



The monthly meeting of the Inglewood Parks and Recreation Commission was convened on Thursday, November 6, 2003, in the City Council Chambers, located on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of Inglewood City Hall. Acting Chairperson, Norma Smith presiding called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

## **ROLL CALL**

### **Present:**

Commissioner Alena Giardina – District I  
Commissioner Norma Smith – District II  
Commissioner Jaime Gutierrez – District III  
Commissioner Henry Brown – District IV  
Commissioner Willie Agee – At Large

### **Staff:**

Rita Gardner, Parks Administration Superintendent  
Sandra Green, Administrative Secretary  
Michelle Jordan, Program Assistant  
Ben Stephens, Senior Recreation Supervisor

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – OCTOBER 9, 2003**

A motion for approval of minutes from September 4, 2003, was made by Commissioner Agee and seconded by Commissioner Gutierrez. Motion passed.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

None

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Rita Gardner, Parks Administration Superintendent**, distributed the soccer stadium Athletic Field Use Policy and a resolution to create a theme of "Creating Community through People, Parks and Programs." Commissioners were asked to review both items for discussion at the next meeting.

**Commissioner Brown** asked what benefit would be received if the resolution to create a theme is passed and if it is going to be national.

**Rita Gardner** stated that the Department would be part of a collaborative effort throughout the state and perhaps nationwide.

**Rita Gardner** stated adoption of the Tree Master Plan was pending review by Commissioners Gutierrez and Giardina. Both Commissioners have reviewed the plan. A copy will be provided to Commissioner Brown for review and possible approval at the next meeting.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** stated that Director Kevin Hawkins mentioned that there was no money in the budget for the Tree Master Plan.

**Rita Gardner** stated that there was no money allocated in the budget because the only thing that was done was to get a consultant to do the Tree Master Plan. A study was done and information was compiled, and the need is for Commissioners to approve the final Tree Master Plan. Mr. Hawkins said in terms of the recommendation the plan was not going to be in the budget. Recommendations were made to do about \$50,000 worth of replacement of trees that are damaged, old and need to be replanted. This is not in the current budget, and that is what the Director was referring to.

Trees are being trimmed on all major streets, Manchester Avenue, La Brea Avenue, Imperial Highway and Crenshaw Boulevard in preparation for the holidays. All ficus trees in center medians are being trimmed.

Darby Park basketball courts are scheduled to undergo renovation. A walkthrough took place and the results were communicated to Councilman Price who would like to proceed by going out to bid. This process shall begin shortly.

**Commissioner Agee** asked the status of the Skateboard Park.

**Rita Gardner** stated that the concrete plan of the Skateboard Park would be included along with the basketball renovation project.

## **Special Events, Activities and Occurrences**

### **School Readiness Program**

**Michelle Jordan, Program Assistant** stated that the Human Services Division participated in a School Readiness Conference on Saturday, November 1, 2003. Eight hundred fifty adults, childcare providers, teachers, concerned parents, and two hundred fifty children attended the conference. Free childcare was provided. At the conference the City of Inglewood was featured, particularly Rogers Park, and some of the volunteers were interviewed.

### **Computer Classes**

Computer classes continue thanks to the partnership with El Camino College and use of a free classroom at the Inglewood El Camino Center, 101 North La Brea. Through the partnership with UCLA and the Americorp Vista Program, Vista students are able to teach classes free of charge. One of the instructors is from China. On Friday, December 12, 2003, there is going to be a graduation potluck, and Commissioners are welcome to attend.

**Rita Gardner** asked how many students have graduated.

**Michelle Jordan** stated that at this time approximately eleven hundred have graduated from computer classes. The program has been running for two years, and classes have been offered in both English and Spanish. Unfortunately there are not enough funds to hire someone to teach the Spanish classes.

**Commissioner Agee** asked if there was money to do the whole program the same day.

**Michelle Jordan** stated that it was decided to give students their certificate the last day of class. We want students to feel celebrated, so a potluck was planned. Every participant will have a chance to show off their cooking and invite friends and family. This was done in the past and has been a success.

