



The monthly meeting of the Inglewood Parks and Recreation Commission was convened on Thursday, August 5, 2004, in the City Council Chambers, located on the 9th floor, of Inglewood City Hall. Commissioner Norma Smith presiding called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

Roll Call

Present:

Commissioner Cindy Giardina – District I
Commissioner Norma Smith - Chairperson
Commissioner Jamie Gutierrez – District III
Commissioner Henry Brown – District IV

Absent

Commissioner Willie Agee – At Large

Staff:

Kevin Hawkins, Director, Parks Recreation and Community Services
Sandra Green, Administrative Secretary
Sabrina Barnes, Recreation Superintendent
Bruce Mills, Park Maintenance Supervisor
Sikizi Allen, Senior Program Specialist

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JULY 8, 2004

A motion for approval of the minutes from July 8, 2004 was made by Commissioner Giardina and seconded by Commissioner Gutierrez. Motion passed.

Public Comments

Ms. Lynette Lewis, 11102 Ardath Avenue – 4th District stated Councilman Franklin held a Clean-Up Day for 4th District that was very well received. Ms. Lewis thanked Sabrina Barnes, Recreation Superintendent for making chairs available for the event, but expressed concern about the condition of Center Park. Ms. Lewis stated that a new coat of paint and steam cleaning of the interior and exterior restrooms would help the situation.

Commissioner Giardina asked if Ms. Lewis frequented Center Park regularly.

Ms. Lewis stated yes.

Commissioner Giardina asked Ms. Lewis if the day in question was an exception or if the conditions observed are the normal condition the park.

Ms. Lewis stated normally, but the City needs to try to clean it up.

Josephine De La Torre, 11162 Doty Avenue stated she was present to talk about the grass and children playing at Center Park. She stated the grass is normally replaced during the summer, but believes it should be replaced during the winter or fall because residents do not use the park as often and children are in school. Ms. De La Torre also stated youth are not being allowed to practice soccer at the park and believes there is a misunderstanding because the youth are not a part of a league, they are simply practicing. Youth were also told that they could not play with metal cleats and she does not know what the problem is. Ms. De La Torre also asked why Lockhaven Community Center was always locked, except during hours when lunch is served.

Commissioner Brown asked Ms. De La Torre to inform the Commissioners about the discussion that they had regarding the adult and midget soccer league.

Ms. De La Torre's Father, stated adults have been playing soccer at Center Park with cleats and have not been told anything. Mr. De La Torre said he did not understand the reason why children were told they could not play at the park, which is the only park in the area. As a taxpayer the policy seems unfair and I do not believe it is fair because I am a taxpayer.

Commissioner Brown asked what time practice was being held.

Mr. De La Torre stated Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Commissioner Giardina asked if children practice in cleats.

Mr. De La Torre stated no.

Maria De La Torre stated the park is needed to train the children. They participate in league play at other parks and simply practice at Center Park.

David Denales, 3425 W. 108th Street stated someone from the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department told him to leave Center Park and he did not believe it was fair.

Commissioner Brown asked Mr. Denales who told him to leave.

David Denales stated he did not remember the persons name but it was someone from Parks and Recreation.

Josephine De La Torre stated there will be other problems if the park remains closed to the public. Gangs, drugs, and tagging activity will increase and it will not be a nice environment because there is not enough security.

Kevin Hawkins stated staff is prepared to respond. We thank the public for coming out to express their concerns. I would like to make one thing clear. No one has been precluded from the park. The park is a community park and no one has ever been shut out from the park. In terms of allowing certain types of play, that is something we are prepared to respond to.

As it relates to Ms. Lewis I too was a little disappointed when I heard about the restrooms. As it relates to the re-soding, I'm sure that Bruce Mills, Park Maintenance Supervisor is eager to begin this work. The Department has been tasked with preventing illegal play at Center Park. The Inglewood Unified School District has been engaged in illegal play at Center Park, which basically destroyed our fields.

Is there a good time to re-sod the fields, no, especially when we are spending taxpayers' dollars to do it. There comes a time when we have to address these issues for the safety of the community.

