

MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

**CITY OF POMONA
PHILADELPHIA PARK COMMUNITY CENTER
700 E. PHILADELPHIA AVENUE
POMONA, CA 91769**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2019
6:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER Chair Ayala called the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

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

Present:	Ion Puschila	Mayoral Appointee
	Melissa Ayala, Chair	District 1
	Fabian Pavon, Commissioner	District 2 (Arrived at 6:49 p.m.)
	Noel Mendez-Zamudio, Commissioner	District 3
	Remington Cordova, Commissioner	District 6
	Cynthia Marino, Commissioner	District 5

Absent: Jeff Sanchez, Vice Chair District 4

Staff present: Monica Belloso, Technical Specialist II
Roberto Curiel, Facility/Sports Rental Supervisor
Kirk Pelser, Deputy City Manager
Michael Osoff, Community Services Manager
Michael Sledd, Parks and Facilities Manager

III. FLAG SALUTE Chair Ayala led the flag salute.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Ayala presented the minutes of August 15, 2019. Chair Ayala made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Cordova, and was carried by a vote of 5-0-2-0.

V. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATION

Commissioner Mendez announced that Pomona Beautiful is now a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization; encouraged everyone to participate in community cleanups. Commissioner Mendez-Zamudio asked when awards will be announced for Proposition 68 grant applicants.

Commissioner Marino welcomed and thanked everyone for coming out.

Commissioner Cordova stated he attended another discussion this month and emergency preparedness was the topic. They went over Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) programs that residents can participate in, offered by Western University of Health Sciences and LA County Fire Department.

Business Emergency Resiliency Training (BERT) classes offered to business owners to learn to become resilient after an emergency. Commissioner Cordova stated representatives from gas companies and water districts discussed how they would respond during an emergency. Commissioner Cordova encouraged everyone to become prepared and go on the LA County Fire website for more information.

Commissioner Puschila stated his activities this month included attending the d'Aztlan car show, the d'Aztlan art show at the dA Center of the Arts, and inspecting the parks.

Chair Ayala welcomed everyone. She stated she attended many events this month, but will highlight just a few. She stated she attended the Art Walk and it's always a great turnout. She toured Hope for Home and reported the first phase is now complete. The shelter offers many services and stated she is pleased to see the shelter coming together. She stated she attended a City Council meeting. She invited everyone to come out on Saturday, October 21, 2019 at Civic Center to enjoy a musical performance by a Beatles Tribute band. She stated she attended a vector control presentation. She helped to organize a park cleanup for a prior beautification day project at Cesar Chavez Park with LaVerne University students.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Chair Ayala opened public comment for non-agenda items.

Al Villanueva expressed his concern regarding the lack of privacy doors in the restrooms and lack of drinking fountains at Tony Cerda Park and would like to see these things improved in the near future.

Tony Cerda stated he sees many improvement projects for other parks. He asked about allocating more resources for amenities to Tony Cerda Park and asked about the process of how to get residents and volunteers to help clean Tony Cerda Park.

Linn Rudenaver of Friends of Ganesha Park asked if she may present a proposed project at Ganesha Park to the Commission. Chair Ayala made a motion to place the Friends of Ganesha Park Butterfly Garden on the following meeting agenda, seconded by Commissioner Mendez-Zamudio, passing with a vote of 5-0-2-0.

Councilmember Victor Preciado announced several upcoming events. A Spoken Palabra, an open mic for poetry will be Tony Cerda Park at 6:00 p.m. There will be a cleanup from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. A Beatles tribute band, Sgt. Peppers will be performing at Civic Center Plaza on Saturday, and there will be an unveiling of the wall flower mural at Civic Center on Wednesday at 5:00 p.m.

Josue Garcia spoke on the conditions at Tony Cerda Park stating there are no restroom stalls for privacy, no drinking fountains, and no picnic tables. He asked that these issues be addressed.

