

MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

CITY OF POMONA
GARFIELD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER
563 N. MOUNTAINVIEW AVENUE
POMONA, CA 91767

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2019
6:00 P.M.

I. CALL TO ORDER Chair Ayala called the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL Chair Ayala asked staff to take roll.

Present:	Melissa Ayala, Chair	District 1
	Fabian Pavon, Commissioner	District 2
	Noel Mendez-Zamudio, Commissioner	District 3
	Jeff Sanchez, Vice Chair	District 4
	Cynthia Marino, Commissioner	District 5
	Remington Cordova, Commissioner	District 6

Absent: Ion Puschila, Mayoral Appointee

Staff Alina Barron, Assistant Planner
Monica Belloso, Technical Specialist II
Michael Osoff, Community Services Manager
Michael Sledd, Parks and Facilities Manager

III. FLAG SALUTE Chair Ayala led the flag salute.

IV. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION

Chair Ayala stated she attended Indigenous Day; she thanked the organizers and everyone involved in putting this event together. She stated she attended the Beatles tribute band summer concert; it had a good turnout. She stated she attended a community meeting hosted by [Pomona Unified School District] Superintendent who spoke about district funding and ways to improve spending.

Commissioner Mendez –Zamudio thanked everyone for coming today. He stated he is working with Councilmember Nora Garcia on designating the month of November as ‘Park Beautification Month’ and have cleanups every Saturday in November. He stated there will be a cleanup at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park on November 2nd and Philadelphia Park on November 9th, and the dates are pending. Commissioner Mendez-Zamudio asked staff what the City is doing about what happened at Tony Cerda Park [fallen light] and if there will be infrastructure inspections at Tony Cerda Park and other parks.

Commissioner Sanchez stated there are many events coming up and thanked everyone who came out to the Pomona 5K.

Commissioner Marino thanked the public for attending. She announced there will be tree planting event at Philips Ranch on the green belt on November 2, 2019 at 8:30 a.m. She said she also attended a place making meeting.

Commissioner Cordova reminded everyone this Saturday, October 19th is the 18th annual Cultural Festival at Willie White Park and said M. Joyce does a great job in putting this together. Commissioner Cordova stated he attended a “talk” discussion where the topic was elections. He stated Monsignor Andrew Tseu of St. Madeleine Catholic Church passed away two weeks ago and made a motion to adjourn the meeting in his honor, seconded by Chair Ayala, and passed by a unanimous vote of Commissioners present (6-0-1-0).

Commissioner Pavon stated he attended Indigenous People’s Day at Ganesha Park. He is organizing a park cleanup at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park on November 2nd. He said residents have been approaching him about the condition of Tony Cerda Park and the lack of restroom stalls, drinking fountains, and picnic tables. He will be hosting an open mic on October 25th and a car show on October 26th at Tony Cerda Park. He said he has been adding plants at Memorial Park.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Ayala presented the minutes of September 19, 2019. Chair Ayala asked staff to make a correction to reflect that she had already helped with the second phase of the beautification day project with ULV students. Chair Ayala made a motion to approve the minutes with the correction, seconded by Commissioner Cordova, passed by a unanimous vote of Commissioners present (6-0-1-0).

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Ayala opened Public Comment for non-agenda items.

Donna Otero stated the Indigenous Peoples Day was a success.

Vince Carpio asked for an update on issues that still need to be addressed at Hamilton Park. He heard that Hamilton Park’s state application was taken out of the running and asked why.

Martin Perez stated Hamilton Park is a neighborhood park with a lot of history. The community has continued efforts to clean, beautify, and provide youth with activities, but the park still needs amenities such as a playground, restrooms, and more drinking fountains. Mr. Perez asked that Hamilton Park’s needs be prioritized.

Irene M. Aguirre stated she is here to support all the parks in the City, regardless of the name or location of the park. Parks are intended for youth and families to gather, enjoy and exercise. When families don’t visit parks, homeless come into the parks because they are empty. Ms. Aguirre stated that residents are stronger together, and must make efforts to support the parks.

Dee Dee Ybarra stated in 2018, the Indigenous People’s Day received a lawsuit for a trip and fall incident due to a broken sprinkler head. She stated she had all her insurance paperwork in order, so they will be alright. Ms. Ybarra stated the pre-event walkthrough drew attention to some issues with some being taken care of. She suggested that when organizations want to do events or programming in the parks, that they provide benefit to residents and that the money goes back to the maintenance of the parks.