**Commissioner Agee** stated that he was not satisfied with the City Council's approval of \$2,500 for Center Park. That money could have been used in the computer program.

**Michelle Jordan** stated that the City is not funding the Computer program. The program is really being supported by partnerships with UCLA and El Camino.

**Rita Gardner** stated that the grant was renewed, but the Department is looking for other funding sources to create more computer classes. Community needs are still being met through the partnerships.

**Commissioner Agee** stated that they had a really nice program last year, so he does not see why they shouldn't have it this year.

**Michelle Jordan** clarified that the PRISM grant was not refunded and that grant is completely over.

**Commissioner Smith** stated if the grants come from various universities and colleges, then Commissioner Agee should meet with Michelle and discuss where funding comes from and maybe something can be done by talking to the board.

**Commissioner Brown** asked if it is possible to get some sponsors to underwrite the partnership because Michelle is doing a tremendous job. There are some businesses that would provide dollars to underwrite the program.

**Michelle Jordan** stated that it would be wonderful. Donation letters have been prepared and money has been requested from other institutions.

**Commissioner Agee** stated that he has a list of names.

**Commissioner Smith** stated if Commissioner Agee does decide to go forward with this, one of the Commissioners should go with him.

### SAT Testing

**Michelle Jordan** thanked the Commission for always being supportive. On Saturday, November 15, 2003, Custom Review is coming out to do a practice SAT. Full practice of SAT is treated as the real thing; there is a timer, no talking, no eating or drinking, and a monitor. This is the second time that this is held. Custom Review normally does not come out back to back. At the school where this exam is offered there are a \$13 charge and these services are provided to the community for free. Students will take the exam on Saturday and the following Monday Custom Review will come out with a folder for each student containing their SAT score, information about the exam itself, college information and much more. The parents are also welcome to come out and talk about a number of things. A representative will be able to come out and offer a workshop regarding financial aid. UCLA found out about it and wants to offer a college application workshop the same day.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** mentioned that two weeks ago he met with Mario Smith, Senior Recreation Supervisor at Rogers Park. During the meeting it was mentioned how kids are not really aware of opportunities to obtain financial aid and go to community colleges. The SAT program offered at Rogers Park is very beneficial. Are Morningside and Inglewood High School obtaining flyers?

**Michelle Jordan** stated that they absolutely get flyers and that is where most of the students come from.

**Commissioner Brown** stated that SATs are usually taken in the junior and senior years. The Commissioner wanted to know if anyone thought about starting this at the ninth grade, because schools of influence start taking the SATs then. Students loose out because they cannot get the necessary financial aid and may be a good idea to start looking at ninth graders who are great achievers.

**Michelle Jordan** stated that the first time SAT testing was held there was one ninth grader and three tenth graders that came from private schools (who appreciate who were not turned away). This time we are asking for students to RSVP in advance in order to accommodate all students.

### R.I.S.E.

**Michelle Jordan** stated that a lot of our community partners really appreciate the fact that we offer R.I.S.E., which stands for Reaching Infinite Success through Education. This is a program that will be ideally ran by college students serving as mentors, but unfortunately we haven't been able to hold students long enough to run it completely, so Trina Tyson and myself run the program every other Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. During the summer we ended up partnering with UCLA and running workshops through their program, which was a phenomenal success. UCLA students came up with many rich ideas and had field trips, study of music, hip-hop culture, talked about race and a lot of things about nature. UCLA students are willing to come out and work with us. The first kick-off will be Saturday, November 13, 2003. Parents and students are signing up. The following Saturday a holiday party will be held so everybody can get acquainted. The R.I.S.E. program originally started to help them with light skills, so we are having the light skills, the academic, and a fun environment. Trina Tyson and myself attended Loyola Marymount University last week and we were able to recruit mentors for that program.

**Commissioner Smith** informed Michelle that there is a program called Saturday School and maybe they will be able to provide some help with the R.I.S.E. Program.

