

The monthly meeting of the Inglewood Parks and Recreation Commission was convened on Thursday, September 1, 2005, in the City Council Chambers, located on the 9th floor, of Inglewood City Hall. Commissioner Norma Smith presiding called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Roll Call

Present:

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

Absent:

Commissioner Irlanda Ordonez – District III

Staff:

Rita Gardner, Parks Administration Superintendent
Stephanie Baltazar, Office Assistant
Trina Tyson, Program Assistant
Arrick Turner, Recreation Supervisor

Commissioner Smith stated Commissioner Brown, do you have a request?

Commissioner Brown stated yes. Can we have a moment of silence for the victims of the hurricane? Commissioner Agee and I are both from that area.

Commissioner Smith stated we will take a moment of silence for the victims in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi.

A moment of silence was taken for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

Commissioner Smith stated thank you. I'd like to say and I'm sure I'm speaking on behalf of the whole staff, Commissioner Brown, Commissioner Giardina and Commissioner Agee; our hearts go out to you and we will be praying for you and your relatives.

Public Comments

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion for the approval of the minutes from August 4, 2005, was made by Commissioner Brown and seconded by Commissioner Giardina.

Director's Report

Rita Gardner stated on behalf of Kevin Hawkins, I wanted to thank you for your attendance and support at the Market Street Festival. We usually have it later in the year, but because we wanted to build a momentum for the Summer Jazz Festival at Vincent Park, we held the Market Street Festival early this year. We also had several events at the amphitheater this past week which led up to the concert on Saturday. I want to insure you understand that we appreciate your support and attendance at the festival.

Sandra will be contacting you for your availability for a field trip inspection with staff to all the parks in the city. I'm certain this will take place some time in October.

An orientation will also be scheduled for the new Commissioners. It will be given by the City Attorney's Office regarding Commissioner's roles and responsibilities.

I'd like to go ahead and start with my division. At last month's monthly meeting there were some questions regarding plans and specifications. I have copies of those plans for you. These are only preliminary plans and they have not been approved by the Building and Safety Department. What I'd like to let you know is that the project is on going and if any of you have been to Vincent Park, you will have noticed that two restrooms have been completely demolished. We went to Council way back in February, stating the restroom facilities were going to be pre-engineered. What that means is that the restrooms are going to be built according to the specifications we gave them. It is different from prefab. Prefab as I understand it is a completely built facility and all they do is they take the building and lay it on the foundation. The difference between pre-engineered is that they build according to the specifications that we give them. They also build the foundation that they set the building on. They will also connect all circuit breakers, electrical lines, water and sewer lines. The contractor is Romtec, Inc., and they are based in Oregon. They have been approved by Council to construct a pre-engineered restroom. What we've done so far is contact them and ask them to modify some of the plans and specifications you have before you. The electrical plan which is on page E2 is not complete and that is why we have not had building and safety approve their construction permit. We have picked out the colors of the restrooms. We are trying to match the theme we have going on in the park now, which is a rustic theme. The brick is going to be very similar to the brick that is at the bathhouse, the roof and tile will be the same texture, and the concrete will match as close as possible so it won't look like it's a different type of building.

Commissioner Giardina stated I just wanted to ask you Rita, you mentioned they will construct the foundation and then they will bring in the pre-engineered building and equipment and set it in. I'm just concerned about the tile on the walls, can you elaborate on that?

Rita Gardner stated there are no tiles on the floor, it will be concrete. When I referred to tiles I meant the tiles of the roof.

Commissioner Giardina stated, I understand. But I'm asking will the floor be concrete or will it have tile?

Rita Gardner stated the walls will be concrete as well, just like it was in the old restrooms. Are you asking about the exterior?

Commissioner Giardina stated no, I'm asking about the interior of the actual restrooms. Will it have some sort of tile on the floor?

