

APPROVED

SEP 23 2010

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

NO. 10-244

DATE September 23, 2010

BOARD OF RECREATION and PARK COMMISSIONERS

C.D. 5

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: WESTWOOD PARK - EXPANSION OF "AIDEN'S PLACE" UNIVERSAL ACCESS PLAYGROUND THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ADJACENT SENSORY PLAY AREA

R. Adams	_____	F. Mok	_____
H. Fujita	_____	K. Regan	_____
S. Huntley	_____	*M. Shull	<u><i>M. Shull</i></u>
V. Israel	_____		

*Ray Culam*  
General Manager

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board:

1. Approve the construction of the proposed "Sensory Play Area Project", at no cost to the City, to be located within Westwood Park adjacent to the existing Aiden's Place Universal Access Playground under the guidance of Shane's Inspiration, a California non-profit corporation;
2. Accept with gratitude the gift of said play area improvements, which are estimated at a value of up to Ninety Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$90,000); and,
3. Authorize staff to issue a right-of-entry permit to Shane's Inspiration authorizing access to the project site for project coordination and construction purposes.

SUMMARY:

In 2001, the Department of Recreation and Parks (Department), with approval by the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners (Board), authorized the construction of "Aiden's Place" within Westwood Park; a universal access playground (UAP) paid for through fund raising efforts by Nicole and Charlie Gaffney, in memory of their son Aiden who unfortunately passed away at a very early age as a result of a rare muscular disorder that had left him ventilator and wheelchair dependent. Aiden's Place was completed in 2001 and has been enjoyed ever since by the local

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community and children with physical disabilities and special needs from across the City, who prior to the UAP's installation, were denied the opportunity to play on traditional playgrounds because of their lack of accessibility by children in wheelchairs or with other mobility restrictions caused by their conditions.

The Gaffney Family has now proposed to fund the construction of a "Sensory Play Area", as illustrated by the rendering attached hereto as Exhibit-A, to be located adjacent to the existing Aiden's Place UAP as shown on the area photo attached hereto as Exhibit-B, and constructed under the guidance of Shane's Inspiration who previously oversaw the installation of the existing UAP. The proposed play area improvements are estimated at a value of \$90,000, and shall be funded entirely through the Gaffney Family at no cost to the City. Shane's inspiration is a Los Angeles based non-profit corporation, which has had a successful 12 year partnership with the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks. In this time, Shane's Inspiration has established fifteen (15) UAPs throughout the City with another six (6) opening in the next twelve (12) months. This partnership has made the City of Los Angeles the most playable city in the world for children with disabilities. Aiden's Place is the second largest Shane's Inspiration Playground in Los Angeles.

The Gaffney Family was integral in raising the one million dollars (\$1,000,000) to build the existing UAP and have now raised an additional \$90,000 to build the proposed sensory play environment. The proposed sensory play area will allow children who have sensory disabilities, such as Autism and Cerebral Palsy, a place of quiet solace, while providing all children a place to enjoy the sensory rich play elements or merely sit and read or relax and take in the pleasant activities occurring all about the surroundings. The proposed sensory play area was designed by Virginia Hatley, Director of Shane's Inspiration, who also worked for the Department for almost twenty years. While Virginia's focus is on the play needs of all children, she also focuses on creating environments that require minimal maintenance while meeting all safety concerns.

Shane's Inspiration and the Gaffney Family are very enthusiastic about the proposed project, as is the Department and community which was demonstrated at a recent community meeting attended by the Department's General Manager, and therefore wish to commence the project's construction as soon as possible and complete the project by December. The goal is to have a grand opening on December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the date on which Aiden would have had his fifteenth birthday.

Staff has determined that this project will consist of the construction of minor structure accessory to an existing recreational facility. Therefore, the project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 11(6) of the City CEQA Guidelines.

Staff has discussed the proposed project with the Assistant General Manager of Operations West, the Superintendent of the West Region, and the Office of Councilmember Paul Koretz of the Fifth Council District, and each supports the project and concurs with staff's recommendations.

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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

There will be no fiscal impact to the Department's General Fund as the proposed play area improvements will be designed, constructed, and funded through the Gaffney family.

