

The monthly meeting of the Inglewood Parks and Recreation Commission was convened on Thursday, February 1, 2007, in the City Council Chambers located on the 9<sup>th</sup> 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 Cindy Giardina – District I  
Commissioner Norma Smith – District II  
Commissioner Raena Banks-Neal – District III

### **Absent:**

Commissioner Henry Brown – District IV

### **Staff:**

Kevin Hawkins, Director  
Sandra Green-Hilliard, Administrative Secretary  
Alma Bryant, Code Enforcement Manager  
Rita Gardner, Parks Superintendent  
Mario Smith, Recreation Supervisor  
Pat Bitker, Food Services Manager

*A moment of silence was taken in honor of Paul Russell.*

### **Public Comments**

None.

### **Approval of the Minutes**

Commissioner Agee made a motion for the comment on page 7 to be removed from the minutes. Commissioner Smith asked for a second, there was no second.

A motion for the approval of the minutes from January 4, 2007 was made by Commissioner Giardina and seconded by Commissioner Banks-Neal.

## **Director's Report**

**Kevin Hawkins** stated good evening. It is wonderful to see you all tonight. We will begin with Rita Gardner.

**Rita Gardner** stated good evening.

The Parks Division and Public Works will be meeting to discuss pending Capital Improvement Projects for the FY 06/07:

- Circle Park Water Feature
- Ashwood Park Restroom Renovation
- Vincent Park Basketball Resurfacing
- Siminski Park Restroom Construction/Building Improvements

Current Capital Improvement Projects are:

Vincent Park Restroom Construction – Romtec, Inc. has been working diligently to complete the project. Teresa Kneedler, Project Manager, has instructed that invoices from Romtec, Inc., should be forwarded to her for handling.

### **Special Projects**

The Police Department and the Parks Division are working in conjunction to remove homeless encampments on Florence Avenue. Officer Loudermilk asked that the Oleander trees on Florence be trimmed down to assist them in having a better view of the area. The homeless have been able to set up encampments due to the heavy shrubbery that allowed them to be hidden from the public view. All of the Oleanders on Florence Avenue have been trimmed from east of La Brea to the west of La Cienega.

### **Imperial Branch Library**

The Parks Maintenance Section has been instrumental in beautifying the newly opened Imperial Branch Library with new plants, trees and bushes.

**Commissioner Giardina** stated I would like to commend you on the remodification of the library, the Oleanders and the plants are beautiful as well as the hard work on the tree trimming in District One.

**Rita Gardner** stated thank you.

**Kevin Hawkins** stated thank you for acknowledging the hard work. We are trying to maintain the citywide tree schedule but it is hard to do so because we have special requests and areas that we also need to address from Administration, Council and Commission. Now, I'll turn it over to Mario Smith.

**Mario Smith** stated good evening:

Training and Research Foundation (TRF)

Over the last four years, Training and Research has operated a highly successful Headstart Program at Rogers Park. The existing TRF contract is due to expire on June 30, 2007. Parents of the program and the City staff have expressed a great desire for the program to remain at Rogers Park. TRF seeks to renew the rental agreement with the City.

TRF provides a full-day program which, in conjunction with the City's Preschool program, provides viable options for residents with diverse childcare needs. A continued relationship with TRF not only expands services offered at Rogers Park but also fosters an environment for collaboration and networking with staff, which will benefit the children and families served by the City and TRF.

In exchange for the provision of classroom space at Rogers Park, TRF will pay the City of Inglewood sixteen hundred and fifty dollars (\$1,650) per month beginning July 1, 2007 for rental, inclusive of utilities (excluding telephone), and on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of each month there after. The monthly rental amount shall be increased on an annual basis beginning July 1, 2008. The percent shall correspond to the Consumer Price Index for the Los Angeles – Riverside – Orange County area. This is a three-year agreement ending June 30, 2010.

TRF will remain joint responsibility for maintenance of the assigned classroom space and an assigned outdoor play area. TRF will also assume responsibility for necessary upgrades for compliance with all applicable Child Care Center Licensing Requirements, Building Codes, safety regulations, and City standards.

The Department operates a successful City-wide Preschool Program at several City-owned Recreational facilities. During the four year program with TRF, the existing City-wide Preschool Program was not negatively impacted. In fact, enrollment in the Rogers Park pre-school program has increased partially due to referrals from TRF.

As in the past, the existing City-wide Preschool program will not be negatively impacted by a continued relationship with TRF. Additionally, the Rogers Park Preschool Program will not be required to share classroom space, furniture, equipment, supplies or personnel, with TRF.

Commission Action

We are seeking the Commission's concurrence of the recommendation to extend the TRF agreement. With your support, we plan to present this item to the Mayor and Council within the next 2-3 weeks.

