

The monthly meeting of the Inglewood Parks and Recreation Commission was convened on Thursday, January 8, 2004, in the City Council Chambers, located on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor of Inglewood City Hall. Commissioner Jaime Gutierrez presiding called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

## **ROLL CALL**

## **Present:**

Commissioner Jaime Gutierrez – District III Commissioner Henry Brown – District IV Commissioner Willie Agee – At Large

# Absent:

Commissioner Cindy Giardina – District I Commissioner Norma Smith – District II

### Staff:

Rita Gardner, Parks Administration Superintendent Sandra Green, Administrative Secretary Thomas Uwal, Program Specialist Mario Smith, Acting Senior Recreation Supervisor

# APPROVAL OF MINUTES - NOVEMBER 20, 2003

A motion for approval of minutes from November 20, 2003, was made by Commissioner Agee and seconded by Commissioner Brown. Motion passed.

# **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

## COMMUNICATIONS

None

# **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

# Capital Improvement Projects

Rita Gardner, Parks Administration Superintendent stated the City of Inglewood is in receipt of \$348,894.50 in excess funds by County Supervisor Yvonne Burke. The funds are from the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District for capital improvement projects. An executed agreement between the City of Inglewood and Los Angeles County must be completed by June 30, 2004. Staff will present to Commissioners a list of capital improvement projects for approval. After Commissioners vote on approving the recommendations, it will be presented to Mayor and Council Members for their approval.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** asked if funds are coming from Yvonne Burke's Office.

**Rita Gardner** stated the funds will come from the Los Angeles County's Safe Neighborhood Parks Act (Proposition A) Grant Program.

**Commissioner Brown** asked what is this money going to be used for.

**Rita Gardner** stated funds may be used for capital improvement projects, which include planning, design, development, acquisition, and repairs that are needed in park and recreational facilities.

**Commissioner Agee** asked if funds are exclusively for Parks and Recreation.

Ms. Gardner stated that is correct.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** asked if staff will meet to come up with ideas.

**Rita Gardner** stated that information has already been gathered, and staff was asked to make a list of repairs and improvements that need to be prioritized.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** asked what the deadline is to use these funds.

**Ms. Gardner** stated to secure the funds the executed agreement needs to be completed by Wednesday, June 30, 2004. Once Council approves the recommended projects a proposal will be sent to the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District for approval.

**Commissioner Agee** asked if staff had any projects in mind.

**Ms. Gardner** stated the capital improvement projects that have been identified include installation of artificial turf at the soccer stadium, replace fencing around the perimeter of Darby Park, and replace worn out arbors at Rogers Park to improve and expand the area.

**Commissioner Brown** stated \$348,894.50 is a lot of money and hopefully it will be proportioned, so all the districts will receive a little something.

**Ms. Gardner** stated in the past grant funds allocated to the City have been equally distributed among the four districts for capital improvement projects. **Commissioner Gutierrez** asked for information by the March Commission meeting regarding the allocation of Prop A funds.

**Rita Gardner** stated by next Commission Meeting Commissioners will be presented with a list of projects.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** stated the \$348,894.50 would need to be spent smartly.

**Rita Gardner** commented that one option is to use those funds to supplement funding for the completion of demolition/construction of two restrooms at Vincent Park. Staff is currently pursuing another funding source to provide the supplemental funds for that project.

**Commissioner Agee** stated artificial turf cost an excess of \$800,000, and there will not be any more funds left for other projects. It is not fair that the majority of funds that come to the City are used on soccer fields. There are other important amenities.

**Rita Gardner** stated staff was directed by Mayor and Council Members to identify funding sources for the installation of artificial turf.

### Watt Development

Rita Gardner stated the Watt Development Company will be demolishing the Boys Scouts and Sportsman Little League Baseball area, west of Darby Park, and replaced with a Housing development. Because the Watt Development Company would like to replace the two venues that will be lost due to the housing project, they are proposing to upgrade and improve Darby Park's baseball diamond to a state of the art baseball field. Sportsman Little League and the City of Inglewood will both benefit from this project.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** asked is the Watt Development Company responsible for the construction of the 324 housing development project.

Ms. Gardner stated ves.

Commissioner Gutierrez asked has the project been approved.

**Ms. Gardner** stated Watt Development Company will be presenting a proposal to Council.

Commissioner Agee stated that is music to my ears.

**Rita Gardner** stated when Watt Development Company presents their final plans it will be presented to Commission for recommendation and then forwarded for Council's approval.

## Special Events, Activities and Occurrences

## Martin Luther King Parade Transportation

**Thomas Uwal, Program Specialist** stated the Martin Luther King Day Celebration will be taking place on Saturday, January 17, 2004, and the Senior Center will be providing transportation from Hollywood Park to the Faithful Central Bible Church. All the shuttles, I-Line Trolley, and drivers will be on duty that day to transport people who will not be able to march. Transportation will be available beginning at 6:30 a.m.

