

The monthly meeting of the Inglewood Parks and Recreation Commission was convened on Thursday, October 4, 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 6:02 p.m., followed by the flag salute.

Roll Call

Present:

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

Absent:

Commissioner Brenda J. Payne – District I
Commissioner Raena Banks-Neal – District III

Staff:

Sabrina Barnes, Acting Director
Stephanie Maldonado, Administrative Aide
Rita Gardner, Parks Superintendent
Arrick Turner, Recreation Supervisor
Thomas Uwal, Transportation Supervisor

Approval of the Minutes

A motion for the approval of the minutes from August 2, 2007 was made by Commissioner Agee and seconded by Commissioner Brown.

Public Comments

Frank Scroggins stated I am the block captain from Queen Street and I am here concerning Queen Park. We'd like for there to be no drinking, no loud talking, no loud music and no double parking. Parking sign says no parking but it is not visible. We ask for no music because it is loud in the park until 10 p.m. and we've had to call the Police. It is the people who drink in the park that have the loud music and come from outside of Inglewood. Parking should be restricted to no parking on the street from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Commissioner Smith stated can we have a copy of your list?

Sabrina Barnes stated he gave one to me.

Commissioner Agee stated thank you for coming in and voicing your concerns.

Commissioner Brown stated it is good that you are concerned and that you have brought it to our attention because otherwise we would not be aware of what is going on.

Mia Hagen stated I just wanted to say that I appreciate the Police in this City. I grew up in New York City and you can tell the difference here. I appreciate the fact that I can call and they know who I am. About a month ago I came home from church at about 8:30 p.m. and there was this thunderous noise coming from the park so I called the police and they come out. The noise continued so I called again and the police came and indicated that the park closes at 10 p.m. These are people who are not even living in our area disturbing the neighbors. I would appreciate anything you can do for us.

Director's Report

Sabrina Barnes stated I have a verbal report regarding fiscal year 2007/2008 budget. As you know the Mayor and Council recently adopted the budget. I again acknowledge your request to have met with staff prior to the adoption of the budget but based on the timeline we were given when the information was provided to us, that window was very, very short and we were not able to get it to you. But, I do have some highlights here I want to share with you. This year's budget for the department is approximately \$10.5 million. That dollar amount reflects approximately \$1 million in reductions. That is primarily in personnel, but it doesn't show in bodies it shows up in the way of benefits and maintenance and operations funding. We didn't lose any physical bodies in terms of anyone losing their jobs. We have been reassigned; we would normally report to Acting City Administrator Jeff Muir; we now report to Jerry Givens. You will look over there and you will only see three staff present as opposed to four. The Code Enforcement and Graffiti section was reassigned to have direct reporting responsibilities to Jerry Givens. They no longer report in our department. Also in terms of staff, we requested and it was accommodated, Danita Meshack-Maden as some of you well know, will be returning to the Public Works Department. The budget had initially recommended eliminating two full time positions; one was the Parks Maintenance Supervisor and the Recreation Supervisor for Cultural. Although Danita is transferring, her position did remain in the budget, it was not recommended to be eliminated. There would have been a vacancy there and we would have lost 2 staff. Initially when the Assistant to the Director position was instituted, there was no Recreation or Parks Superintendent, so that person served as a true Assistant to the Director. The position was eliminated in 2000 and it was brought back when Kevin Hawkins joined our department. He brought with him three other sections Code Enforcement, Graffiti Abatement and we also had the SEO's who are now located with the Police Department. We had a much larger department and the Assistant to the Director position was reinstated. Now, the complexion of our department has changed again and we are now down to three divisions as opposed to five. It seemed appropriate that we not utilize the Assistant to the Director position this year in effort to save the positions that were

being eliminated. Two were recommended and we were successful in saving 1 ½. We were trying to keep both positions but we ended up with our Recreation Supervisor position and the Park Maintenance Supervisor position was down graded to a lead worker. Now we have one Park Maintenance Supervisor and three lead workers. The lead workers are assigned to the three various sections (North, South and Construction) and they are supervised by Juan Mata who was recently appointed to Parks Maintenance Supervisor. Our budget is very tight. We are pleased that it wasn't as bad as we thought it would be. There were some assumptions made last year based on the budget that the fee increase would be approved by the Mayor and the Council, there would be other stabilizing factors. You may or may not recall that the Mayor and Council implemented policies that said we had to put forth a balanced budget and for the first time in a long time the budget was balanced. That's it, if you have any questions I'll be glad to entertain them.

Commissioner Agee stated I'd like to congratulate you on the budget this year. I don't quite understand why our budget was cut. I guess you will have to do what you have to do and you are doing a good job of it. Thank you.

Commissioner Brown stated I spoke with Sabrina briefly. It's amazing how one department and its staff seems to be everywhere 24/7. We are the one department that does as much work as the Police and Public Works Departments and I think Council should look at that.