Rita Gardner stated I don't know if there will be tile on the walls. Like I said, it is pre-engineered. I wasn't privy to the plans and specifications when it was discussed but I can certainly get the information from our contractor. If it's not already in the plans, we can request some description of what the interior walls will look like.

Commissioner Giardina stated maybe they can send us some renditions that we can take a look at it.

Rita Gardner stated I will ask them to send renditions.

Commissioner Smith stated you only have to make two (2) copies of these plans.

Rita Gardner stated I can provide those for you after the meeting.

Commissioner Agee stated to my understanding, the major reason for demolishing the previous restrooms was to make them accessible to wheelchairs.

Rita Gardner stated that is correct.

Commissioner Agee stated what they normally do at Darby Park is spray chemicals in the restrooms and then they use the water hose and wash it down. If it's graffitied, they can paint over it. If you have tile on the floor, I don't think you'd be able to water the floor down because eventually the tile will come up. That is to my understanding. I'm familiar with blue prints and what I see here is exactly what we need and I want to congratulate staff.

I don't know what the job is going to look like when it is finished, but based on what I see here it is going to be just what we need in the park.

Commissioner Smith stated thank you Commissioner.

Commissioner Brown asked is this project underway?

Rita Gardner stated it is. Unfortunately we do have a delay and it is because Building and Safety has not approved the plans and they can not issue a construction permit. It's going to be mid October when they start the construction on the restrooms. That means the delay will cause the construction of the project to fall past December. We are looking at probably mid January as to when we can have both bathrooms completely constructed. As we get into the rainy season, it might push it to the beginning of February.

Commissioner Brown asked do you have a back up plan?

Rita Gardner stated yes. We are thinking of putting some port-a-potties by the soccer stadium. There is a restroom by the tennis courts, which has been used by our baseball participants. They only have to walk down about 100 feet to get to it.

Commissioner Smith stated thank you Commissioner Brown. Rita, are there any more reports you'd like to give us?

Rita Gardner stated yes. I will also provide additional copies.

Commissioner Smith stated before I make any comments on this, I'd like to see it first.

Rita Gardner stated ok.

Commissioner Agee asked would you like my copy?

Commissioner Smith stated sure, thank you. Now you only have to make one (1) copy Rita.

Rita Gardner stated I have an extra copy in my office. I just didn't bring it because there are a few attachments that have not been collated, so it is not complete.

I'd like to continue with Capital Improvement Projects.

Vincent Park Swimming Pool Valve

We are In the midst of replacing the valves in the swimming pool at Vincent Park, they have been there since the pool was built. We did receive some money from the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District.

Commissioner Smith stated Rita; didn't we replace the tile over there already?

Rita Gardner stated they replaced the tile floor in the swimming pool last year.

Commissioner Smith asked are the pumps along the side of the pool?

Rita Gardner stated these are the pumps that pump out the chlorine. The pumps and valves are very old and irreparable.

Commissioner Smith stated ok, so you are not replacing the little valves in the pool?

Rita Gardner stated no, we are replacing the pumps in the pump room which is right next to the swimming pool.

Commissioner Smith stated ok.

Skate Park Construction

The skate park construction and concrete slab for Vincent Park and Rogers Park will be taken to Council in September. Shortly there after, they will be installing the concrete slabs at both parks.

Tree Trimming Schedule

The tree trimming schedule is currently available online.

We are in the process of replacing diseased and problematic trees. Tonight, Mark Martinez is attending Councilman Morales' town hall meeting. There are a lot of concerns. We do receive a lot of calls to cut down trees and prune roots due to the invasion of roots into sewer lines. We are trying to replace the trees that cause a lot of damage to the sidewalks.

Commissioner Smith stated I have to commend your guys. They did an excellent job replacing a lot of damaged trees on 64th Place. While I have your attention I will report this now, right across the street from me, the sidewalk goes into a "v" shape, because of the roots of the tree.

Rita Gardner asked is it on 64th Place?