**Michelle Jordan** stated another program ran by students from UCLA is called Heightening Academic Performance through Education, and is offered from 4:00p.m. to 7:00p.m. Monday through Thursday at Rogers Park.

**Michelle Jordan** stated that students from UCLA are planning to have a community youth town hall meeting which has been advertised on KJLH's website. Councilman Price will be there and a number of students will be there. We were informed that there are a number of Spanish speaking parents that will be attending. The Senior Center will be providing us with translation through a head set.

### New Senior Center

**Rita Gardner** stated that on last Tuesday Council voted on the design that the Commission approved and the majority of seniors prefer. The total cost of the project is about \$16.2 million is the total cost of the project.

**Commissioner Smith** stated the Commission was only presented with two designs, one with a driveway on each side and parking on top and the other with parking in the bottom.

**Rita Gardner** stated the architects presented three designs to Council but they choose the same designs the seniors preferred and the Commissioners voted on.

### Holiday Decorating Contest

**Ben Stephens, Senior Recreation Supervisor** stated that at this time the Department is accepting entries for the Holiday Decorating Contest. The contest is conducted citywide with individual and group winners in each Council district. The due date of applications is Wednesday, December 10, 2003, at 5:00 p.m. Entries may be returned to Darby Park, Rogers Park, Vincent Park and City Hall. Judging will take place on Wednesday, December 17 and Thursday, December 18, 2003. Assistance of Commissioners is needed for judging of the contest. Teresa Estrada will contact each Commissioner to discuss selection of judges and confirm judging date and time. Each Commissioner is asked to select up to five residents to serve as judges for their district. Winners will be recognized at the first Council Meeting in January.

### NEW BUSINESS

**Commissioner Giardina** stated she's been talking to Councilman Price and Assemblyman Vincent about improvements at Circle Park, and came up with ideas that they would like to incorporate. There is a drawing and a master plan on how they see Circle Park within the next three to five years and would like to share them with the rest of the Commissioners and staff. In the drawing there is a water fountain that they would like to put in Circle Park. And the last picture is a master plan on how it would look upon completion with the water fountain. Hopefully this will be able to move forward. This very well used park could be used in a better way. The fountain will add a lot of aesthetic value. Seating can be incorporated around the entire circle of the fountain. Many residents use the park for walking and jogging and the plan is to incorporate a track within the park.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** asked where the park is located because he would like to see it.

**Commissioner Giardina** stated that the park is on 82<sup>nd</sup> Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Actually the park has one ring of trees and the plan is to take 4½ to 5 feet from the street and expand the park with another ring of trees. By ringing it the second time, we would be able incorporate the track because most people do their actual physical pounding on the sidewalk. There is really not going to be any cost for land acquisition because the park is already there and we will only a small section of the street. The street is wide enough and is underused.

**Commissioner Smith** asked if by adding more trees would that interfere with traffic.

**Commissioner Giardina** stated that the trees would actually bring the park out so it will be more visible and make it friendlier and will not impede traffic. Because the street around the park is very wide, people get confused and try to go through the opposite direction when it is one way all the way around. By narrowing the street there will be less confusion and more efficiency.

**Rita Gardner** suggested that a tour of all recreation facilities be arranged to familiarize the new Commissioners with City owned facilities and provide an opportunity to see what Commissioner Giardina has in mind. Cost estimates are being generated to gather information about funding needed to implement park improvements.

**Commissioner Agee** stated that he does not know why Senator Vincent didn't do something when he was on the Council. A lot of seniors live in that area and needed something like this and supports it one hundred percent.