Margaret Aichelle of the dA Center of the Arts shared statistics from the 1990s and the link between crime and community centers open until 8:00 p.m. Ms. Aichelle stated that she wishes to partner with the

City to provide arts programming between 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at community centers. She is researching grant opportunities to partner with the City and said the process can be cumbersome. She suggested looking into other cities' models on how to make it easier to partner with the City for grant funding.

VII. OLD AND/OR NEW BUSINESS

1. Butterfly Garden at Ganesha Park

Lin Rudenauer of Friends of Ganesha Park presented the Butterfly Garden Project to the Commission. She stated the place making project is intended to benefit the park by creating an inviting space for people. Ms. Rudenauer presented photos of the location, area, and routes to the proposed butterfly garden. She presented a concept site level plan and a list of plants that will be planted in the garden, and proposed Sunday, November 17, 2019 as the day to begin the project. Ms. Rudenauer stated funds have been secured for the project. Ms. Rudenauer stated it will be an ongoing project, as the area will need to be prepared and weeded, and eventually maintained. She is seeking the Commission's approval for the proposed Butterfly Garden at Ganesha Park.

Chair Ayala made a motion to approve the Butterfly Garden Project at Ganesha Park, seconded by Commissioner Mendez-Zamudio, and passed by a unanimous vote of Commissioners present (6-0-1-0).

2. Creating a Park Foundation

Alfredo Camacho and Regina Wang of Pomona Leadership Network presented their capstone project on creating a park foundation. Mr. Camacho stated he chose to research this topic to find out how a park foundation can help activate parks and address community issues such as safety and accessibility. Ms. Wang stated that as a Community Life Commissioner for District 2, she was interested in learning how to start and sustain a park-related nonprofit.

Mr. Camacho stated parks provide economic, health, environmental and social value to communities. The research process required a park needs assessment which included analyzing data from the Los Angeles County Needs Assessment report and Los Angeles County Public Health Pomona Community Profile, speaking with key stakeholders, and identifying solutions, challenges, and opportunities.

Ms. Wang stated they then met with their designated board advisors who suggested they look beyond park foundations and consider conservancies as a public-private partnership. This led to their interviewing CEOs of several conservancies and speaking with Fairplex CEO Miguel Santana and Vice President of Arteco Partners Ed Tessier to gain a better understanding of public-private partnerships. She stated they spoke with the City's Planning Commissioner Dr. Kyle Brown, to get a landscape architecture perspective and the City's Development Services Director Anita Gutierrez, who provided them land-use and historical evidence for their key studies.

Mr. Camacho stated the next step was connecting their capstone project to a location in Pomona that could achieve the goal of a good park system and provide economic, environmental, health, and social value to Pomona residents. As part of their project, they chose Westmont Hills for the area for a potential "Westmont Hill Nature Park". Mr. Camacho described Westmont Hills with 300 acres of undeveloped open space that sits between the Phillips Ranch and Westmont neighborhoods. There is a hiking trail that, while not prohibited, is not encouraged or publicized either. There is no parking lot or crosswalk to access the trail. Mr. Camacho stated there is potential for adding park open space to Pomona in the form of a nature park.

Ms. Wang stated their research identified three possibilities to address park needs: a land conservancy, a parks foundation, and an advocacy group. While a land conservancy has the ability to purchase land, get the word out, enter into public-public partnerships, create and manage programming, it also requires substantial work and can be very time consuming. Ms. Wang stated if a conservancy were started in Pomona, it would require significant resources, including a board and staff to maintain it. Another option Ms. Wang suggested, was a park foundation. A park foundation has the ability to meet the needs of residents and can supplement city staff and budget. However, a park foundation can be limited in scope, as it does not own the land. Ms. Wang also stated that funding for park foundations can be challenging and competitive, as people often donate to regional parks for greater impact. Lastly, Ms. Wang stated that an advocacy group can be a good option because it is not place-based and it has the freedom to engage on different issues. Ms. Wang recommended that Pomona first start an advocacy group and then move toward creating a parks foundation, and eventually create a conservancy. Mr. Camacho concluded the presentation and stated the next steps include investing in our parks, meaning that residents commit to visiting parks and engaging in positive activities to deter negative activities.

3. Proposal for Philadelphia Park Cleanup and Beautification Projects

Councilmember Nora Garcia presented a beautification project at Philadelphia Park. The proposed project included various art projects, a free community library, park sign improvements, and adding three trees. The art projects included painting trash cans, a storage box, a utility box, and a handprint mural on the back wall of the community center. Ms. Garcia provided a description of the free community library and ensured the Commission that it would be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible and that she would be the steward responsible for stocking the 'library' with children's books and adult bilingual books. The park sign improvements included repainting the sign image and letters, adding four lantern plants to the planter under the sign, and painting the posts next to the sign. Ms. Garcia also proposed adding a tree next to the bench in front of the community center, a tree along the property line adjacent to the school, and a tree in the open patch along the path closest to the music room. Ms. Garcia is seeking the Commission's approval for the proposed project at Philadelphia Park Project on November 9, 2019.

