The monthly meeting of the Inglewood Parks and Recreation Commission was convened on Thursday, January 13, 2005, in the City Council Chambers, located on the 9th floor, of Inglewood City Hall. Commissioner Cindy Giardina presiding called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

Roll Call

Present:

Commissioner Willie Agee – At Large Commissioner Cindy Giardina – District I Commissioner Henry Brown – District IV

Absent:

Commissioner Norma Smith - District II

Staff:

Sandra Green, Administrative Secretary Mario Smith, Senior Recreation Supervisor Patricia Bitker, Program Specialist Bruce Mills, Park Maintenance Supervisor

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion for approval of the minutes from November 10, 2004 was made by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Agee.

Public Comments

None.

Communications

None.

Director's Report

Human Services

BINGO Grant

On December 8, 2004 staff from the Senior Center, accepted a check for \$6,000 from the BINGO Charities fund. The funds were deposited in the Non-Profit account to be used for senior citizens in need.

Family Support Program Extension

On December 14, 2004, the Human Services Division received notification that the Family Support grant has been extended for six months from January 1, 2005 to June 30, 2005, with funds totaling \$58,000. The scope of work for this extension includes the Americorps VISTA volunteers who will assist in locating grant funds, as well as work on Youth Enrichment Activities, including the College Resource Lab and College Preparation Events (Princeton Review, College Empowerment, field trips to local Colleges and Universities and the Annual College, Career and Health Fair). The VISTAs also teach computer and ESL Classes. Other programs funded by Family Support are Career Development Activities, such as the Annual Regional Job Fair and Job Shadow Day. In addition, this grant extension will support the extension of the Oral History Project, the Youth Radio 89.9 program and allow planning for a youth driven update of the *Youth Action Plan*, which was adopted by the Mayor and Council Members in 1999.

Mural Restoration

On December 13, 2004, Lesley Elwood, Program Coordinator and member of the Inglewood Site Preservation Committee, made a presentation to the California Cultural and Historical Endowment Board in Sacramento on behalf of our grant request for \$160,000. This means we made the first cut and now are awaiting the final decision. Receipt of this grant will allow for timely completion of the Mural Restoration and Relocation Project.

Commissioner Agee asked if we made the first cut for the Transportation Mural for \$160,000.

Patricia Bitker stated yes we did.

Commissioner Agee stated I'm glad to hear that. You know I'm on the committee and it has been a struggle.

Patricia Bitker stated yes, I do.

Pilot Snack Program for After-School Programs

On December 7, 2004 the Mayor and Council Members approved the agreement with NDK Foods, the low bidder to vend the snacks to the thirteen after-school program sites. Because of questions regarding the insurance, the program began on January 3, 2005. We are serving approximately 800 snacks per day to our youth and the numbers are growing. The youth really appreciate the nutritious snacks, which consist of milk or juice plus a muffin, fruit, crackers and cheese and other items.

New Grant

We are working on a grant to the State of California Department of Transportation to fund 80% of the purchase of two new paratransit vans to expand our fleet. This is a unique opportunity to expand our service to meet growing needs. The proposal is due on February 3, 2005.

Commissioner Giardina stated congratulations to staff on the success of your projects.

Pat Bitker stated the snack program makes an enormous difference.

Parks Division

Tree Maintenance

Within two weeks, the Fleet Services Division will be seeking approval of the Mayor and Council Member's for the purchase of two new chipper bodies that will be attached to existing trucks, a new stump grinder, and a new tractor that will be utilized by both Parks Maintenance and Tree Maintenance.

Capital Improvement Projects

The Lockhaven Community Center Renovation Project is currently underway involving Parks, Recreation and Community Services and Public Works. Two employees of the Parks Division are handling the demolition phase.

The Basketball Court Renovation Project at Darby Park has been completed.

The Skate Park Construction Project at Darby Park is 90% complete. The Project Manager is proposing to have the surface coated in order to improve the aesthetic look of the area.

Tornado in Inglewood

On December 29, 2004, a tornado touched down in Inglewood. A total of 20 employees from the Parks Division were involved in the major clean up which took six hours. There were 20 trees damaged from the storm and five trees that fell. There were no reports of major damage to any homes. Fallen trees and limbs hit three vehicles.

Commissioner Giardina asked did the clean up include the tree that fell on Van Ness yesterday?