#### Restroom Reconstruction at Vincent Park

**Khanh Chu**, Supervising Engineer of Public Works Department stated that since 2002 Public Works has been working with Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department to have the Parks and Recreation Commission adopt the construction of the two new restrooms at Vincent Park. In September 2003 we had difficulties, the lowest bid was \$790,000 and \$625,000 was budgeted. The two departments have worked together and came up with two options. The first option was to scale down with the scope of work and the second option is to do construction of one restroom and upgrade the fixtures inside the other restroom. It is recommended that Commission adopt and proceed with the construction of one restroom for this fiscal year. The remaining funds will be used to upgrade the fixture inside the other restroom.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** asked if the bid was for \$790,000 and if the City was only given \$625,000 and is short \$84,000, so the plan is to fix the inside of the other one? Is there any other sources where the money can be obtain?

**Khanh Chu**, stated that the lowest bid was \$790,000 and the difference will be \$125,000.

**Commissioner Agee** asked what is the cost of one restroom.

**Khanh Chu**, stated the cost of one restroom is about \$520,000.

**Commissioner Smith** asked is the cost of two restrooms \$790,000.

**Khanh Chu** stated that cost for two restrooms is \$790,000 and the difference will be \$125,000.

**Commissioner Smith** asked if there is a report for Commissioners to review before making a decision.

**Khanh Chu** stated no.

**Commissioner Agee** asked if there is a sketch for Commissioners to review, and if so he would like to see it.

**Khanh Chu** stated that at this time he had no sketches or reports available for Commissioners, but he had the plans.

**Rita Gardner** asked Commissioners if they would like to see the plans.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** stated if the cost for one will be \$520,000 and \$790,000 for two, maybe the project could be stalled for some time to see if resources can be obtained to meet the \$790,000 to build the two restrooms.

**Commissioner Brown** stated that he would like to see a report.

**Commissioner Smith** asked for a motion to table the Restroom Reconstruction at Vincent Park until a report is provided. Motion was made by Commissioner Agee and seconded by Commissioner Gutierrez. Motion passed.

**Rita Gardner** stated that recommendation for the new restroom would not go to Council until Commission gives their approval.

**Commissioner Smith** stated that the problem is that for one restroom is \$520,000 and for two it is \$790,000 and seems like a waste of money.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** stated that it is a great proposal, but would like to see the layout.

**Commissioner Agee** asked what kind of restroom is it going to be if it is \$520,000

**Khanh Chu** stated that people look at restrooms different from houses and the restroom that is going to match the existing ones in the park, so it is a special design.

**Rita Gardner** stated that Myers and Associates came up with the design. We asked to look at the other restrooms and come-up with a theme that matches the bathhouse. We are trying to create the rustic theme throughout the park. The playhouse has a rustic color and we would like to have that throughout all the restrooms at Vincent Park and that is why it comes up a little high. We are also asking for a concession stand to be included as part of the design. That is what we have currently by the baseball diamonds. There is a restroom with a concession stand and that is what also brings up the cost of the restroom.

**Khanh Chu** stated that the other restrooms are about 950 square feet and the new one will be about 1,400 square feet.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** stated that this is the reason the numbers are high and it makes sense, but he would still like to see a report.

**Khanh Chu** stated that we did not get a lot of funding for this project.

**Rita Gardner** stated that this project is being funded by Prop A money, which is part of the County of Los Angeles 1992 and 1996 Pro A, Safe Neighborhood Park Per Parcel Grant Program, we do have some funds that might be available from Prop 40, which is the Urban Park Bond Act of 2001, we haven't identified any projects. We had to go before Commission and Council under that project. Council has already directed staff to go forward with this in terms of having the project go out to bid for an architect because they already approved the architect contract.

**Commissioner Smith** asked how many restrooms are currently in Vincent Park.

**Rita Gardner** stated that there are six restrooms at Vincent Park and three are operable. Two restrooms by the soccer stadium and the baseball diamond are very old and would like to bring them up to code and that is why those two were chosen because those are the ones that are used more frequently than any of the other restrooms at Vincent Park.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** asked is this money coming from the City's budget.

**Rita Gardner** stated that it is grant funded and that most of the Capital Improvement projects are funded through grant like bond, state money, as well as the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program that is funded by the federal government. This is funded by the County of Los Angeles.