Commissioner Smith stated I'm sorry; I wasn't here last time because I was out of town. But if you can let all of us know ahead of time, we can help you. But we can't do anything after the fact. If you can let us know what you need a couple months down the road before next years budget, we can see what we can do.

Sabrina Barnes stated I understand your request and because we were implementing a new financial system, the budget wasn't given to us in a timely matter as it has been. Much like other departments, we all shared in making sure the City was fiscally sound. We are basically now being forced to be a little bit more strategic and wise with our spending. Where we may have had an extra dollar here or there to buy something that is more of a want than a need. We just have to be more fiscally responsible this year which is something that we should always look to be.

Commissioner Smith stated we don't need a copy of the whole budget, but we would like to have one for our department.

Sabrina Barnes stated ok, we will get that to you with the minutes.

Commissioner Smith stated thank you.

Sabrina Barnes stated thank you. Next on the agenda we will move on to our Parks report, Rita Gardner.

Rita Gardner stated good evening Commissioners. I would like to report out on a few things.

The Vincent Park restroom project is moving right along and is almost complete. I was just informed that Romtec has been notified by Public Works that their contract is over.

Effective October 1, a new Tree Trimming Schedule will be followed.

Park Construction working on broken water mains.

Finally we'd like your support on a capital improvement project. If you take a look at the second page of what was passed out to you, you will see a change was made and Darby Park was taken out.

Vincent Park Fence Replacement (\$53,000)

This project provides for the replacement of a worn out chain link fence at the east and west baseball fields. It will also include fencing a 44 feet wide and 8 feet high across the two fields. The exterior fence has many holes and is bent in many areas. The fence separating the two fields is too low and causes concern regarding the playing conditions.

Darby Park Gymnasium Floor Replacement (\$130,000)

This project provides for the replacement of hardwood floors located in the gymnasium. The current flooring has been refinished several times in the past and has resulted in an uneven surface. Staff has been advised that refinishing is no longer an option due to the thinning surface.

Replacement of Windscreens at Various Parks (\$20,000)

This project will provide for the replacement of worn out windscreens at various parks. Many of the windscreens are torn and tattered from years of use.

Commissioner Agee stated I am disappointed about Darby Park, but I guess I understand why. Would it be a good time to make a suggestion?

Commissioner Smith stated let's go ahead and finish this and then you can make your suggestion.

Commissioner Brown asked are you asking us to approve the expenditure?

Rita Gardner stated we are asking for your support.

Commissioner Brown stated I am looking at this and out of the \$97,000 there are still funds available?

Rita Gardner stated that is correct.

Commissioner Brown stated well if we don't use it, we will lose it.

Commissioner Agee stated I just would like to recommend looking into getting the fence replaced at Darby Park, its in bad shape. It is really rusted and kids climb the fence then put their hands in their mouths. If you have extra money, maybe we can get it replaced or maybe it can be sand blasted and repainted, I think it'll make the park look much, much better.

Rita Gardner stated we did do a cost analysis on that and it would be about \$500,000 to replace the fence.

Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the Capital Improvement Projects, Commissioner Agee second.

Sabrina Barnes stated thank you. I would like to acknowledge Rita and her staff for taking an aggressive approach with trying to address the tree issues. Additionally in this year's budget there is \$200,000 allocated to contract tree trimming services to offset staff. Priorities for that have not been established just yet, but it will also affect tree trimming issues. Thank you Rita. We will move on to Arrick Turner our Recreation Supervisor for the Westside Facilities.

Arrick Turner stated good evening. I will start off with the event we have going on this weekend, the Annual Inglewood Celebrates the Arts Market Street Festival and Car show will take place on Saturday, October 6. There will be live music, special performers, a food court and a variety of vendors.

Cirque du Soleil

On Saturday, October 13, 2007 at Vincent Park, the Darby Park Boys and Girls Club will be working together with the Canadian Consulate and Cirque du Soleil on a tree planting project. The day will consist of an educational workshop on Canada at 10:00 a.m. a planting project at 11:00 a.m. and at noon a luncheon with Canadian students.

Halloween Happenings

This year Inglewood Police Departments Community Affairs Section in conjunction with Rogers Park will put on the Annual Halloween Carnival at

Rogers Park. With the Police Department involved, everything should be a lot safer.

Darby Park will host its Annual Halloween Carnival on October 31, 2007 from 6p.m. to 8 p.m. The event will have games, prizes and a costume contest as well as a haunted house. Added this year is a dance production of the video Thriller which will be performed by the Boys and Girls Club. The Inglewood Police Department will also be assisting with the evening activities as well as donating prizes for the costume contest.

Sports

The flag football season is underway for children ages 5-14. It is \$30 for residents and \$34 for non-residents.