Bruce Mills stated this was the work that was done on the 29th of December for the tornado clean up only. This was the hard work of the Emergency Crew. I was there myself and I commend the hard work everyone did.

Commissioner Agee stated we would like to commend you especially for the work at Darby Park. These projects really mean a lot to me. Over the past four years I've been working hard to get a Skateboard Park in the City for the kids, so we're making a good start. As far as the tornado is concerned, Jerry Givens did his job and never paid one minute of overtime, unbelievable. As a matter of fact we have the best Park and Recreation people and Street Maintenance people in the whole South Bay. I really want to commend you. On Tuesday, the City Council realized what a great job you did and they also thanked you.

Commissioner Giardina stated it was just a matter of hours before the tree that had fallen on Van Ness was cleaned up. There was no sign that a tree had ever come down. You have an incredible response time. Your entire units as well as the other workers here at the City are to be commended, they did a fabulous job. Thank you for your hard work.

Recreation

2004 Holiday Decorating Contest

Special thanks to all of you for your assistance with the Holiday Decorating Contest. This year we had over 60 residents who participated in the contest. Contestants were judged on elements such as elaboration, creativity and complexity.

2005 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Activities

The City of Inglewood will conduct its 22nd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration on this Saturday, January 15, 2005. As in previous years, the festivities will include a celebratory service and a symbolic commemorative Civil Rights March. New this year, the event will begin with the ecumenical service. The ceremony will take place at 9:00 a.m. at the Tabernacle at Faithful Central Bible Church, 321 N. Eucalyptus Avenue. The symbolic commemorative civil rights March will take place immediately following the ceremony. Marchers will leave The Tabernacle and walk to Hollywood Park (Gate 8 at Pincay Drive (formally known as 90th Street) and Kareem Court). Keynote speaker – Dr. William Thurmond, Sr. Pastor of Park Windsor Church. M.C. – Janine Haydell, radio personality for KJLH 102.3 FM. Grand Marshals – Joanna Hayes, 2004 Track and Field Olympic Gold Medalist, Shirley Strawberry of 100.3 FM The Beat's "Steve Harvey Morning Show," and KTLA Channel 5 News Anchor Michaela Periera. Flyers are available in your packet.

Skate Park Ordinance

It's anticipated the Skate Park will be up and running in the next two months. In December, the City Council approved an agreement with Spohn Ranch to manufacture and install skate park equipment at Darby Park. Staff is working with Legal to draft an ordinance that outlines the policies for the Park. By law, we will require helmets, knee and elbow pads. The ordinance will also deal with hours of operation, and address courtesies at the park such as no profanity, graffiti, food and drinks allowed, no skating on wet surfaces and other issues such as these. We will advise you again before the ordinance goes to Council.

Siminski Park Programs Relocated/Site Temporarily Closed

Due to an Edison power surge in District Three, Siminski Park was closed. All programs have been relocated to Rogers Park until repairs can be made. Staff is working with Edison to expedite the process.

Basketball Season

Basketball season will get under way shortly. We are currently expecting registration for youth interested in playing basketball.

Commissioner Brown stated just three things that you didn't mention. It is always amazing to me what extensive work the staff of Parks and Recreation does. I think that they went above and beyond the call of duty for the Tree Lighting Ceremony. The turnout was something I've never seen before and I commend the staff. The Christmas Decorating Contest, in which I was involved and had a wonderful time going out to the districts. What I would hope is that we can push back the actual deadline date because there were people still trying to get their decorations up in the little time capsule that we had. In District 4 we did have new winners, and I'm quite proud of that. We took many pictures.

As for the MLK Services and the parade itself, I want to go on record and highlight Sabrina Barnes. She says this is just her job, but you have to see what she goes through to put this event together. I'm just so happy to be apart of the team. I commend all the efforts you've put forth. I went before the Council to speak about this years' event almost turning into a political football. I know if King were alive he wouldn't want to see it that way. I just want the staff to know that we appreciate them.

Commissioner Giardina stated she'd like to comment on a little bit of what Commissioner Brown stated. We had incredible participation this year, as we always do. I was hoping that maybe we can work together with Parks & Recreation to see about altering the deadline date of the contest from the 16th to the 18th or the 19th in order to give residents more time to actually complete their

decorating. There were people still trying to put up their decorations in the little time they had. There were a number of people that would have had much more expensive and elaborate decorations, but they seemed to be short on time this year. I know traditionally the deadline is the 16th, but if we can make a recommendation to the Committee maybe it will be possible to push the date back to the 18th or 19th. It will give the residents more time to complete their decorating, and also allow more residents to participate. I thought the contest was wonderful; a tremendous job well done. It is very gratifying to see that kind of interaction amongst so many people. We really enjoyed it, and it was wonderful to be a part of it.