**Commissioner Smith** asked Rita Gardner if she mentioned that there were additional grant funds.

**Rita Gardner** stated that there were funds from another funding core and it depends on how Council directs us to use allocated funds.

**Commissioner Smith** stated that she prefers that both grant moneys be used.

**Commissioner Giardina** asked if the project could be started and at the same time look for the additional funds to make up the \$125,000.

**Rita Gardner** stated that according to the procedure the project needs to be awarded and in order for it to be awarded it needs to go out to bid and it has to go out to bid which describes the scope of services, so services should indicate if its one or two restrooms, and before it goes to Council the funds have to be available for encumbering for the line item on that particular project. If the total project is going to be more than \$750,000 and we only have \$625,000 in that line item, we won't be able to proceed with that project. So we can proceed with your recommendation in order to go back to staff and discuss what way to go by seeking future funds for the projects.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** asked is staff was going to come up with some ideas.

**Rita Gardner** stated that recommendations could be given to the Director asking if there might be some possible funds or that the rest of the funds may need to be allocated.

**Commissioner Smith** stated that if Commission met twice this month and not in December is staff going to have everything ready for the December meeting if Commission met a week earlier.

**Khanh Chu** stated yes.

**Commissioner Smith** stated that the next Commission Meeting is scheduled the same night as the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, Thursday, December 4, 2003, and would like to reschedule it for Thursday, November 20, 2003.

**Commissioner Agee** stated that he would like to see a schedule or something because \$520,000 is a lot of money and he would like to see what is going to be done with the \$520,000.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** stated that at the last meeting a schedule was provided regarding the New Senior Center Project and it was easy to follow as it was being explained.

**Commissioner Smith** stated that once Khanh Chu returns with the sketches next week, he would be able to continue with the proposal.

#### Ashwood Park Sound Wall

**Rita Gardner** stated that Charng Chen is taking the place of Parviz Koupai who is on the agenda and will be speaking about the sound wall.

**Charng Chen, Transportation Engineer** stated that two weeks ago the County compensated the City with \$100,000 for the Sound Wall project. The project is scheduled to be completed by March 2004.

**Rita Gardner** stated that there is no impact to the parking at this time.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** asked if the wall be covered with ivy.

**Rita Gardner** stated that there would be anti-graffiti spray and some vegetation to cover the wall. This concern will be taken to the Project Engineer.

**Khanh Chu** returned to the meeting with plans and stated that there are two identical plans. There is a consensus that the restroom has one side for men and the other for women. On each side there are two sinks and six fixtures for men and five fixtures for women. One plan meets ADA compliance and the other one is not ADA compliant. The existing one was built before 1976, so there is asphalt and abatement that needs to be done before they can proceed with demolition of the other one. That is why it increases the construction costs.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** stated that it is understandable that one restroom is going to be fixed and touch up... as for the other one; I would like an explanation on how it is going to be done.

**Rita Gardner** stated that this construction is planned to be done at the soccer stadium because that is where it is heavily needed, and touching up the one by the baseball diamond by re-doing the interior as oppose to the exterior.

**Commissioner Smith** asked what is the total square footage of both.

**Khanh Chu** stated that there is a total of 304 square feet and the other one is 1104, so there is a total of 1408 square feet.

**Commissioner Brown** asked how long it would take to implement project.

**Khanh Chu** stated that the construction duration is sixty working days to complete both restrooms.

**Commissioner Brown** asked if this project would be next to the soccer field.

**Khanh Chu** confirmed that one would be next to the soccer field and the other across the road of the baseball diamond.

**Commissioner Brown** asked if there is only going to be one restroom reconstructed.

**Rita Gardner** confirmed that is the plan if Commission recommends going with one. If Commission recommends two restrooms and for staff to seek funding for the completion of this project, than we can go with two, but at this moment we are proposing to go with one.

**Commissioner Agee** stated that he does not want to sound prejudice but it seems that all the funding is geared towards soccer and not towards anything else and he has a concern about that.

