

City of Pomona

505 S. Garey Ave
Pomona, CA 91766

Regular Meeting Minutes

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION



*Chair Donna Otero
Vice-Chair Cynthia Marino
Commissioner Chris Lang
Commissioner Julian Ibañez Mandujano
Commissioner Vince Carpio
Commissioner Ion Puschila*

VISION STATEMENT

*Pomona will be recognized as a vibrant, safe, beautiful
community that is a fun and exciting destination and the home of
arts and artists, students and scholars, business and industry.*

Thursday, March 21, 2024

6:00 PM

Ganesha Park Community Center

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Marino called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Marino led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Cynthia Marino
Vice Chair Chris Lang
Commissioner Julian Ibañez-Mandujano
Commissioner Vince Carpio
Commissioner Donna Otero
Absent: Commissioner Ion Puschila

STAFF PRESENT

Rene Guerrero, Public Works Director
Danny Whaley, Parks and Facilities Manager
Mike Osoff, Community Services Manager
Monica Belloso, Management Analyst
Mark Gluba, City Manager
Dr. Pedro Payne, Office of Violence Prevention Manager
Vanessa Moreno, Senior Management Analyst
Jordan Sanchez, Recreation Supervisor
Nathan Alton, Technical (Skate) Specialist II

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

V. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION

Vice Chair Lang reported that on February 26, 2024, City Council approved the purchase of three vehicles for a park ambassador program. He informed there was an incident involving gunfire at Palomares Park and asked if staff could share information or an update. He welcomed staff from the Office of Violence Prevention. He shared that he experienced an encounter at Ganesha Park and said that transients feel possessive over space or camping spots, and said that sometimes those encounters can turn violent. Vice Chair Lang reported that it was International Forest Day and would like to place an item on the next agenda to discuss fallen trees at Ganesha Park and throughout the City, including revegetation.

Commissioner Ibanez-Mandujano reported that the mural at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park is almost complete. Now that it is spring, there are efforts to plant vegetables. He is happy to announce that he took over the free community library at Centennial Park. There will be a corn planting at Lopez Farm on Saturday, April 13, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.

Commissioner Carpio commended Clean & Green for planting trees in South Pomona over the weekend, and encouraged people to volunteer. The Egg Hunt event is coming up, including other community events, like the Eagles Lunch and encouraged people to participate.

Commissioner Otero also thanked Clean & Green for planting trees. She asked if anyone was interested in volunteering, there will be a cleanup event at Spadra Cementary on Saturday from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Chair Marino stated that she attended a City Council meeting and that the spring recreation guide is now available.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

It was recommended that the Parks and Recreation Commission approve the meeting minutes of February 15, 2024. **MOTION BY COMMISSIONER CARPIO, SECOND BY VICE CHAIR LANG, CARRIED 5-0.**

VII. DISCUSSION CALENDAR

1. All Children Thrive Presents Project Findings

Monica Guerrero and Tina Pham of All Children Thrive presented survey findings about youth, parks, open spaces, and community gardens. The survey had 578 respondents of which 71% were high school students, 92% were Pomona residents, and 47% stated they use the park at least once a week. Other information highlighted were high schools that respondents attend, parks most visited, and common concerns at parks, which included issues with restrooms, graffiti, and safety. The team asked youth a variety of questions regarding youth employment, vacant lots, and community spaces. Seventy four percent of respondents said they think it is a good idea to have an afterschool job program where youth could be paid to keep parks clean

and report safety and cleanliness issues; 43% said they would be interested in participating in a job program like that. Forty percent reported there are vacant lots within walking distance of their neighborhood or school that could be converted into a park space and 60% thought it would be a good idea to convert vacant lots into community spaces. The design team shared their vision in working with the City of Pomona to create a youth park watch committee and receive resources for a adopt-a-lot project.

No public comment. No vote, as this item was a presentation only.

2. Staff Introductions: Assistant City Manager and the Office of Violence Prevention Manager

Assistant City Manager Mark Gluba introduced himself and provided an overview of his time with the City, his new role, and oversight, which includes City Administration, Community Services, Library, and the Office of Violence Prevention. He said he looks forward to his new role and with working with the Commissioners.

Dr. Pedro Payne, the Office of Violence Prevention Manager introduced himself, shared his personal and professional background, and gave an account of the newly established department. Dr. Payne stated that in 2022, the City had applied for a grant to reduce gun violence in the City. In July 2022, the City hired consultants to help roll out the program, and Dr. Payne began in October 2023 and Ms. Moreno began in January 2024. The program is modeled after evidence-based strategies that have been conducted 20 times in 20 cities throughout the United States.

Senior Management Analyst Vanessa Moreno introduced herself and provided a brief description of her background and experience. She explained the program's fellowship and intervention features, and described the program's strategic goals, which are to reduce participation in homicides, improve social cohesion, and strengthen community-police relations. She stated the peacemaker fellowship targets high-risk individuals and enrolls them into an 18-month program focusing on seven touchpoints. The touchpoints are made through texts, phone calls, and in person, and are designed to provide developmental and healing resources to reduce cyclical and retaliation violence. It also offers services such as tattoo removal, housing, mental health services, employment, and transformative excursions. She spoke of an Elder Circle, made up well-respected volunteers that provide mentoring and support. The program offers an internship opportunity to help fellows gain permanent employment. It also offers a monthly stipend to incentivize progress.