Commissioner Smith stated the sidewalk is actually on Eucalyptus.

Rita Gardner stated I'll submit this to our Public Works Department.

Commissioner Smith stated I think the address is 200.

Rita Gardner asked 200 Eucalyptus?

Commissioner Smith stated 200 W. 64th Place.

Rita Gardner stated ok, I'll refer that to Public Works who handles sidewalk repairs. We have received some calls regarding trees that were causing an area to be dark over by Vincent Park. We went out there today and we trimmed those trees and it looks much better. I don't know if you have been by the park during the twilight time. It did create a very unsafe area and now hopefully it will deter all of the criminal acts that have been going on in that area. That is it for the Parks Division. I'd like to turn it over to the Recreation section.

Commissioner Agee stated I just want to congratulate Parks and Recreation on the concert that was held at Vincent Park on Monday night. I had no idea Parks and Recreation had so much talent.

Rita Gardner stated we had a talent show which showcased our City's employees' who have such wonderful gifts from God.

Commissioner Agee stated I tried to get a contract for James Henry.

Rita Gardner stated he is one of our employees who sang his heart out.

Commissioner Agee stated absolutely.

Rita Gardner asked are there anymore questions?

Commissioner Brown stated you did mention earlier the Market Street Festival. It was hot and in speaking with Kevin, we found that we did bump heads with other activities and it posed a problem. Overall the food was good; I think the second entertainment was better than the first. Overall it was a great festival.

Arrick Turner stated good evening. First of all I want to report on the kiln at Rogers Park. There are 2 kilns. One needed a chimney sweep and it has been done, the other one had an electricity issue and a new one has been ordered.

Recreation

Rogers Park Summer Program completed its session at 90%. The participants really enjoyed themselves this year.

The feedback from the parents was positive and reassuring; camp should be at full capacity for both sessions next year.

Ashwood Park Summer Program came to a conclusion on August 31, 2005.

On August 13, 2005, the first Annual Family Fun Day was held at Siminski Park. Over six hundred people attended the fun filled event which had live entertainment, free popcorn and cotton candy, exhibits, an art show, a carnival and the In and Out mobile.

Cultural

On Saturday, August 27th, 2005 the city hosted the annual "Inglewood Celebrates the Arts" Market Street Festival. Over 3,000 residents and visitors participated in the exciting event. The event included 45 arts and crafts and commercial vendors, 9 food booths, strolling performers, entertainment on three stages, hands-on art workshops, interactive games, and an art exhibition. The Department also sponsored the 31st Annual Classic Car Show.

Sports

The youth baseball season ended with a picnic on August 27th. Trophies and awards were given to all the kids.

Flag football registration will commence on September 12th, with the season scheduled to start on October 1st for girls and boys ages 5 thru 13.

Registration for the fall programs such as the after school and preschool programs will begin on September 7th. Classes will begin on September 12th.

Commissioner Agee stated I am very happy to hear about the kiln. Are you going to get that repaired?

Arrick Turner stated 1 kiln has already been repaired. It will take approximately 4-6 weeks for the new kiln to arrive.

Commissioner Agee stated you spoke about the Market Street Festival and I like the idea that you guys combined the 2 events, it was great. I understand next year the block clubs will zig zag their events, so there won't be any conflicts. Most of the people didn't get a chance to come by, but I don't think that will happen again.

Commissioner Smith asked is that it Arrick?

Arrick Turner stated yes.

Commissioner Smith stated thank you, over to you Rita.

Rita Gardner stated let's turn it over to Trina Tyson who is representing the Community Services Department.

Commissioner Smith commented and our era of the 70's (referencing her hair).

Trina Tyson stated good evening. I am here on behalf of Sikizi Allen who is out ill. We are not going to have a report for the Senior Center. However I do know that Skip is electronically submitting a grant for the Be Well program.