Chair Ayala stated she likes the project and provided her recommendations regarding paint colors, as well confirming that the placement of the 'library' does not interfere with an area where children enjoy playing.

Assistant Planner Alina Barron informed the Commission the beautification project requires a mural permit for the community mural, and must be approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission. Ms. Barron presented details including location and measurements for mural permit 12816-2019 and then requested approval for the installation of the community-executed mural.

Chair Ayala opened up public comment for this agenda item.

Cultural Arts Commissioner Joshua Swodeck said he thinks the Parks and Recreation Commission should have the ability to approve community murals. The Parks and Recreation Commissioners have oversight of beautifying parks. He described the procedures of approving art projects in the City of Venice Beach and recommended that Pomona follow similar procedures. He stated this art project should not be required to go before the Cultural Arts Commission, as this project is not being installed by a professional artist or required to be up for five years. He stated he is planning to speak on this when the project comes before the Cultural Arts Commission next week.

Martin Perez stated he wishes to plan a similar event at Hamilton Park.

Vince Carpio asked about the process of murals permits and asked if illegal murals will be whitewashed.

Chair Ayala motioned to approve the Philadelphia Park Cleanup and Beautification Project, passing with a unanimous vote of Commissioners present (6-0-1-0).

4. Proposal to Install a Free Community Library at Kellogg Park

Staff member Monica Belloso presented a request to install a free community library at Kellogg Park. A site visit with Councilmember Gonzalez, Public Works and Community Services staff determined the proposed location of the 'library' will be ADA accessible, has sufficient lighting, and does not affect any water or electrical lines. Staff is seeking the Commission's approval to install a free community library at Kellogg Park. Chair Ayala made a motion to approve the Free Community Library at Kellogg Park, seconded by Commissioner Pavon, and approved by a (6-0-1-0) vote.

5. Proposal to Paint Trash Cans at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park

Commissioner Pavon proposed to paint trash cans red, black, and green as part of a beautification project on Saturday, November 2, 2019 at Martin Luther King, Jr Park. The project also includes trash pickup, raking leaves, scrubbing restroom facilities, and spreading mulch on perimeter of the park.

Chair Ayala opened up public comment for this agenda item.

Chair Ayala stated she missed a speaker card for the previous agenda item, and asked Ms. Ybarra if she would like to speak now, with the Commission's permission. The Commission agreed.

Dee Dee Ybarra commented about the mural at [Sharky Park] that was painted without a mural permit. She said the mural did not go through the Cultural Arts Commission or graffiti abatement. She said it is not graffiti; it is pictures taken from the internet without knowing what it means. The pictures on the internet were indigenous, but not related to the general tribes in California. The community had been working with an artist for over a year and a half and a contract was awarded. Suddenly the mural on the stage happened with no explanation from the cultural Arts Commission. The way the Cultural Arts Commission handled this was offensive to the people worked hard to work with them and the dA Center of the Arts.

Commissioner Cordova asked what mural Ms. Ybarra is referring to, and what does it look like.

Chair Ayala stated this was a public comment, and not intended for discussion. Chair Ayala moved on to the next speaker.

Josh Swodeck stated this project is not considered art by the standards of the Cultural Arts Commission. Mr. Swodeck recommended the Parks and Recreation ask staff to provide the City Code regarding mural permits and the Commission's power and duties.

Cheryl Simpson asked why the colors red, black, and green were selected for the trash cans. Commissioner Pavon responded those colors represent the Black Liberation flag. Ms. Simpson recommended placing something in the park to inform residents what the colors mean.

Commissioner Cordova asked Commissioner Pavon if the project is attempting to beautify the park or make a political statement. Commissioner Pavon responded that the project is trying to beautify the park. Commissioner Cordova stated there is a political subtext in choosing those colors, and the Commission should be careful approving projects with political messages.

Chair Ayala commented that colors should be carefully considered because they can have serious implications. Chair Ayala made a motion to hold off approving the painted trash cans so staff can provide clarification on the definition of beautification, and clarify the process of art projects in the parks.

Commissioner Mendez-Zamudio stated they are just colors and doesn't feel there is an issue. He said it should be okay to paint them. He said the problem is that everyone wants to be politically correct and people are going to disagree about what the colors mean anyway.