Dr. Payne stated the program is an intervention program, but there prevention features that community partners support. He said that because the program works with individuals that are involved in gangs, it is recognized that parks are a place that attracts behavior and activities that the community does not want.

No public comment.

Commissioner questions: Does the program address prostitution and homelessness. Dr. Payne stated the program focuses on gun violence based on the State's requirements and grant guidelines.

How is the population identified. Dr. Payne spoke of credible messengers with 'lived experiences' that can look intimidating or like gang members. The team works with individuals that have turned their life around to help identify those who want to turn their life around.

How does the program determine if Pomona residents are responsible for shootings and how will the program be evaluated. Dr. Payne responded that a program analysis was conducted and it was found that those living outside of Pomona were responsible for slightly less than 20% of shootings. Independent evaluators from UC Berkeley and CalPoly Pomona will evaluate the effectiveness of the program in December 2025.

No Public Comment. No vote, as this item was a presentation only.

3. Measure A Updates

Public Works Director Rene Guerrero provided an update of various park projects funded by Measure A funding, an annual allocation from Los Angeles County to the City. In February, City Council approved Measure A funding for the following projects: new playground equipment at Washington Park and all-abilities playgrounds and rubberized surfacing at Ted Greene Park, Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, Jaycee Park, and Country Crossings Park.

No Public Comment. No vote, as this item was a presentation only.

4. Potential Skate Park and Amenities Expansion

Recreation Supervisor Jordan Sanchez and Technical (Skate) Specialist II Nathan Alton provided a brief overview and background of the City's skate programming. They stated that creating skate spaces in the City increases physical and mental health, teaches perseverance and self-accountability, and bridges the gap between culture and traditional sports. It also makes those spaces more frequented, activated, and have less negative activity. They presented park sites where skate spaces could be created in order to expand City skate programming and activities, such as Centennial Park, Memorial Park, Garfield Park, Ralph Welch Park, Kennedy Park, and Ganesha Park. Mr. Alton provided a description of each of the locations and the types of skate amenities and features that could be added. He stated that next steps would be identifying sites, holding community meetings for input, sourcing funds, and design/build.

No Public Comment. No vote, as this item was a presentation only. The Commission provided a consensus of support with staff expanding and creating skate spaces in the City.

VIII. STAFF COMMUNICATION

- The Civic Center Playground Project has 90% plans and a construction contract is expected to be awarded in June. The project may begin in late summer.
- The Park Restroom Replacement Project plans are complete and a scope of work will be prepared to release a Request For Project (RFP).
- The La Casita Teen Center project received a \$4M federal grant from the Office of Norma Torres. Last week, an agreement was executed. A scope of work will be prepared to release an RFP for a designer to renovate the center.

- The tennis courts at Palomares Park will be resurfaced and restriped to create a hybrid sports court for 16 pickleball courts.
- At Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, the project to expand the skate space is getting design plans.
- Staff was notified that a Community Resiliency Center proposal for Washington Park Community Center was not funded, and staff is in the process of scheduling a meeting to obtain feedback with a project officer.
- Staff met with a representative from the California Department of Parks and Recreation to clarify project details for the Outdoor Equity Grants Program. Staff submitted a proposal for Pomona Pathfinders requesting \$700,000 for a three-year project to take youth to outdoor nature-based places and participate in nature-based activities. Awards will be announced in the summer.
- Staff submitted five proposals to the Office of Norma Torres requesting approximately \$10M for capital projects. Renovation projects were for Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, Ganesha Pool, Washington Pool, La Casita Teen Center, and Palomares Senior Dining Hall.
- Staff will be submitting a proposal to Pomona Unified School District to enhance and expand Outdoor & Active for the 2024-2025 academic year.
- Staff will be submitting a grant proposal to Tri-City Mental Health Services through their Community Wellbeing Program. The project is designed for teens to help teens by planning and organizing community service opportunities for their peers.
- The project on Holt Avenue is almost complete, the lights at Garfield Park will be going up this week.
- HVAC projects, including roofing and flooring throughout the City are in process.
- Staff will be preparing proposals through Measure A funding for basketball courts at Philadelphia Park, Ralph Welch Park, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Park.
- Staff have park signs and will be placed at specified park locations.
- The Egg Hunt event will be held concurrently at four parks, Ganesha Park, Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, Philadelphia Park, and Ted Greene Park from 9am to 12pm on March 23, 2024.
- A Day of Play is a pilot program with the Childhood Development Center at the Fairplex offering youth ages 0-5 and their parent/guardians an opportunity to learn through play on the third Saturday of the month at Washington Park Community Center. The first one had a great turnout with 41 participants.
- The Youth Commission is seeking five high school students to serve a two-year term from July 2024 to June 2026. There will be an info session on Thursday, March 28, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at Pomona Council Chambers, and dinner will be served at 5:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Marino adjourned the meeting in memory of Stephen Manzanares at 8:35 p.m. to the next meeting scheduled on Thursday, April 18, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at John F. Kennedy Park Community Center, Pomona, CA 91768.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:



Monica Belloso
Management Analyst



Cynthia Marino
Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission