

The monthly meeting of the Inglewood Parks and Recreation Commission was convened on Thursday, March 1, 2007, 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., followed by the flag salute.

Roll Call

Present:

Commissioner Willie Agee – At Large
Commissioner Cindy Giardina – District I
Commissioner Norma Smith – District II
Commissioner Raena Banks-Neal – District III
Commissioner Henry Brown – District IV

Staff:

Kevin Hawkins, Director
Sandra Green-Hilliard, Administrative Secretary
Stephanie Baltazar, Administrative Aide
Alma Bryant, Code Enforcement Manager
Teresa Estrada-Quintanar, Cultural Supervisor
Mark Martinez, Tree Maintenance Supervisor
Thomas Uwal, Transportation Supervisor

A moment of silence was taken in honor of Sheldon Curry's mother who recently passed away.

Public Comments

Nancy Cryder stated good evening my name is Nancy Cryder and I live in the 4th district.

Sandra Green-Hilliard stated can we have your address?

Nancy Cryder stated no, no address. Instead of talking this evening I thought I'd show some pictures that way you know what I'm complaining about. You'll see how bad our field is, it's just terrible and disgusting. You really, really need to do something about it. I've been up here before and all my comments are the same. If you guys ever go out there and look at it, the pictures show just how bad it is.

Sandra Green-Hilliard stated what field are you referring to?

Nancy Cryder stated Center Park.

Commissioner Smith stated thank you. Are there any further comments?

Diane Sambrano stated I'd like to address the item of the agenda.

Sandra Green-Hilliard stated can you please state your address.

Diane Sambrano stated no, absolutely not. No address needs to be given according to the Brown Act. I would like to discuss how the agenda is set up. You are the only department in the city who has their agenda like this.

I arrived a little late and want to address a complaint about Center Park. At the community meeting that was held at the Lockhaven Center last year, Councilman Franklin showed up with his little medal that was given to him by the illegal group of players who damage the fields at Center Park who have absolutely no respect for the rules that are posted. My neighbors felt intimidated by these outsiders. Enough is enough.

Approval of the Minutes

A motion for the approval of the minutes from February 1, 2007 was made by Commissioner Giardina and seconded by Commissioner Brown.

Director's Report

Kevin Hawkins stated as you all know as a part of the Director's Report we give an overview of some of the activities we have going on. TRF is here tonight to speak with you as part of a presentation on behalf of our Recreation section. I'll now turn it over to Teresa Estrada-Quintanar our Cultural Supervisor.

Teresa Estrada-Quintanar stated good evening. The department is seeking support for the renewal of an agreement between the City of Inglewood and Training and Research Foundation (TRF). Ms. Elaine Atlow from TRF is here to make a presentation and answer any questions that the Commission might have.

Elaine Atlow stated I welcome the opportunity to speak before the Commission today. I'm not really sure what the Commission needed, but I'm here to answer any questions you may have. I would like to share with you that from the inception of our agreement with the City of Inglewood, we have met with great success at Rogers Park and it's time to renew our lease. For the new Commissioners, when we first entered into the agreement with the city it was for one year as an exploratory conditional use. After the first year, we renewed for three years and now we are up for another renewal. We have asked for five years because things are running so well at the park and it is a much needed program for the city and especially in that particular area. We have a number of children on the waiting list (over 50) and it's the only full day Headstart program in the City of Inglewood.

We just wish that there were other areas in Inglewood where we can expand. I've talked to Councilmen Franklin and Morales and have expressed my wish and they both agreed that it was something that is needed in their district. I just appeal to you today to allow us to continue and if you have any questions I'll be more than happy to answer them.

Commissioner Smith asked how is the program working as far as success?

Elaine Atlow stated it has been a great success. All of the children in the previous year's programs were fully mastered when they depart and went into the public schools reports that we get from various schools show that the Headstart children somewhat stand out because they are ready for kindergarten. Spanish speaking children are more fluent in English, our children are well nourished, we provide a program for parents, we make sure each child has a complete physical, dental and optical exam as well as treatment if deemed necessary before they go into public school. One problem that we encountered at the park that was remedied immediately was the young teenagers hanging out in the park; it was creating problems for the children coming in and out. We called Sabrina Barnes (Recreation Superintendent) and it was taken care of immediately but the program is running very well. We get full cooperation from the park. We utilize the facility for meetings and it is just a wonderful partnership. When we first appealed to the Council we hoped that their minds would have been open because we saw an opportunity to provide an expanded operation with the west and the east end of the building but it did not meet with the success that we thought. But if it had, it would have been a wonderful thing because we could have expanded our services to all of the children in the park. Maybe we can relook at that again in the future and if there is room for us to expand, we would like to look into that.