Chair Ayala expressed the importance of understanding what beautification means and the process of art projects because this issue is going to continue to come up in the future. Chair Ayala made a motion to hold off on painting the trash cans, seconded by Commissioner Cordova. The motion failed with a 2-4-1-0 vote. (Ayes: Ayala, Cordova) (Noes: Pavon, Mendez-Zamudio, Sanchez, Marino).

Commissioner Pavon made a motion to paint the trash cans red, black, and green, seconded by Commissioner Sanchez, passing with a 4-2-1-0 vote. (Ayes: Pavon, Mendez-Zamudio, Sanchez, Marino) (Noes: Ayala and Cordova).

Chair Ayala said she feels it is still important that staff provide clarification of the definition of beautification and the process of art projects in parks at the following meeting, passing with a 6-0-1-0 vote.

6. Development of Priorities and Goals of the Parks and Recreation Commission

Community Services Manager Mike Osoff advised that staff was asked to provide the Commission with potential dates to schedule a first meeting to discuss priorities and goals. Mr. Osoff provided potential dates to the Commission. After discussion, Chair Ayala made a motion to hold a special meeting to discuss priorities and goals for the Parks and Recreation Commission on Sunday, November 17, 2019 at Palomares Park at 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Pavon, passing with a vote of 6-0-1-0.

VIII. STAFF COMMUNICATION

- The Fall/Winter Recreation Guide is now out and available on the City's website.
- Mr. Osoff recommended the Commissioners to review the Council's Priorities and Goals and bring their top five priorities related to parks and recreation to discuss during the upcoming special meeting.
- Mr. Osoff stated he provided the same presentation he provided the Parks and Recreation Commission about the sale of Veterans Park to Council during the October 7th City Council meeting. It passed with a 5/6 vote therefore staff will move forward with the process. Mr. Osoff noted that the sale would still need to be approved at a higher level by the Department of Interior. Mr. Osoff stated there were speakers during public comment opposing the item because of the concern of losing park space. Mr. Osoff stated park space and amenities will be increased by repurposing funds from the sale of Veterans Park.
- Staff is consistently seeking grant opportunities, evaluating funding criteria, and open to partnering with community organizations. Mr. Osoff also noted that the City has limited staff resources and is more readily available to vet opportunities to apply for funding and/or partner on applications when they are given ample notice.

- Mr. Osoff stated the City has a current partnership with Los Angeles County Public Library to bring bookmobiles to the senior centers. Last week, they funded Aztec dancers to perform at Washington Park Senior Center and funded a drum circle at Renacimiento Community Park.
- Mr. Osoff asked the Commission's assistance in marketing efforts and spreading the word for future special events and programming to increase participation.
- Staff is carefully considers when to open restrooms in parks during the day due to illegal activity like vandalism, drug use, etc.
- Mr. Osoff responded to a comment about Hamilton Park's state application being removed from consideration. Mr. Osoff stated the State [CA Dept. of Parks and Recreation] reached out to staff to clarify application responses for both Washington Park and Hamilton Park applications and have not been removed from consideration at this time.
- Mr. Osoff responded to a question about if fee from organized sports to go back to maintaining the fields. Mr. Osoff stated that field rentals and lighting fees are based on classifications for Pomona-based leagues and non-Pomona-based leagues. Although increasing fees can lead to more revenue, it can lead to sports leagues not being able to afford running leagues in the City.

Mr. Sledd responded to a question made during Public Comment about the status of the mural at Tony Cerda Park and stated that his requirements for murals are using professional grade paint with an anti-graffiti coating.

Chair Ayala made a motion to discuss the mural at Tony Cerda Park, seconded by Commissioner Cordova, passed by a vote of (5-1-1-0).

Chair Ayala stated the Proposition 68 application was made possible by all the community members advocating for Hamilton Park. She encouraged everyone to continue their efforts and commended residents in working together and thanked staff in assisting their efforts.

Mr. Sledd stated a grant application was submitted for the Huntington medians with trail and educational features around the perimeter. Based on funding criteria for disadvantaged communities, options to submit applications for trails in a wilderness area is limited in the City, but staff will continue efforts to find funding opportunities.

Mr. Sledd responded to the question regarding the lights at Tony Cerda Park. He stated the light pole that fell was removed as well as two others. A survey of all lights in the park system was done resulting in the removal of five more. A work order will be submitted and can take up to 16-18 weeks for new poles to arrive. Mr. Sledd explained that inspections are done, but City does not have an inventory system for maintenance and infrastructure.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Ayala adjourned the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

Michael Osoff
Community Services Manager

Melissa Ayala, Chairperson
Parks and Recreation Commission