### Seniors on the Move

**Thomas Uwal** stated the City of Inglewood, and Los Angeles County's Supervisor Yvonne Burke are working together to provide more transportation services in Inglewood. An information event will be held on Thursday, January 22, 2004. MTA, Access Services, LA DOT, and other transportation agencies will attend the event to educate seniors on different modes of transportation. Seniors in attendance will receive a free bus pass for a month. MTA buses will be available that day for those wishing to tour the metro connection and Green-Line Train Station, located on Hawthorne Boulevard. Lennox and Hawthorne Senior Centers were also invited to attend the event. Transportation will be available.

#### Transportation

**Commissioner Brown** stated during the Christmas Decorating Contest judging in District IV, the drivers went above and beyond their call of duty. He knows that the other Commissioners feel the same way. Drivers were very timely and I heard a lot of good comments throughout the evening. As part of the Martin Luther King Committee, I am very aware that transportation was super last year.

**Thomas Uwal** thanked Commissioner Brown for the compliments and will relay the message to the drivers. Drivers have provided transportation every year and have received compliments from several people in the past.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** stated that it was his first time judging the Holiday Decorating Contest and he had a great time. The drivers did a great job finding addresses that were not listed. It is good that Thomas is being resourceful with the budget crisis in trying to find other areas to improve transportation.

**Thomas Uwal** commented there are some other resources for transportation. We have cab coupons that serve as emergencies for seniors, I-Line Trolley, Para-Transit, and Fame who provides 250 vouchers on a monthly basis. Other agencies are also used when transportation is needed beyond Inglewood, Lennox and Hawthorne.

**Commissioner Agee** stated he did not get the opportunity to ride the buses because he represents all districts, but he heard good things about the contest. There is a lot of development coming to the City of Inglewood and he would like to see seniors shopping in the City. He asked if there was a program to transport senior citizens to shopping centers.

**Thomas Uwal** stated a program started a couple a months ago to transport residents to the Hollywood Park Shopping Center. Thursdays has been designated for the shopping day. At this time only one shuttle is being utilized.

**Rita Gardner** stated as part of the Shop Inglewood effort we are working together with the Office of Economic and Business Development to enhance shopping opportunities for Inglewood businesses. The effort is being promoted at this time to increase ridership, add more seniors, and have City employees take advantage of the program.

Commissioner Agee stated this is a fantastic effort and he believes senior citizens will enjoy it.

**Thomas Uwal** stated meetings have been held with the Office of Economic and Business Development to discuss shopping opportunities for City employees and residents. The Transportation Division and Office of Economic and Business Development established a fixed route for shopping opportunities. Since a lot of people are not aware of this opportunity, ridership is low. Once established and ridership increases, that area will be stationed with a set route.

**Commissioner Agee** stated to please continue the great job.

**Mario Smith, Acting Recreation Supervisor** stated a renovation of the Rogers Park pre-school classrooms will take place shortly. Classes will be relocated one at a time during renovations. It is expected to take about four months to complete.

**Mario Smith** also commented sign-ups for youth basketball are taking place for boys and girls 5 years to 14 years of age at Rogers, Darby and Vincent Parks. The cost is \$30 for Inglewood residents and \$35 for non-residents. More information may be provided by contacting the Sports Office.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** asked what the number is to the Sports Office.

**Mario Smith** provided the number.

# 21st Annual Martin Luther King Day Celebration

**Mario Smith** announced the march will begin at 8:00 a.m. at Hollywood Park, Gate 8, (90<sup>th</sup> Street). The Grand Marshal is John W. Mack, President of Los Angeles Urban League. The keynote speakers will be Dr. Cecil L. Murray, Pastor of First African Methodist Episcopal Church. Mistress of Ceremonies will be Leslie Sykes, News Anchor and Reporter of KABC Channel 7 News. Over 50 groups will be marching.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** asked if Martin Luther King Day Celebration flyers are being disbursed at the schools.

Mario Smith stated that flyers are being distributed at schools and local recreation facilities.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** stated some students in his class misplaced their flyers and are asking what number can they call to obtain more information.

Mario Smith provided the number

**Commissioner Brown** stated the Martin Luther King Committee was given a report that there are approximately 2000 individual participants this year.

### Head Start Program

**Commissioner Brown** asked how the Head Start Program is coming along.

**Mario Smith** stated that the Head Start Program is going very well and it is a service that we needed in the community. There has not been a negative impact to the City's Pre-school Program.