**Rita Gardner** stated that one restroom was identified as the most critical in need of repairs. The one by the baseball diamond is not as critical.

**Commissioner Agee** stated that staff was aware of men's restroom problems and asked if this restroom will be any better.

**Rita Gardner** stated that it is hard to project that, but was hoping to have Park Rangers to deter that kind of activities. There is police visibility throughout the park.

**Commissioner Agee** stated that his concern is that everything is being spent on the soccer field and asked when is something going to be spent for baseball or basketball.

**Commissioner Giardina** asked if the structure of the plan will include complete renovation from the inside and would not affect the structure from the exterior. Can it be elaborated of what is meant with touch-up?

**Khanh Chu** stated that the fixtures do not meet the ADA code. The plan is to replace all fixtures with the left over funds if only one restroom is built.

**Commissioner Giardina** asked if in essence it was the intent to build the new restroom and with left over funds upgrade it to ADA code with the replacement of existing fixtures the City will be building a new restroom, and using left over funds to upgrade the other for ADA compliance and replacement of existing fixtures.

**Khanh Chu** stated that we try to do the best things for the restrooms, but not solely for ADA compliance because we have to reconstruct the restrooms to meet the ADA compliance.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Commissioner Smith** stated that the Commission Board needs to elect a new chair and called for nominations.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** made a motion to appoint Commissioner Smith as Chairperson and Commissioner Giardina second the motion. Motion passed.

**Commissioner Agee** stated that he objected to that motion because the new Commissioners need to get a feel of what is going on and maybe one of them would like to run for that position. He also believes that they should have waited a couple more meetings before appointing someone.

## **COMMISSION SUGGESTIONS, REPORTS AND QUESTIONS**

**Commissioner Brown** stated it is ironic that he used to work at a university that was one of the innovators in the field of recreation and ironically he gets the opportunity to act out his wishes. Many of the constituents don't really understand recreation and believe that it is only about gymnasiums and balls. But when he broke the word down he came up with the following meaning: Recreation stands for relaxation, entertainment, crafts, rejuvenation, empowerment, arts, therapeutic, innovation, order and discipline, and neighborly. This means that we are here to aide, provide friendship, we are social, and good sportsmen. He is happy to be here as a Commissioner.

**Commissioner Smith** stated that she welcomes the new Commissioners and that this Commission has had an admirable relationship with each other even if they disagree. Also, there are no arguments and this is one of the things that she appreciates about the board.

**Rita Gardner** stated that this is a historic moment because we have never had five Commissioners at one time, and this is the first time that a meeting is held and all five Commissioners are present.

**Commissioner Agee** stated that for the last four years he has dedicated his life to the Parks and Recreation Commission and he believes that results can be seen. To get railroaded like he did tonight is a bad sign and he believes that no one else has gotten close to doing what he has as far as getting work done in the parks. He knows every employee and doesn't believe that the election of a chairperson should have taken place tonight.

**Commissioner Smith** stated that all Commissioners are here for the children and are trying to do the work that needs to be done for the children.

**Commissioner Agee** asked Commissioner Smith where has she been for the past four years.

**Commissioner Giardina** stated that she has been in Inglewood for twenty-five years and has been a probation officer for the past twenty-five years and has dedicated her life to children and parks and recreation. She is proud of being here and had no idea that a chairperson was going to be elected tonight. There is a paragraph in the bible that talks about selfless acts when you do works and doing from your heart, you don't speak of it and boast on it, the Lord will reward you in its own way. If we are spiritually guided to do the right thing for children then we will just hope that the end results will produce the fruits that we are trying to do, which is to bring something that is very profound. I would like to applaud Michelle for all her work because it is a phenomenal thing to be able to go out and reach children that have made it through college and bring them back to give something to younger children. Commissioner Giardina stated she is grateful and glad to be able to represent Inglewood.

**Commissioners Agee** stated that he has dedicated four years to Parks and Recreation and continues to be dedicated to it.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.