Commissioner Giardina stated I am very, very impressed with the program.

Commissioner Agee stated good afternoon. I am very, very familiar with the program and it's sad that it is not in every district. I heard you mention districts two and three.

Elaine Atlow stated we would love to be in every district.

Commissioner Agee stated I would love to see the kids in each district have the opportunity to attend Headstart. (Commissioner Agee's phone rings).

Commissioner Smith stated Commissioner Banks-Neal, do you have any questions?

Commissioner Agee stated I'm not finished (call me back).

Commissioner Smith stated yes you are that is so rude.

Commissioner Agee stated I'm not finished.

Commissioner Banks-Neal stated I'd like to give him an opportunity to finish his comment.

Commissioner Agee stated this is nothing new with this Commissioner and I apologize.

Commissioner Brown stated we spoke earlier and I have visited the program.

Commissioner Smith stated I apologize.

Commissioner Banks-Neal stated I apologize, I was the one who requested more information on this program because I'm not that familiar with it. I'm familiar with the after school program.

Elaine Atlow stated you don't owe us an apology. I just like to say thanks to you for asking us to come and explain to you what our program is all about. We feel very good about what we do, we do it well and it has made a positive impact in the city and we are always open to come to let you know what we are doing.

Commissioner Banks-Neal stated I appreciate that, thank you.

Commissioner Giardina made a motion to approve TRF and was seconded by Commissioner Brown. Motion was carried.

Elaine Atlow stated thank you.

Kevin Hawkins stated I'll turn it back over to Teresa.

Teresa Estrada-Quintanar stated thank you.

Black History Month

On Friday, February 23, the Department held a Black History Event at Darby Park from 6:00-9:00 p.m. The event was very successful and included performances by Parent Elementary School Choir, All That Dance Company, Fantasia Dance Ensemble, Little Ladies of Worship and many others. Highlighting the event was spoken word artist Adwin and a black art exhibition by local artist Michael Massenburg. More than 250 residents, their families and friends attended the event.

Inglewood Idol IV

On, Friday, March 30, 2007 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. the Rogers Park Boys and Girls Club will host "Inglewood Idol IV."

Idol is a talent competition where local youth, teens and adults compete for bragging rights to the Idol trophy. The Idol competition is also a fundraiser for the Boys and Girls Club. Tickets are \$3.00 and all donations are welcome.

If anyone knows of any talent that would like to compete, please have them call Herman Browne @ 310 412-5504 to arrange for an audition. All are invited to attend.

Cesar Chavez Day Celebration

Final plans are being made for the Annual Cesar Chavez Day Celebration. The City of Inglewood and Inglewood Unified School District will celebrate the life and achievements of Cesar Chavez with a Unity March, Recognition Ceremony and Celebration. The event will get underway at 10:00 a.m. at Hollywood Park Gate 8. Marchers will travel east on Pincay Drive to Darby Park. This year the march will be led by Maria Elena Chavez, the niece of the late Cesar Chavez. Immediately following the March, the celebration will continue at 11:00 a.m. on the grounds of Darby Park. Activities have been planned for the entire family, including interactive and carnival style games, face painting, and arts and crafts. The event will also include live entertainment, exhibitors and a soccer tournament - featuring the 4th Annual Cesar Chavez Day Cup.

Teresa Estrada-Quintanar asked are there any questions?

Commissioner Banks-Neal stated I'm still learning, did the information for Inglewood Idol go out to the high schools?

Teresa Estrada-Quintanar stated flyers have gone out to the local junior high and high schools.

Commissioner Agee stated congratulations, you always go above and beyond your job in all that you do for the city, I pay pretty close attention to that.

Commissioner Smith stated thank you Teresa.

Kevin Hawkins stated thank you. We'll go ahead and continue in order; next we have our Tree Maintenance Supervisor Mark Martinez.

Mark Martinez stated good evening.