**Commissioner Brown** stated he has not heard anything bad about the program since the controversy at the beginning.

**Rita Gardner** stated because it has been a very controversial issue; it put us on the map and made us more aware of what the needs are in the Community. We had an increase in our pre-school enrollment this year. The Head Start Program

runs separate from the pre-school program. The program begins in September and runs thru June.

Commissioner Gutierrez stated he had the pleasure of taking a tour with Councilman Morales and he didn't know what to expect when he saw a lot of parents who were extremely happy about the program and they were thanking the staff for allowing this to happen. This program allows the children to go to school as well as the parents. The brief visit and reaction of the parents made it seem like it is going well.

**Commissioner Agee** stated we need more Head Start Programs to push us along with things that need to be done. Most likely the Head Start Program had something to do with the renovation of the Pre-school classes at Rogers Park. Rogers Park is looking good. Staff is not hanging in front of the building any more and everything that is being done is very satisfying.

# Youth Basketball

**Commissioner Brown** asked is the basketball program for league or individual play.

**Mario Smith** stated it is a Youth Basketball Program for league play ages 5 to 14.

# **Department Staff**

**Rita Gardner** stated when Chuck Harper retired after supervising Rogers Park for over 20 years, there was a concern about who would replace him. Since Mario Smith has taken on the responsibility of the Westside programs, facilities, and activities, recreation hasn't skipped a beat. I would like to have Commissioner Gutierrez and Brown take a tour of the different districts and see other facilities we have and their programs.

Rita Gardner stated there are four people that have contributed more than 100 years of services combined in the City of Inglewood who will be leaving by the end of February. One of them is Leon Bolton, he has been around the Market Street and the Darby Dixon area (and has worked with the City) for more than 30 years. Ben Stephens, Senior Recreation Supervisor at Darby Park, will also be leaving after contributing more than 30 years of service, he will be missed. Mike McLaughlan, Park Maintenance Superintendent has done a tremendous job and has been innovative with the Parks Division Staff. He has provided 35 years of excellent service as well as John Carter, Park Service Worker who has contributed 9 years of service. There will be a farewell party for Leon and Ben and would like Commissioners to join in the celebration.

## Ashwood Park Sound Wall

**Rita Gardner** stated the sound wall that is being constructed at Ashwood Park will be completed within the next few months and will include cleaning of graffiti. Graffiti on the freeway side will be cleaned by Cal-Trans.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** commented he has received a report that the sound wall project will be completed by March. The report stated to use ivy over the wall.

## Vincent Park Swimming Pools

**Rita Gardner** stated the two swimming pools at Vincent Park are now being resurfaced and will be completed within two months.

# Darby Park's Basketball Courts

**Rita Gardner** stated a walk-through of Darby Park's Basketball Courts was held on Thursday, January 8, 2004. Twelve contractors responded to the walk-through bid for the renovation of the basketball courts and the concrete slabs for the Skate Park at Darby Park. Bids will open on Wednesday, January 28, 2004. Once Commissioners are informed of the lowest bidder, a recommendation will be presented to Mayor and Council for approval.

# Capital Improvement Projects

**Ms. Gardner** stated Parks Division staff met with Public Works to discuss future Capital Improvement Projects. Khanh Chu and Teresa Kneedler from Public Works are working together to try to meet with us and discuss some of the concerns and identify other projects.

### Inglewood Beautification Association

**Rita Gardner** stated an IBA planting was held on Saturday, December 6, 2003. Charlie Morgenstern and Commissioner Gutierrez helped with the planting.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** commented some of the students assisted with the IBA planting and loved it. It was a great thing to see the students and parents getting involved.

**Rita Gardner** stated all participants' names will be placed on flower plaques to recognize them for assisting with the planting. Another planting will take place in May and hopefully everyone will be able to come out.

# **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

# **COMMISSION SUGGESTIONS, REPORTS AND QUESTIONS**

**Commissioner Agee** stated he was at Center Park and observed that most of the graffiti comes from students from nearby schools.

Rita Gardner asked at what location of the park did this take place.

**Commissioner Agee** stated where the picnic tables are located.

**Rita Gardner** stated staff checks for graffiti on a regular basis and notifications are sent to remove the graffiti. We are adamant about making sure that graffiti is removed quickly.

**Commissioner Agee** stated he agrees that graffiti is removed rapidly, but it is the students that are causing the graffiti. There is not proper supervision.

**Rita Gardner** stated this matter may be discussed with the Inglewood School District Superintendent.

**Commissioner Gutierrez** commented it will be helpful if there is more school police presence in that area.

**Commissioner Agee** stated if the graffiti does not stop, we should hold the school district responsible.

**Rita Gardner** stated that is a point that needs to be brought up with the school district.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.