Sabrina Barnes stated Center Park is for the community, but the Department does have a priority use system for athletic fields that gives youth groups first priority. The Department has been trying to address the issue of adult soccer players using the fields illegally, and that is all that is taking place. The posted signs say the City does not allow organized soccer play. Organized from our perspective means anything that has a uniform, schedule, regularity, and a formal process. If you are just practicing or kicking a ball around we encourage that because the park is for public use, but cleats are not allowed. Because it is a small area, the City must balance the needs of the entire community to make sure that everyone has equal access. If necessary to accommodate regular activity the Department does have other facilities and welcome you to hold your organized games at one of these locations.

Mr. De La Torre stated it is not posted that cleats are not allowed.

Sabrina Barnes stated the cleat item is not posted, but we can provide you with a copy of our field reservation policy that talks about what is allowed and what is not. Ground friendly (non-metal) cleats are not a problem, but adults wear metal cleats that lift up dirt and tear-up the ground. Metal cleats are prohibited.

Sabrina Barnes stated the Lockhaven Community Center is only open when there are programs there, such as the Summer Food Program, Karate, or Pre-School. The Department is aware of the concerns and is looking at how to expand the opportunities by remodeling the Lockhaven Community Center to increase public access. We are aware of your concerns.

Commissioner Giardina stated we thank the community for coming out and expressing their concerns. If all your concerns were not addressed tonight, you can speak with Commissioner Brown in the next couple of days. He should have your answers.

Communications

None.

Directors Report

Kevin Hawkins, Director stated a press release was included in the agenda packet regarding the incident at Vincent Park. At this time the press release is the only statement regarding the matter. The matter is under investigation, at this time and the Department is not aware of any legal action, but is anticipating something, so that is why we are not elaborating. Most important is the fact that a 7 year old is no longer with us and our prayers continue to go out to the family.

Parks Division

Bruce Mills, Park Maintenance Supervisor stated the mowing of parks is going back to the regular schedule. Mowing was behind due to equipment failures. Staff is working hard and preparing the park for the Jazz Festival. This year children did not cut their feet on the surface of the pool.

Bruce Mills stated two at-risk youth between the ages of 14 and 25 were hired part-time, who will be working on weekends to clean the parks.

Kevin Hawkins stated grant funds were used to hire at risk youth to assist in areas that needed help. We were concerned about the look of the parks Monday through Friday, but the parks are mostly used on weekends and that has always been our biggest challenge in terms of staffing. With part-timers working on weekends they will be assuring that the parks and the bathrooms are cleaned.

Bruce Mills stated there has been a big difference in the condition of the parks since part-time staff started working. They work 150 percent to keep the park clean. During the last two weeks, there has been heavy tagging at Vincent Park. Tree crews started trimming trees at Vincent Park, so more light will come through. The Edison Company will be receiving additional funds and Vincent Park is on their list for installation of a new lighting system.

Bruce Mills stated the coordinators of the Summer Food Program have been doing a great job in making sure children put their trash in the trash containers, as opposed to past years when trash was discarded all over the park.

Commissioner Giardina stated the Police Department uses cage cameras in problem areas that need to be highlighted and asked if the Police can install

cage cameras at Vincent Park and get a follow up on graffiti because that is a dangerous situation. Once they start tagging they are actually striking down the wall for territory, and another gang will come by and do the cross out, that is threatening each other with death. That is something that we do not want to leave on the walls any length of time. Maybe we can work in conjunction with the Police Department.

Kevin Hawkins stated that is a good suggestion. The camera used is a Flashcam system. Parks and Recreation purchased some cameras when Graffiti Abatement used to be with the Department. The camera was invented by a Police Officer and is an audiovisual camera, so when the tagging is occurring it will snap a photo and say, "your photo has been taken by the Inglewood Police Department". Once a high tagged area is identified a camera will be installed. The Police Department is also using it for prostitution stings. At this point I am only aware of three (3) cameras that the City has purchased, and we have recommended that more be purchased. In a previous meeting I mentioned the budget process. During the budget process we were given a chance to respond to the question, if you needed something, what would it be? Our response was, the provision of additional services by the Police Department because park safety issues are law enforcement related. Graffiti is a crime against property, we often observe behavior taking place in our restrooms that is inappropriate, and gangs congregate in our parks. The issue is to make sure our parks are safe. I am happy to report some of these issues will be addressed, since Commissioners have talked to Council. We are preparing a cover memo for the City Administrator for the resolution that Commissioners passed.