Capital Improvement Projects

- Vincent Park Restroom Construction – restrooms are progressing well
- Ashwood Park Tree Removal/Replacement – Trees and asphalt have been removed, irrigation lines have been installed and new trees will be planted within the next two weeks

- A meeting with the Public Works Director/Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director will take place shortly to discuss FY 06/07 CIP's.

Commissioner Agee left the chambers at 6:31 p.m.

The Park Maintenance/Construction Sections removed 7000 square feet of asphalt and installed a new irrigation system to ready the area for trees and turf along the walkway at Ashwood Park. All parks, center medians and slopes are being kept up aesthetically. Soccer field A at Ed Vincent Park will be closed in two weeks for maintenance we will keep field "B" open to accommodate users. We are still maintaining small areas for graffiti throughout the parks.

Tree Section

We recently completed the holiday trimming and we now have a crew working in each district.

Commissioner Giardina stated I'd like to commend you and your guys for all your hard work. Do you have an idea of a completion date on the Vincent Park restrooms? Can you be a little more explicit as to where we are?

Commissioner Agee returned to the chambers at 6:34 p.m.

Mark Martinez stated I don't have that information.

Kevin Hawkins stated we are working on trying to get the project manager to come and make a presentation to this body. The vendor is on the premise. We have received estimated completion dates of August, which was pushed back from the original completion, due to legal issues.

Commissioner Giardina stated I ask that some sort of presentation be brought to the Commission at our next meeting. I'm really concerned about this project and I'm concerned it might not be finished by the time the Jazz Festival comes around.

Commissioner Smith stated Kevin, can you have someone come out and give us a presentation?

Kevin Hawkins stated we will make a request for someone in Public Works to come and give us a presentation at the next meeting.

Commissioner Brown stated two things, I wanted to ask you about the sod at Center Park and also how is your equipment holding up with all the work you have to do? Do you have all the necessary trucks and what not that you need?

Mark Martinez stated the equipment is an ongoing battle with the garage. We are in the process of getting a new mower. We have some tree trimming trucks down right now. When they go down, the tree work doesn't cease there is always plenty of work for us to do. As far as the sodding, the parks section is usually on top of it.

Kevin Hawkins stated I have a few comments in regards to the condition of the field at Center Park.

Our department put together a proposal and submitted it to Administration and it was not embraced last year. That proposal was revisited and modified. The Councilman in that district embraced it and the plan has been presented. I agree with the Commission, something has to be done. We have spoken with Code Enforcement and the Police Department about the illegal parking. We understand the frustrations; Center Park is not a staffed park it is overseen by the staff at Darby Park. We are working with the school district; we have the same frustrations because posted signs are being violated. We believe we have a plan to mitigate it. Ultimately, there is just not enough open space in the city and we are trying to balance that and not take what we do have from the kids. We know that open space is scarce. We are trying to work with the school district to get them to open up their property to allow for expanded play. So it's kind of a comprehensive approach.

Commissioner Smith stated thank you.

Commissioner Agee stated can you describe a state of the art public restroom?

Mark Martinez stated it would be a restroom that would cater to everyone's needs.

Commissioner Smith stated while you were out of the room, Kevin stated he would have a specialist come in and go over that with us.

Kevin Hawkins stated we will make sure we get someone to come in and give a full report to this body.

I'll now turn it over to Ms. Alma Bryant, Code Enforcement Manager.

Alma Bryant stated good evening. There were 2 events that we took part in this month.

District Four Clean Up Day

On February 10, Code Enforcement and the Graffiti Section participated in the District Four Clean Up Day. The event took place in the Darby Dixon area. The focus was on cleaning the streets and alleys in that area.

Clean Up Day

On February 24, the Code Enforcement and Graffiti staff, along with the Youth of the Christ of the Latter Day Saints conducted a clean up day in the Civic Center Area. The focus was on cleaning the main thoroughfares in and around the civic center, the train tracks, and the Downtown area. We had around 175 people that participated. The day was very successful.

Commissioner Brown stated I'd like to thank Code Enforcement for working in the Crenshaw area on the graffiti. They've been called several times to clean up the three story building there and every time they go out there, they color match that building perfectly.

Alma Bryant stated thank you.

Commissioner Giardina stated your guys do a wonderful job, please pass that on to them.