Regina Wang, a Community Life Commissioner and participant of Pomona Leadership Network, conducted a capstone project consisting of interviews and a needs assessment on whether to start a parks foundation. She asked if she may present her project findings to the Commission. Commissioner Puschila made a motion to place the Pomona Leadership Network presentation on the following meeting agenda, seconded by Chair Ayala, passing with a vote of 5-2-0-0.

VII. OLD AND/OR NEW BUSINESS

1. Possible Sale of Veteran's Park and Associated Facility and Programmatic Enhancements

Deputy City Clerk Kirk Pelser provided a brief introduction and background of Veteran's Park. He informed the Commission that Veteran's Park was acquired in the 1990s from the Department of Defense. The property came with a deed restriction that required it to be a space for recreational use in perpetuity. The City created the soccer complex, and while it provided benefits for many years, Mr. Pelser stated that it may be time for the City to consider other opportunities to benefit residents through enhancing recreational programs and facilities. Mr. Pelser stated that in order to sell the property, the City must demonstrate to the community and federal government that it will relocate facilities and programs elsewhere in the City. Mr. Pelser stated he and staff have worked with the former City Council, the current City Council and the office of Congress member [Norma Torres]. This item will be on the October 7, 2019 City Council meeting to determine if the sale of Veteran's Park can move forward.

Mr. Osoff stated the sale of Veteran's Park would not cause the loss of park space or park amenities, but instead the City would gain space and amenities. Mr. Osoff provided an overview of the current state of Veteran's Park, its debt obligations, and challenges associated with the location, services, and amenities of Veteran's Park Soccer Complex. The park is located adjacent to the train tracks and 71 freeway; it is surrounded by office buildings, not visible from the Mission Avenue, and lacks sufficient parking for games and tournaments. The complex lacks amenities such as a playground area and lacks adequate shade for visitors. Veteran's Park has four full size soccer fields that have exceeded its life expectancy, and the cost to replace the artificial turf would be approximately \$1,500,000. Other costs to maintain the park include continuous security when the park is not staffed. The park is also affected by extreme weather and primarily serves non-Pomona residents.

[Commissioner Pavon arrived at 6:49 p.m.]

Mr. Osoff's presental included a financial overview of the park's revenue and expenses since its opening in 2008 and stated the park has seen diminished usage and revenue affected by increased competition of similar soccer complexes in and outside Pomona. Mr. Osoff stated that with a possible sale of Veteran's Park, there is an opportunity to reinvest in the City's parks, improve recreational opportunities to Pomona residents, and reduce the City's debt. Mr. Osoff stated that staff carefully considered the proposed use funds from the sale and established a plan for the following parks:

1. Washington Park – Expand park to Ninth Street yard; design and testing, add outdoor restrooms, concession stand, improve parking, improve existing fields, and 1-2 modified field(s), and expand or add a playground.
2. Philadelphia Park – Field renovation and the addition 1-2 soccer field, and lighting.
3. Westmont Park – Add soccer field and lighting.
4. Palomares Park – Convert existing softball fields to soccer fields, convert tennis courts 1-2 speed synthetic soccer fields, add lighting and expand restrooms.
5. Parking lot at trailhead – Add parking lot and signage.
6. Tony Cerda Park – Add lighting, possible expanding park space.

Mr. Osoff reiterated the overall benefits of selling Veteran's Park to enhance and expand park recreational opportunities for Pomona residents.

Commissioner Pavon asked staff how selling Veteran's Park sale benefit Tony Cerda and if existing soccer leagues could be supported there. Mr. Osoff stated that a parcel on the south side of the park could be used to expand for modified soccer fields.

Commission Marino asked if Veteran's Parks was sold, would there be restrictions on what could be built there. Mr. Pelser responded the area is zoned for industrial and manufacturing.

Commissioner Cordova asked if the Washington Park extended to Ninth Street, is there a plan to move the maintenance yard. Staff responded there is space elsewhere in the City to move the items from there. Commission Cordova asked if the City owns the lot along Westmont Park, could a parking lot be built there? Staff responded they could look into that.