Commissioner Gutierrez stated he went to Vincent Park and Ashwood Park and there was more graffiti there than in the last month or two. When you exit the 405 freeway from Manchester you can see the heavy tagging. Police patrol is the only source of control. In the past I have recommended ivy for the walls, is ivy in the plans?

Kevin Hawkins asked if Commissioner Gutierrez is referring to the Ashwood sound wall.

Commissioner Gutierrez stated the wall that comes from Inglewood to La Tijera. At this time there is no graffiti along that wall, but I believe once that wall is completed, it is going to be tagged. I am recommending that ivy be put up to

eliminate that. I spoke to the Councilman about that and I would like to know if there are plans to put ivy on the sound wall.

Kevin Hawkins stated if you are talking about Inglewood he believes Commissioner Gutierrez is referring to part of the Ashwood area, and Cal Trans is still working on that area. Just recently Cal Trans asked us to modify our watering, because the watering is wetting the concrete. I know your recommendation of covering the wall with ivy has been forwarded to Cal Trans, so we will make sure we monitor the situation.

Summer food Program

Sikizi Allen, Senior Program Specialist stated the Summer Food Program is doing very well and is getting a lot of community residents who are now participating in the lunch program. A “share box” was created for the kids to trade off what food items they dislike for something more favorable to eat.

Ms. Allen stated Basic ESL classes are being offered at Lennox Park for Spanish-speaking senior citizens. Over 20 students are learning phrases that will be used on a daily basis, such as my back hurts and doctor. The class runs from Monday, July 19 through Wednesday, August 11, 2004. A graduation celebration is scheduled for Thursday, August 12, 2004, at the end of the session.

Ms. Allen stated Nutrition Membership / Lunch Registration Card is underway at Inglewood and Lennox meal sites. Hawthorne Senior Center is scheduled to begin this month. This is a new automated project developed by Los Angeles County Community and Senior Services Department / Area Agency on Aging. We are implementing the first phase of this project, which involves collecting and inputting client data intake information for all new and existing clients who participate in the congregate and home-delivered meals. The County purchased laptop computers and scanners for Lennox, Hawthorne and Inglewood Senior Center.

Sikizi Allen stated Assemblyman Jerome Horton sponsored his annual “Senior Day at the Races” at Hollywood Park Racetrack on Saturday, July 17, 2004. Inglewood Senior Center provided bus transportation for Inglewood, Lennox and Hawthorne senior participants.

Commissioner Brown stated there were some individuals who indicated on Saturday that they wanted to come before the Commissioners, is it possible for them to do it at this point?

Commissioner Smith stated they can come before the Commissioners at the end.

Commissioner Giardina asked if the Title III-E funds are for seniors only or also for people that need in-home care.

Sikizi Allen stated the Title III-E, which is caregivers family support and is for caregivers who have to take care of youth under the age of 18 and also for caregivers who take care of seniors of 60 years of age and older.

Commissioner Brown asked how is the new home delivered meals van working out.

Sikizi Allen stated great.

Commissioner Brown stated he would like a picture of before and after. The drivers polish it everyday, and deliveries are a lot smoother.

Kevin Hawkins stated because of the Commissioners efforts and pressure that was put on Administration and Council, we were able to get the van.

Recreation

Summer Activities

Sabrina Barnes stated we are in the process of wrapping-up the summer seasonal activities. The 2nd session of the Summer Day Camp will end on Friday, August 20, 2004. At this time we are serving approximately 400 youth in that program. This year field trips were reduced, but we were determined that children got the maximum experience, so we added additional components, which included every camper getting involved with tennis, art instruction, dance lessons, special activities. In order for campers to feel that they have the number of fields trips that they were accustomed to having, we have expanded our fun day. Every year we have a fun day where all the campers come together to unite for fun at Vincent Park. This year, fun day will take place on Monday, August 16, 2004, and will be an all day activity. The

event will include interactive games, sports, and food, which will be provided by the In-N-Out mobile unit.