Kevin Hawkins stated just a quick note. We are getting more aggressive with the graffiti throughout the city. We are adding two additional workers to the graffiti crew. We also need to remind folks that graffiti is a property crime. We have been coordinating with the Police Department and trying to stick to our 24 hour response time to abate all graffiti calls. With that, I'll now turn it over to Thomas Uwal.

Thomas Uwal stated good evening.

5317 New Freedom Transportation Grant

We applied for a new transportation grant to get two new vehicles jointly with Circle of Friends. The grant provides funding for new public transportation services, and alternatives to public transportation services, for people with disabilities, beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

New Freedom funding may be used to support up to 80% of the capital project costs and up to 50% of the project's net operating expenses. Funds from other non-USDOT federal programs (e.g. human services) may be used for the matching purposes. Upon approval by Metro, in-kind contributions may be used to meet the local matching requirements.

If we receive the grant, it will enable us to do the following things:

- We are only curb-to-curb transportation service now; but we can service door to door. We have several clients that need escort assistance. Under the New Freedom Programs (Section 5317), we would be able to go door to door.

- We service the City of Inglewood, Lennox and Hawthorne now. Under the New Freedom Programs (section 5317) we can go beyond those cities and serve more clients.
- Our seniors that have physical limitations can be assisted through the New Freedom Programs (Section 5317). Currently if they have physical limitations, we require family members or a caregiver to assist.

Food Service Caterer

The Food Service Section continues to have difficulty getting the caterer to provide quality food to our seniors. Pat Bitker, our Food Service Manager continues to advise the caterer to improve the quality of food. Another caterer is identified who will provide much better quality of food for our seniors. As soon as the current contract can be terminated, we can begin to do business with the new caterer.

Be Well

The current four-month Be Well intensive at Darby Park with Kaiser Participants is going very well. Data records at the end of the first six weeks show steady progress, such as lowered blood pressure, weight loss and increased steps. On February 6, a camera crew filmed the program, getting initial quotes from the members and shots of the education and exercise sessions. A DVD promotional tape will be prepared.

The special Kaiser grant for \$20,000 will be used to fund the continuation phase for the graduates of all four intensive phases through December 31, 2007.

Commissioner Brown asked how is the food for the seniors being prepared?

Thomas Uwal stated the supervisor has been more hands on. The food has improved but it is not to our standards, but they are trying to bring it to that level.

Commissioner Giardina stated at the last meeting we had a lengthy discussion about the food and how they should try preparing it with love.

Kevin Hawkins stated Thomas did a good job pointing out the consistency of the food. The caterer we hired came recommended to us by the County of Los Angeles and their requirements. But they are not performing to the level of the city. There is a list of other caterers; it's not a long list. We know seniors need quality food. We actually sent some of our kitchen workers to assist the caterers. As soon as we are able to get a new caterer, we'll come back to you.

New Business

None.

Unfinished Business

Commissioner Giardina stated I would like an update on the Circle Park water feature. I'd like to see some renditions and see that expedited and rushed through.

Commissioner Brown stated I would like an update on the status of the senior center.

Kevin Hawkins stated jokingly, that makes two of us. In short we are preparing for the new center. As you know, the old center has been completely demolished and the property has been graded. There is a committee composed of professionals from every department. We have not been given a time line at this point. We are trying to make due with what we have and are preparing the current center as home for three days, months or years. Once we have a time frame we will report that to you.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Agee stated at the last meeting I was not permitted to respond to certain accusations. It's my word against the other Commissioners. We did have a special meeting at the ICOPP Center and no one showed up.

Commissioner Banks-Neal stated I appreciate this department and the Police Department working together on the IPAL program, it's a wonderful program. I'd also like to commend the graffiti crew. There is a huge driveway way with a garage door which had become the target of graffiti and the graffiti crew has come out right away to cover that up which has alleviated some of the problems that were happening there. Also to Ms. Nancy, I've never been to Center Park, but I can't imagine being disrespected like that. Maybe we can get more community members involved as volunteers to help monitor the park.

Commissioner Brown stated I see on page six of the minutes that the Parks Division is utilizing Title V to provide staff. Maybe we can sit down and see if you are able to utilize more staff to increase your after school program. It is sad a city with less than nine square miles has a gang problem.

Commissioner Giardina stated I was never made aware of anyone not wanting the water feature. The meeting was well attended and the residents are excited. I will continue to repeat what has been said to me. I've been a resident of Inglewood for well over 28 years and I'm looking forward to this project.

Meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.