### After-School Recreation Program

The After-School Recreation Program is going extremely well. We are currently serving nine Inglewood Unified School District Schools and 409 students. The program not only gives the children somewhere to go after school, but also provides a safe and structured environment. The program provides homework assistance, arts and crafts, educational games, independent reading and sports. Individual cultural instructors are also contracted to teach various cultural activities. We have two dance instructors that provide dance instruction to the youth once a week. We are in the process of hiring an art and martial arts instructor. The program is conducted on site at each school with the exception of Highland Elementary School. This school is currently under major construction and unable to provide space for the City's After School Program at this time.

### Black History Month Activities

The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department will host a Black History Month Celebration titled, "Black History! Educate, Celebrate and Motivate: Looking Back to Move Forward." The event will be held at Darby Park on Friday, February 23, 2007, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The event will feature music, dance, spoken word and winners of the 2007 Martin Luther King, Jr. speech contest. The event will also include an art exhibition by local renowned artist Michael Massenburg.

### Inglewood Playhouse

The Inglewood Playhouse is currently running a production titled "Sweet Evelyn." Set in the 1980s, this play is about overcoming fears and limitations. It explores the idea of information passed from one generation to the next, which is accepted as "the truth." But, there are certain "accepted truths" that are essentially "accepted fears" that can paralyze an entire group of people from reaching their highest level of greatness. This play is beautifully written and produced by Kyona Kevine and Directed by Apaulo Malloy. You will not want to miss it! The play runs February 2-February 25, 2007. Show times are at 8:00 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and 3:00 p.m. on Sundays. There will be no performance on Sunday, February 4. The cost is \$15 per person. For more information you can log on to [www.plays411.com/evalina](http://www.plays411.com/evalina) or contact the Cultural Office at 310-412-8700.

**Commissioner Smith** asked that TRF be waived until we investigate and come back to the next meeting.

**Commissioner Agee** stated I am familiar with the program and I feel we should take a vote tonight. I would like to make a motion that we review, can I get a second?

**Commissioner Banks-Neal** stated I am not familiar with this and I would not feel comfortable voting on it.

**Commissioner Giardina** stated I would like an update on this program before I pass a vote.

**Commissioner Smith** asked can we please be given something that would allow us to review and will come back with a decision?

**Commissioner Agee** asked has anything changed?

**Mario Smith** stated no.

**Commissioner Smith** stated any time you want a Commissioner's vote on a project, give it to us 30 days in advance.

**Kevin Hawkins** stated I will ask that the TRF staff come before this Commission with a presentation at the next meeting.

**Commissioner Smith** asked will you please give us an update on the After School Program and Mobile Recreation?

**Mario Smith** stated I have given you a report on the After School program. The Mobile Recreation van is at the City Yard waiting for the logo to be applied to the van.

**Kevin Hawkins** stated Mario; you must be tired tonight because you came into my office and talked up a storm about your baby (referring to the Mobile Recreation Program).

**Mario Smith** stated yes, this is my baby and I'm just a little excited today.

**Kevin Hawkins** stated next we will hear from Pat Bitker.

#### Senior Center Relocation and Demolition

The demolition of the old Center is nearly complete. A sign has been ordered to place on the construction fence, notifying of the new address for the Center. Many service requests for the new Center are still pending. We are creating a chart of the requests for an ongoing update progress of the requests. The highest priorities for unbudgeted work are the two doors-Centinela side and Warren Lane side. If we utilize a reception counter from the yard, we may be able to spend the money budgeted for it on the doors. Public Works is hiring a consultant to create a calendar for the major facility improvements. Other priority items are the cubicles for Room #2, the acoustic panels and the repair of the steam table.

With staff and programs spread out and loss of the central kitchen, an organizational re-alignment is underway. Staff is working on job descriptions, procedures and service gaps. To address some of these gaps, we hope to fill a position to assist with phone and reception duties.

We are looking into getting Title V workers through SER-Jobs for Progress. A quarterly general staff meeting for all 40+ Division staff is planned for February 28.

### Food Service and Catering

While some progress has been made to improve service with the caterer, overall things remain unacceptable. Meetings have begun with other project directors who use the same caterer and we have begun to present our joint grievances and problems in a united front effort to force some improvement. At this point the other project director and I are convinced that we will never be satisfied with the service and have begun looking for other options. Los Angeles County AAA understands our frustrations and will make concessions in their requirements for going out to bid to allow us to make needed changes.

**Kevin Hawkins** stated if the County gives us the approval to loosen their bid requirements and we didn't want to wait until the next regularly scheduled meeting, we would call an emergency meeting to break the contract and to get someone in there to meet the needs of the seniors.

**Commissioner Smith** stated I'm familiar with the food and have spoken to several seniors.

**Commissioner Giardina** asked do we have a larger pool of vendors? Can you elaborate on what our liability will be to break the contract? I think it is very important to find a vendor that can replace the one we have now.