Commissioner Agee stated going back to what Commissioner Brown stated about King's birthday becoming a political football, that's not the way it should be. I'm not on the committee, but if it's possible I'd like to be a part of the committee for next year. This is about Dr. King's birthday; it's not supposed to be a religious thing. I have some ideas that I'd like to bring forward next year. Everyone is not religious, but they want to celebrate Dr. King's birthday and I think that's the way he would want it to be. Next year maybe we can make a few changes.

By the way there Mario, you're doing a good job over there (Darby & Center Park), and I'm keeping my eyes on you.

Mario Smith stated Thank you Sir.

New Business

None.

<u>Unfinished Business</u>

None.

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Agee stated I want to talk about the Holiday Decorating Contest. I did not have the opportunity to participate in it this year, but I did watch it on television. I didn't think it was right for candidates to politicize the Decorating Contest or to go inside people's homes. I thought we were judging the decorations from outside. We represent the City, if you go into people's houses and something happens the City is liable. There are other reasons as to why we should not go into people's houses. That was the way it was when I was judging the contest lights. We'd drive by and pick out the best lighting and continue onto the next home. This year was totally different and I really didn't care for it, but I'm just one Commissioner. Maybe next year staff can correct this.

Commissioner Brown stated I went inside some homes because I was invited in. I took some lovely pictures and will bring them back to Parks and Recreation to show how people went above and beyond the call of duty. I didn't have any councilperson riding with me, this was something I did on my own and I was well received. I'm into unity and in District 4 where I am Commissioner; they had always been on the backside. This year we jumped out there. We had more participation than we have had in previous years and the response I received was positive. I don't want us to put too many restrictions on how we judge the contest. The only thing I am sorry that didn't happen was the letters that were supposed to go out to the residents from the Council Members themselves, thanking them for their participation regardless of how well they decorated. It shows the community that some people can do something when they get a chance to show their creativity. I can only speak for District 4; I didn't see the program but can speak from what I was told and from my participation. I had a bus full of kids, and we had a ball.

Commissioner Giardina stated I too went on the Decorating Contest and I too was invited in. It was the same thing in my district as well. There was also another issue where a resident had collected over 2000 toys and they shared that with me. The Saturday before the Contest, they had an event that allowed all children to come from whichever district to partake in receiving toys, hot apple cider, and cookies. The people in District 1 who had agreed to come on my bus ended up having unforeseen emergencies. I requested for more people to ride on my bus and the only one available was Councilman Price. We did go into 1 particular house-- we did not go into houses-- we went into one house and were gratified by it and I enjoyed the experience. Certainly it wasn't us asking to come in, we were invited in. I thought it would have been extremely rude and discourteous to not go in when we were invited to see the other decorations. I thought it was a wonderful event. Opinions are what they are, very individual. It was not a political event. It was something we partook in, in the spirit of Christmas. We were gratified to have had the participation from District 1, it was a phenomenal turnout and I enjoyed it.

I think we should remember that Martin Luther King, Jr. was a Reverend. There is a spirituality that we do partake in. I hope that this blessed event turns out to be wonderful and well attended.

Again I want to commend the staff here at the City of Inglewood, you do a phenomenal job going above and beyond the call of duty. With so little money, a lot was accomplished. Without overtime you still managed to do it. It's not about the money; it's about the art of professionalism in doing a good job.

Mario Smith asked how were the toys in District 1 handed out?

Commissioner Giardina stated one of the particular persons who decorated, collected the 2000 toys and distributed them to all the kids in the neighborhood as well as all of the kids who came by. It was a private thing he did, and we thanked him for it.

Commissioner Agee stated I'm not trying to knock anything, but it appears that the rules have changed. I was told years ago that you couldn't go into people's houses. I did see City Councilmen in Districts 1 & 2 campaigning.

Commissioner Brown stated the MLK Committee would welcome anyone to be a part of the committee.

I enjoyed judging the Holiday Decorating Contest and meeting the people.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to end the meeting.

Commissioner Agee seconded the motion.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.