Commissioner Agee stated that price for non-residents sounds a little cheap to me. I think we should charge a little bit more because it does take a lot out of the park.

Commissioner Brown stated I am looking forward to Saturday and as Commissioner Agee stated maybe we should look at making registration fees \$38 for non-residents.

Sabrina Barnes stated thank you, now Thomas Uwal.

Thomas Uwal stated good evening, I am the Transportation Manager for the Human Service division.

Transportation Section

The transportation section is short two class B drivers and is looking to fill those positions. There is also a driver who is out sick indefinitely. I am asking for people who want to obtain Class B license from our department. We will jump start training employees who are interested in obtaining their Class B so that they can assist when needed. So far, 14 employees have signed up to obtain the license and the class will begin soon.

Rocio Hernandez is our new Community Transportation Scheduler has started working in Dispatch. She is working out very well. She is bilingual and has had experience with planning transportation.

The Transportation Annual Audit by MTA was conducted on August 30 and 31, 2007. All of the records were in place except minor inputting errors. The audits done in three separate parts, the motor bus (I-Line Trolley), the Dial-a-Ride program (Para-transit vans) and the taxi company contracts.

Thanksgiving Collection

Flyers are being distributed for our annual Thanksgiving collection for home bound seniors. Boxes will be placed at the information desk on the 1st floor and on the 5th floor in the Parks and Recreation Office.

Commissioner Brown stated regarding that position you mentioned, what are the requirements?

Thomas Uwal stated a Class B license – transport passengers, an excellent driving record, no tickets within the past three years, a medical certificate that is current, experience with transporting seniors, background check.

Commissioner Brown stated I know a person who has applied at Universal Studios to drive a tram and I know you have to make a distinction because people apply with a Class B not knowing that is should be to transport people.

Thomas Uwal stated I do have a lot of applicants who have a Class b license but without the passenger endorsement.

Commissioner Brown asked what do they start out at?

Thomas Uwal stated a little over \$10 an hour with no benefits.

Commissioner Brown stated I know a resident who is a driver and has recently retired. I'll get your card from you later.

Commissioner Smith stated well you took care of my question. I was wondering how the salaries compare to other cities.

Thomas Uwal stated the MTA for example starts at \$17 an hour and they also offer benefits.

Sabrina Barnes stated thank you Thomas. Normally at this time we would have a report from the Community Services division. They did have items for this meeting prior to us knowing they were no longer with us: they have conducted several task forces, staff is working at Cirque du Soleil and staff worked the Jazz Festival.

Commissioner Smith asked are we going to have the report on a later date?

Sabrina Barnes stated that was the essence of the report, they will no longer be reporting to us.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Agee stated I would like to know about Grevillea Park.

Sabrina Barnes stated that item was pulled. We were looking at closing the street on Nutwood and making it into a cul-de-sac to extend the park area. It would cost us about \$350,000.

Commissioner Agee stated I like that idea.

Sabrina Barnes stated we weren't able to find funds for that project. We are looking at the money that is available and will prioritize by need and then want.

Commissioner Brown stated I noticed that there is a minimal amount of advertisement on Cirque du Soleil; I was wondering what is the cost of it. Also a brief comment on the Jazz Festival. As I spoke with City Council, my concern is that we should start earlier with planning the event with whomever the promoter is. I was not overly pleased with the Jazz Festival this year compared to prior years. I felt like the entertainment was down this year, and the cost. When you have other cities such as Gardena who put theirs on for free. Like I told the City Council, they charge \$58 for brick seats and don't even provide people with a pillow. From a promotional stand point, I think things could have been a lot better. Attendance was down. I was not impressed with the vendors and they felt like with what they have to pay they have to charge more. I just feel the way things were promoted they can be done better and make the festival family oriented with a special price for the seniors. I didn't see a lot of seniors there. Also with the parking, there is a parking structure at Faithful Central that people can park at and be transported to the park. The sound was good, I just think maybe we can work with the promoter earlier and maybe even down the road put on our own Jazz Festival, we have the staff.

Commissioner Smith stated thank you, you've said it all. Commissioner Agee do you have any last comments?

Commissioner Agee stated I think the Jazz Festival is dying and it's the city's fault. I think the city can put on our own festival. Also, the soccer field is not being utilized all the whole season. It should be for all people in the city. I go to the park on Sunday's and when they play soccer not many people attend the park. It should be utilized by the whole city. We don't have a football field but we have two soccer fields. Also at Vincent Park a great show was held today and being held tomorrow. No one attended there were only about 10-12 of us. Tomorrow is the last day and I know that it is something the seniors will love.

Sabrina Barnes stated noted.

Commissioner Smith stated I do think that the city can put on our own jazz festival. With that if there are no more questions or comments, the meeting is adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.