**Commissioner Agee** stated this involves senior citizens, I think it is very important and we should vote on it tonight.

**Commissioner Smith** stated Commissioner Agee has made a motion that we approve a new caterer.

No second.

**Kevin Hawkins** stated he appreciated the gesture. We have tried to work with the vendor, which by the way was recommended by the County, went through the bid process and was the low bid. We loaned them staff to assist them. We've given it time and there hasn't been any change—they remain inconsistent with

their product. We haven't narrowed down a vendor, but when we do, we will move on it and let you know.

**Pat Bitker** stated the next contract contains a provision – was the food made with love. If you don't understand that the food is going to be eaten by a frail person, it needs to taste, look and smell good. It's a process to try and locate caterers. We only have a list of two people that came from Los Angeles County. I found two that make their food with love. So we are working on it. The good news is that now the process with L.A. County is that no caterer is allowed to bid that has no experience with home delivered meals. The process will be better from here on out.

### Grevillea Art Park and Mural Restoration

Progress is visible at the Grevillea Art Park Site. The land has been graded and the forms for the wall are being constructed. The cement for the wall will be poured in two sections. We have invited Huell Howser to film the second pour. This is part of the TV show which will have segments from removing the panels from the old wall, work on the panels in the studio, construction and rehanging. A date for the re-dedication will be set as soon as we have a clear idea of the construction schedule. On January 9 and January 23, 2007, the Construction Task Force (compromised of the Project Manager for Pima Construction, staff from Parks, Public Works, conservators, architect and structural engineer) met to review the details of the construction. Another meeting with the President of Pima Construction was held on January 22, to urge them to speed up the work.

### Be Well Program for Seniors

Our fourth "Be Well" light exercise and nutrition class started on Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, at Darby Park. This class is funded by Kaiser Permanente to conduct a research study of the program utilizing Kaiser Permanente senior participants. We have partnered with Kaiser Permanente, Partners in Care and Food and Nutrition Management for this particular research study involving "Be Well."

### Intergenerational Mentors

On Saturday, January 20, 28 potential mentors attended an orientation at Rogers Park. The Intergenerational Mentors Project, which pairs a senior citizen or adult mentor with a youth from foster care, is a partnership between the City, the Torrance Department of Children and Families oversight. The City will assist with programs and outings for the Inglewood Intergenerational group. Proposed outings include trips to the Long Beach Aquarium, Clippers, Dodgers and Chivas games, Women's Professional Tennis Tournament, UniverSoul Circus and activities such as skating, bowling and other sports. A Mentor Recognition is planned for January of 2008.

**Commissioner Banks-Neal** stated the mural project is a beautiful piece of artwork. District Three is experiencing a graffiti war and I'd like to praise the Graffiti Department. I hope that we can get the taggers involved in a mural project.

**Commissioner Agee** stated (referring to the senior center) I would not eat that food anymore; I have eaten the food before.

**Commissioner Giardina** stated I have some very serious concerns. I would hope there would be some sort of emergency finding to help us expedite this process so that we can get out of the contract. We certainly would like this expedited. Are we going to be penalized for getting out of the contract?

I couldn't agree more with Commissioner Banks we need to install security cameras to capture the mural to help police the area and protect it.

**Commissioner Smith** stated there was overhang to cover the patio. This has been corrected?

**Patricia Bitker** stated yes, it has been corrected.

**Kevin Hawkins** stated I appreciate the strong feeling and support for the Food Service.

Mural – your concerns about graffiti have been concerns for all of us. The mural committee has been especially concerned regarding how valuable this mural is to the community. Speaking of graffiti, here is Alma Bryant.

**Alma Bryant** stated good evening.

#### Graffiti and Code Enforcement

Graffiti and Code Enforcement will participate in the District Four Clean Up Day, which will be held on February 10, 2007 from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The event will take place in the Darby Dixon area. The starting point will be Bartdon Park. The focus will be on the streets and alleys between 104<sup>th</sup> Street, between Woodworth and Club Drive. The Graffiti crew will have three trucks running and Code Enforcement will assist in trash pick up and passing out of literature. After the clean up, lunch will be provided for all participants.

#### Unfinished Business

**Commissioner Giardina** asked has there been a project manager assigned to the Circle Park Water Feature Project?

**Rita Gardner** stated Goran Milunovic from the engineering section is working on assigning a project manager. We provided them with the preliminary information that you provided to us.

### **Commissioner Comments**

**Commissioner Agee** stated first of all there was a comment made by one of the Commissioners and I would rather appreciate it if it is removed. Second of all I've been on the Mural Committee for the past five years and every precaution has been taken to deter the vandalism and graffiti.

**Commissioner Banks-Neal** stated I was speaking about the graffiti but my main point was to find a creative outlook for the starving artist.

Meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m. in honor of Paul Russell.