another said six hours. Greg gave an example of a seven o'clock event with a five-to-eleven window, and Dave said the total should be $60. The discussion did not settle the duration.
- **Citywide expansion**: Dave said the city was expanding metered areas and hours, including Sundays, and could adjust event-area rates. He said the city owned the streets and did not need a parking district to install meters. He argued that the city charter requires meter funds to be spent in the community where they are collected, but said the city could use district funds for work the city would otherwise pay for from its general fund.
- **Past payments**: Sunny said $250,000 went directly to Beachbug for Circuit service. Of that, $50,000 had been expected for Discover PB administration and advocacy but did not come to Discover PB. She said Discover PB received

about $14,000 for administration after submitting reimbursements the prior year. She said there was no paperwork showing whether the Beachbug costs had been fully paid.

- **Circuit service**: Dave said Circuit had gone nearly a year without payment and stopped operating the broader service. He said it now offered free rides between City College and the park where the homeless encampment was located.
- **Survey data**: Scott proposed putting on a future agenda whether to seek city data or collect meter-use data independently, including counts of empty spaces on nearby streets. He said other districts were submitting public-records requests. Sunny said she would ask Claudia for the past utilization reports and, if Claudia did not respond in a timely way, submit a public-records request.

Other district and city-service examples

Dave said Little Italy had once received $750,000 a year from its parking district for five years, which he described as an overpayment from a surplus in the downtown parking district. He said the amount fell to $118,000 last year. Scott questioned whether all of that money came from parking-district funds, but Dave said Little Italy's profit-and-loss statement showed that it did. Dave said East Village had received $1.2 million for projects the city considered acceptable.

Scott also said San Diego's code-compliance department had published a three-page list of violations it would not address unless they were life-threatening, including illegal fencing, illegal digging, and noise. He said a California code-compliance chair had described a stronger approach, but that had not matched his experience in San Diego.

Charlie said the Mission Bay Park Committee faced a similar situation: city-proposed projects used funds for work the city already planned, leaving the committee to vote on those projects.