

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Department of Recreation and Parks
April 18, 2001

DATE:

TO: Recreation and Parks Commissioners

FROM: Ellen Oppenheim, General Manager



SUBJECT: **HAZARD PARK - FORMER RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY**

On January 5, 2000, the Board was informed of an investigation into the status of a right-of-way located within Hazard Park. This right-of-way, or perpetual easement, was granted to the Pacific Electric Land Company in 1905 for railroad purposes, and was most recently held by Union Pacific Railroad.

In a letter addressed to Union Pacific Railroad, the Office of the City Attorney opined that this right-of-way is now abandoned, thereby relieving from burden of easement the City's fee title to the underlying property. The City has the right to use this property for any purpose authorized by law and pursuant to the Charter with respect to parkland.

On February 27, 1997, a representative of the US Fish and Wildlife Service conducted an evaluation of the plant and bird life found in the area of the former right-of-way. This evaluation was performed at the request of Mr. Alexander Man, Chairman, Friends of Hazard Park, who has provided the Department with the evaluation findings. This information has been forwarded to Department staff of the Griffith/Metro Region and Planning and Construction Division for further consideration.

Report prepared by Drew Tolliffe, Real Estate and Asset Management Division.

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CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Department of Recreation and Parks

April 18, 2001

TO: BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

FROM: ELLEN OPPENHEIM
General Manager *Margie Matthew Sr*

SUBJECT: Park Advisory Board Composition and Member Terms

At the meeting of March 7, 2001, the Board requested information about the composition of Park Advisory Boards (PABs) and the lengths of terms of members.

As the Board is aware, PABs are volunteer advisory groups constituted at each recreation center, to advise and work in partnership with the center directors to enhance recreation services at their center. The PAB concept was launched in 1995 with the Board's directive that a Manual for "Community Recreation Center Boards" be drafted by staff. Ultimately a completed Staff Manual for the PAB program was presented to the Board and approved on June 18, 1997.

The Staff Manual provides instructions and guidelines for creation and management of PABs, including: the solicitation of members, number and composition of boards, the preparation of by-laws to guide PAB activity, and grievance procedures for members. The program is designed to be flexible, within broad guidelines, so that directors can establish PABs which reflect the individual needs of the centers and the neighborhoods they serve. The following guidelines are provided:

- Establish a membership number that insures sufficient attendance to conduct regular meetings, allows for enough members for the constitution of working sub-committees, avoids tie votes, and reflects the diversity of neighborhood served (recommended as 7-13 members).
- Recruit members willing to volunteer time and effort.
- Select members through an interview process who are motivated and willing to work together as a group to reach the goals and objectives established for their center, and who represent a balance of park patrons, community residents, business leaders, but not a majority single interest.

- Include as ex-officio members local City Council representation, and representation of youth agencies operating at the center, permit groups using the center, and homeowners groups and local business groups.


According to the policies established in the Staff Manual, issues such as terms of membership and meeting schedules are to be determined on a PAB-by-PAB basis through the drafting and adopting of PAB by-laws at each center. The sample by-laws provided in the Manual as a starting point for new PABs suggest a one-year term for PAB members, but terms actually are established by majority decision of each PAB, in cooperation with the center director, when setting up (or amending) the by-laws. A common practice at the centers are to establish terms of three years in setting up the initial PAB, but to stagger initial terms so that all PAB members' terms do not expire at the same time; in other words, a few members would receive one year terms, a few members would be appointed to two year terms, and the remaining number would be on three year terms. If all members received the same initial term lengths, the PAB theoretically could be disadvantaged in it's work at the Center by needing to start over with projects and relationship-building every certain number of years. However, nothing in the Manual or in the practical operation of the PABs over the last several years, precludes directors from re-appointing members of PABs to concurrent terms if they are willing and contributing members, and if the director does not have other community candidates waiting their turn to participate.

In March of 1999, in response to a public inquiry, the City Attorney submitted a written opinion to the General Manager and the Board about the applicability of the Ralph M. Brown Act, also known as the "open meetings law," upon the conduct of the PABs. The City Attorney advised at that time that most probably a court of law would conclude that PABs were "created" by the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners in the broadest interpretation, by virtue of approval of the Manual which provides the policies and procedures for appointing PABs, and other actions. Therefore, we were advised that PABs should be considered a "legislative body" under California Government Code Section 54952, and subject to the Brown Act, which requires that directors publicly post agendas for meetings 72 hours in advance of the meeting and that meetings are open to the public. Other technical requirements of compliance with the "open meeting law" are disseminated to recreation center directors through training and staff instructions. The applicability of the Brown Act in the conduct of the PABs does not suggest that PAB roles and responsibilities differ from those initially approved by the Board in so far as they are to be assistants and advisors to the individual recreation center staff in programming, special events, and fundraising matters.