Family Support

For the past nine years, South Bay Counseling has awarded us a grant for the youth enrichment program. Each year it has been anywhere from \$52,000 to \$58,000, however this year due to significant budget changes, we were only awarded \$29,000 and the funding has changed. The funding was typically for youth enrichment programs, now the funding has a case management approach. We will be getting a social worker from the Department of Children and Family Services to work with our Department and the recreation programs. What we will do in our after school program is observe the kids and find the kids who are lacking special attention or if we already know that they are wards of the state, we will pay close attention to them and make sure their needs are being met. The \$29,000 will go towards staffing to do case finding for the Department of Children and Family Services. The funding from South Bay is coming from DCFS, so we need to go into the direction of the funding. We have been doing this informally for the past nine years. We definitely try and fill in the gaps. We are not looking at this as a challenge, but as an opportunity.

Summer Lunch Program

The summer lunch program concluded on August 31, 2005. Approximately 450 free lunches were served to youth 18 and under at six different locations in Inglewood. The summer food program is funded through a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). We initially had a little difficulty with our Woodworth site because the school district did not want us on the grass. Typically when this occurs we move to the parking lot. But they installed a very large gate and kept it locked all summer long. We were in a tiny spot in the entrance of the school which made it difficult for us to do the outreach, and logistically it just didn't work. We did however do some staff changes in order to make it work for the last three weeks, and we were able to get out 100 meals a day. Woodworth is normally a site where we would serve 200 to 300 meals a day. Our numbers were low there in the Lockhaven area. We are not really sure what happened, but we are looking to do some trouble shooting and outreach to make sure the children are taking advantage of the meals.

After School Snack Program

Also funded by the USDA, is the after school snack program which will begin on Monday, September 12, 2005 at 14 sites. The Department conducts this program. Snacks consist of milk or juice, yogurt, cookies, etc. The parents and students are really excited about it. Last year we served over 1400 snacks.

Commissioner Smith stated that is excellent. Thank you.

Unfinished Business

Commissioner Giardina stated at the last meeting, Bruce mentioned that Circle Park is supposed to have a fountain installed but he didn't have a date.

Rita Gardner stated we still have to go to Council. We have identified some funding and before it goes to Council it will be brought to the Commission.

New Business

Commissioner Agee stated I just want to congratulate you again for combining the Market Street and the Jazz Festivals. I think in the next two years, the Jazz Festival will top out. About four years ago, I took some pictures of all the parks in the city. I'm getting ready to go out and take those pictures again. If you look back at my old pictures, I don't think you will recognize the parks. I'm so proud of the parks, Vincent Park is absolutely beautiful.

Rita Gardner stated we just planted some new flowers on the corner of Centinela and Warren Lane. Our director suggested that we have flowers planted.

Commissioner Agee asked how are the parking arrangements going to be for the Jazz Festival?

Rita Gardner stated parking is going to be available by the swimming pool, playhouse, Veteran's Building and by the soccer field.

Commissioner Agee asked will the Commissioners be permitted to park inside the park?

Rita Gardner stated as I mentioned to Commissioner Giardina, I will be there from 7:00 a.m., way before the concert starts. I will make sure that I touch bases with Charles Harkey in regards to parking on the basketball courts, but you still will have to enter through the regular admission entrance.

Commissioner Agee asked, so it will basically be like it was last year?

Rita Gardner asked did you park there last year?

Commissioner Agee stated I parked inside.

Rita Gardner stated what I'll do is make sure that staff is at the electronic gate, but you know the code, right?

Commissioner Agee stated I just want to say Commissioner Smith and I fought for the Jazz Festival. Do you remember Commissioner?

Commissioner Smith stated, yes I remember I wanted this really bad.

Commissioner Agee stated and it's paying off.

Rita Gardner stated I will make sure all the Commissioner's name will be on the list for parking.

Commissioner Smith stated Rita, is there an approval of the permit for the Jazz Festival? Are we suppose to discuss something related to the permit?