Chair Ayala opened public comment for this agenda item.

Miranda Sheffield asked if the complex was purchased by US Soccer Foundation. Staff stated the site was acquired by the Department of Defense, and there was funding contributed from US Soccer Foundation. Ms. Sheffield asked if the Veteran's Park proposal include a component to deal with the homeless; are there plans to incorporate amenities other than soccer features in the parks, and does the City have a say of what is developed at the site. Staff responded that the City currently has a strategic plan for homelessness. The key components for the Veteran's Park proposal are not to lose recreational space. Staff responded that if the deed restriction is lifted for recreational use, the site is zoned, in the general plan, for industrial and manufacturing.

Alfredo Camacho did not wish to speak.

Edward Samaniego stated the name, Veterans Park is an important tribute to veterans in Pomona. He stated if Veterans Park were sold, could the money be used to fix Memorial Park and build new bathrooms at Tony Cerda Park.

Dr. Kyle Brown stated he recognizes the challenges of Veterans Park, and is not opposed to better utilizing resources. He stated he does not want to see a reduction in total park acreage. Veterans Park has about 11 acres and asked for clarification on where acreage will be added. Dr. Brown stated he sees opportunities for the trail system at Westmont Hill and asked for more information about plans there.

Chair Ayala thanked staff for their presentation on Veterans Park and introduced the next agenda item.

2. Development of Priorities and Goals for the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Mr. Osoff stated the Commissioners expressed an interest in creating priorities and goals similar to City Council. He asked the Commissioners how they would like to begin the process and presented the following options: (1) they could create an ad hoc committee comprising of three or less Commissioners (2) schedule a special meeting or (3) add as a discussion item at a regular Commission meeting. Mr. Osoff advised that special meetings are like regular meeting and are open to the public and would be properly posted. Mr. Osoff stated this process may take several meetings. After Commissioner discussion, Chair Ayala made a motion to hold a special meeting to discuss Parks and Recreation Commission priorities and goals at a date and time to be determined based on the availability of staff and Commissioners, seconded by Commissioner Mendez-Zamudio, and passed by a vote of 6-0-1-0.

VIII. STAFF COMMUNICATION

Parks and Facilities Manager Michael Sledd reported that as part of a prior Beautification Day project, a volunteer group is proposing to donate plants for the area on top of Ganesha Park.

Mr. Osoff reported the following Community Services updates:

1. Proposition 68 applicants are expected to hear back by December 2019.
2. The Fall/Winter Recreation Guide is expected to be out next week.

3. The After School Recreation sports leagues are offering flag football and volleyball. They are scheduled to begin soon.
4. Community Services is hosting its 5th annual Haunted House on October 26 and 27, 2019. Volunteers are needed for the family-friendly and the scary side. If interested, please reach out to him, Adrian Valdez or e-mail hauntedhouse@ci.pomona.ca.us to more information.

Chair Ayala asked staff if the City Contact page in the recreation guide can be translated to Spanish. Mr. Osoff informed the Commission that funding was allocated for residents to receive one guide through the mail. Staff is currently receiving quotes for mailing flyers to residents informing them when the recreation guide is available, up to three times a year.

5. There has been an interest to start a Youth Commission; staff is in the research stage at this time.

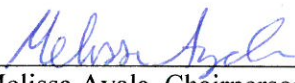
Commissioner Pavon stated he is hosting Spoken Palabra, an open mic, tomorrow at Tony Cerda Park; he plans to do this on a monthly basis to help activate the park. He stated he is working with the community to do a clean-up at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park on Saturday, and a custom bike and car show at Tony Cerda Park on Saturday, October 26, 2019.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Ayala adjourned the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting at 8:03 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission is Thursday, October 17, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at Garfield Neighborhood Center, 563 N. Mountain Avenue, Pomona, CA 91767.



Michael Osoff
Community Services Manager



Melissa Ayala, Chairperson
Parks and Recreation Commission