Circle of Life

Ms. Barnes stated Inglewood youth, ages 5 to 18, will take to the Vincent Park amphitheater stage on Sunday, August 8, 2004, at 2:30 p.m., for a performance of "Circle of Life," an adaptation of Disney's "The Lion King." The event will mark the culmination of a four-week Summer Arts Camp presented by the Department. The camp includes art, dance, and voice training.

Sports

Ms. Barnes stated we are in the baseball season at this time and flag football will be starting shortly and registration will be underway next month. Flyers will be available to Commissioners during the next Commission Meeting.

Skate Park

Ms. Barnes stated the skate park construction at Darby Park is going well. At this time we are securing and purchasing the structure that will be installed in the park. Once the Skate Park is completed we will be holding a grand opening and ribbon cutting.

Lockhaven Community Center

Ms. Barnes stated Public Works has been assigned the remodeling project at Lockhaven Community Center. Two rooms that are located on the 2nd story will be converted into one large room to make a computer room. The bathroom, carpet and tile will be updated to refresh the facility. The SHAPE Program, pre-school and other programs will be held at Lockhaven.

Summer Free Swim Program

Ms. Barnes stated the City will sponsor a Summer Free Swim Program at Morningside High School. The Inglewood Unified School District will provide the venue at not cost to the City and the Department's Recreation Division will staff the activity. Activities will include swimming and various recreation activities provided by the Mobile Recreation Program. Originally scheduled to begin on Thursday, July 29, 2004, the program was delayed pending approval

of the Joint Use of Facilities Agreement by the Mayor and Council Members. The program will begin on Thursday, August 5, 2004.

Jazz Festivals

Kevin Hawkins stated he did not know if Commissioners had an opportunity to attend the 1st Annual Hollywood Park Jazz Festival, but the attendance was pretty good. Sabrina Barnes has been on loan to Hollywood Park for provision of technical assistance.

Kevin Hawkins stated plans are underway for the 2nd Annual Jazz Festival that will be held on September 4 and 5, 2004, at Vincent Park. Mr. Hawkins stated he is talking to the promoter to make sure the Commissioners are not forgotten.

Movie in the Park

Sabrina Barnes stated on Saturday, July 24 and 31, the Department presented its 1st Annual "Movie in the Park" series. The movie took place at Vincent Park soccer field and featured "Finding Nemo" on week one and "Daddy Day Care" on week two. Both events were very successful. More than 500 residents, their family and friends enjoyed two unforgettable evenings of cinema under the stars. It was a wonderful event and we are looking forward to next year to expand from 2 weeks to 4 weeks.

Commissioner Brown asked is there going to be vendors this year at the Jazz Festival, if so what will be the cost, because several people have approached me.

Kevin Hawkins stated a vendor's package will be posted on the website and more information may also be obtained from the South Bay Entertainment Group.

Commissioner Brown stated the only problem that I saw at the Hollywood Park Jazz Festival was the sound. Vendors had a hard time hearing customers due to the music.

Kevin Hawkins stated there is a fundamental difference between that venue and our facility in the sound quality. We have a natural sound there and as well as the investment in the sound technician. Last year I received feedback

from one of the artist, Norman Brown, he couldn't believe the sound quality and wanted to play again, but his schedule did not permit. So just the natural acoustics of Vincent Park and the amphitheater is much better than Hollywood Park. I am not saying that just because it is our park, but because the artists confirm that.

Commissioner Brown stated Sikizi did not mention the turnout for the Day at the Races luncheon. A lot of the seniors received commendations for their volunteer work. Fifty seniors from Inglewood, Hawthorne, and Lennox received awards. We have 2 honorees from each site that received commendations from the City Council and Mayor. Over 200 seniors were in attendance.

New Business

None.

Unfinished Business

None.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

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