Rita Gardner stated I have a copy that Sabrina submitted and they do have a permit approved by Permits and Licenses.

Commissioner Smith stated I just noticed that it is under new business, so I was assuming someone was going to address it.

Rita Gardner stated I can address it. I have a copy of it, that will show you that they are legit and the layout of everything.

Commissioner Agee asked Chair, do we need to vote on this?

Commissioner Smith stated Commissioner Agee is requesting we vote on approval of the permit.

Commissioner Agee stated I make a motion that we approve the Jazz Festival 2005.

Commissioner Brown stated I second.

Commissioner Smith asked all in favor?

All Commissioners voted in favor of the motion.

Commissioner Brown stated I think it's great when you look at our Commission and you hear things from other people's Commission and you know that we have a staff that goes above and beyond the call of duty.

I'm still concerned about seeing that their budget is increased and money is not taken away from them and given to someone else. I think we all will unanimously continue to fight for that cause. You serve so many lives out there, not just the tree trimming, the seniors and the babies. I don't think the message of what you do is heard in the community as it should be. As Commissioner Agee said, if you look at the pictures from years ago, it doesn't compare to the way the parks look now. That shows that the staff is doing their work and we are here to cheer you on.

Rita Gardner stated I believe everyone in the Department continues to step up to the plate and produce, again last Saturday was a picture of success. I really appreciate your comments.

Commissioner Brown stated along with that, I think the City really needs to know that the Parks and Recreation Department are the ones who have stepped up to the plate, bringing the Queen from Africa over here and all. You guys have multiple hats.

Commissioner Agee stated if you watch the City Council meeting on Wednesday night, you will know how I feel about Parks and Recreation. Even down to the lowest man on the tote pole starting from Kevin on down. I can remember when I first came on board; we had approximately twice as many people working here. I can tell you these people are out there working; I'm talking about the street workers. You're guys are fantastic and they love you guys. That is why they get out there and do the work; they respect you because you treat them like they are human beings. Sometimes I go out there and take them pizzas.

Rita Gardner stated that is very nice, I didn't know that. Let me know next time, so I can go down there and get some.

Commissioner Agee stated I don't see you standing out there working. It's the guys in the parks who are out there getting dirty and doing all the hard work to make the parks look so beautiful. But they have to have the leadership, and they do.

Rita Gardner stated we received a call today from our Director and he asked us to get rid of the blighted area on the corner of Centinela and Warren Lane. I told my guys and within an hour, by 3:00 p.m., it was done. That is so much effort and dedication from the guys and I really do appreciate it.

Commissioner Agee stated absolutely, you have to know when to appreciate them.

Commissioner Giardina stated I'd just like to echo the sentiments of the Commission. I think you do an exemplary job.

I know that in this time of a budget crisis, you are doing so much more with so much less and it's a testament of professionalism of all the employees. I think you do get more sugar than you do salt when you work for wonderful people, you have a tendency to work harder and better because you respect the people you work for. The community can never speak enough in terms of gratitude and appreciation for your work. Anytime you help babies and seniors you are covering a wide spectrum and I am very proud to be a part of this Commission and a part of the doing this great work, it speaks volumes to Inglewood. It really is the employees and we can not say enough about them and the work you guys do. Thank you.

Commissioner Smith stated I have to echo everything that has been said by all the Commissioners.

Commissioner Agee stated we are praising Parks and Recreation too much now.

Commissioner Smith stated what I'm saying is behind one great leader is a good woman. Well behind every great administrator, there are a lot of people that do their job to a hilt. I have to commend your guys as well. I am proud of this department.

Meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

UPCOMING DISCUSSION ITEMS

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

PARKS DIVISION

- Department Highlights

RECREATION DIVISION

- Department Highlights

HUMAN SERVICES

- Mural Project Update
- Oral History Update
- Be Well Update
- Extension of Yellow Cab Contract
- Holiday Food and Gift Drives