This report was prepared by Joel Alvarez of the Department's Real Estate and Asset Management Section.

Exhibit-A

Sensory Play Area Rendering

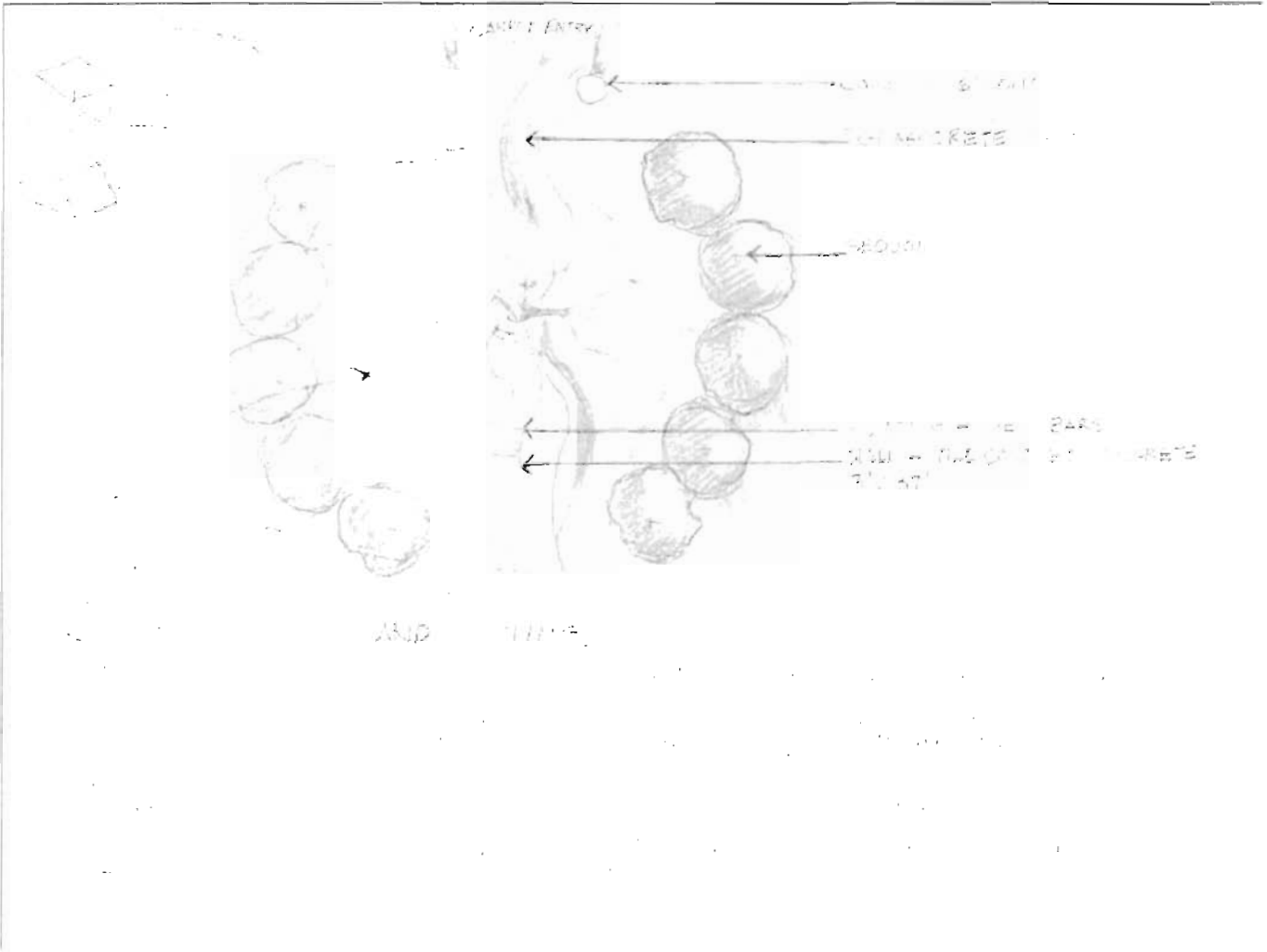


Exhibit-B

Sensory Play Area - Area Photo



READING CIRCLE LOCATION