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS

April 18, 2001

TO: BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

FROM: ELLEN OPPENHEIM, General Manager 

SUBJECT: PETITION BY MR. BUSHNELL REGARDING CONDITIONS AT
DELONGPRE PARK

On February 7, 2001, a petition was submitted to the Recreation and Park Commission by Mr. George Bushnell and twenty-two residents who live adjacent to or in the vicinity of Delongpre Park (1350 North Cherokee Avenue).

The petition expressed the following desires that:

- The park be closed regularly and promptly at sunset as stated on the existing signs,
- The southeast gate of the park be permanently closed to retard the easy access by vendors on foot and others who pass by 1335 North June Street and cause disturbance of the dog at that address,
- There be increased surveillance to apprehend unlicensed and unleashed dogs that are regularly allowed to run free, bark, defecate and urinate in the park throughout the day,
- There be increased surveillance to minimize the presence of transients who play loud radios, play musical instruments and drums and light fires for barbecues,
- The homeless and mentally unbalanced be required to spend their time elsewhere so that they do not become permanent features of the park,

- The homeless be required to clean up after themselves and not leave their bedding, waste from meals and other debris on the ground, and
- All incentives for habitation for long hours during a day are removed from the park such as the portable toilet at the southwest gate.

FINDINGS:

In response to these requests, staff recommends the following action:

- The Park Rangers secure park gates no later than one hour after dusk 365 days a year,
- The gate located at 1335 North June Street be temporarily locked during the less patronized winter months to deter illegal vendors. And that additional, intermittent gate closures be considered based on reports of illegal activity,
- A task force of Park Rangers and Animal Services Officers periodically patrol the park and issue citations for unlicensed dogs, dogs off leash, and other related violations, and
- A lawful notice of Scheduled Clean-Up Procedure be posted to inform patrons that debris and housekeeping materials will be regularly discarded.

Due to legitimate public need for sanitation in the park, the portable toilet has been relocated to the west entrance (1335 North June Street).

Undesirable patrons cannot be removed from the park during open hours unless an unlawful act is committed. Therefore, transients cannot be removed from the park without cause.

Petitioners and all involved parties shall be encouraged to continue their cooperation with Department Administration by notifying the Rangers about immediate problems at 323/913-7390.

BACKGROUND:

During the 1980's and early 1990's, DeLongpre Park was a known stronghold of narcotics activity. To combat the problem, City Ranger, Police, and Fire agencies supported the community by holding holiday celebrations and other legitimate activities.

In 1994, the Rangers and other park representatives began working with a local community group, the Hollywood Sentinels and its then-President, Virginia Sharon, who were committed to improving DeLongpre Park. As a result of several community meetings, a capital improvement project was undertaken which involved enclosing the park perimeter with a wrought iron fencing, removing a decaying restroom building, and constructing a children's playground. (The Rangers continue their relationship with Ms. Sharon today.)

Since January 1, 2000, the Rangers have responded to 63 calls for service at DeLongpre Park. Nineteen calls were for dogs off leash violations and 16 were for illegal vendors. Of the calls that received Ranger response, approximately 55% resulted in a disposition of "no problem or crime upon arrival", with no enforcement required. The rangers have determined that 44 of the 63 service calls were generated from petitioner Mr. Bushnell.

Throughout 2000, the Rangers found no chronic pattern of homeless encampments or other disruptive conditions. At present, DeLongpre Park is a shaded, 1 1/3 acre, landscaped facility that is conducive to passive recreation and leisurely relaxation.

Although the petitioners' concerns are valid, problems are currently being addressed by responsive action from Park Rangers and Maintenance crews. Graffiti is being removed, automatic lighting is being adjusted, and the Rangers are making frequent, unexpected patrols.

In addition, the Rangers recently centralized deployment for their Night Closures Program staffed by Park Patrol Officers (PPOs, part-time exempt employees). Now, all PPOs are deployed from the Central Service Yard in the Griffith-Metro Region, which is expected to improve availability of field personnel and program efficiency. Eight applicants for PPO are currently being considered for hire into the Night Closures Program.

This report was prepared by Albert Torres.