

APPROVED

APR 01 2021

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

BOARD REPORT

NO. 21-055

DATE: April 01, 2021

C.D. 4

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: GRIFFITH PARK – DONATION AND INSTALLATION OF NATIVE PLANT TREE SAPLINGS AND A TWO-YEAR FOREST MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR A LOS ANGELES PARK FOREST TO BE PLANTED IN 2021; CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO ARTICLE III, SECTION 1, CLASS 4(3) [NEW GARDENING, TREE PLANTING, OR LANDSCAPING] AND CLASS 11(6) [PLACEMENT OF MINOR STRUCTURES ACCESSORY TO EXISTING INSTITUTIONAL FACILITIES] OF CITY CEQA GUIDELINES AND ARTICLE 19, SECTIONS 15304(b) AND 15311 OF CALIFORNIA CEQA GUIDELINES

AP Diaz	_____	* M. Rudnick	<u>MR</u>
H. Fujita	_____	C. Santo Domingo	_____
V. Israel	_____	N. Williams	_____

M. Shue

 General Manager

Approved X Disapproved _____ Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approve a proposed park improvement project at the Bette Davis Picnic area of Griffith Park consisting of the installation of seed grown native plants and tree saplings and a two-year forest maintenance plan for a Los Angeles Park Forest to be planted during 2021 (Project), approved by the Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) Planning, Maintenance and Construction Branch (PMC), as a donation to RAP through the Los Angeles Parks Foundation (LAPF);

2. Authorize the RAP Planning, Maintenance and Construction Branch (PMC), upon the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners' (Board) approval of the proposed improvements, to issue a Right of Entry Permit (ROE) to LAPF and the Hancock Park Garden Club, allowing access to Griffith Park for the installation and future maintenance of the Project over a 2-year term;

3. Accept the Project improvements valued up to approximately Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000) as a gift to the City of Los Angeles and RAP from the Hancock Park Garden Club through LAPF, subject to a post-installation inspection and approval of the completed improvements by PMC staff;

BOARD REPORT

PG. 2 NO. 21-055

4. Find that the proposed Project, consisting of the park improvements and associated signage, is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 4(3) [New gardening, tree planting, or landscaping] and Class 11(6) [Placement of minor structures accessory to existing institutional facilities] of City CEQA Guidelines and Article 19, Sections 15304(b) and 15311(a) of California CEQA Guidelines and direct RAP staff to file a Notice of Exemption (NOE); and,
5. Authorize RAP's Chief Accounting Employee to prepare a check to the Los Angeles County Clerk in the amount of Seventy-Five Dollars (\$75.00) for the NOE.

SUMMARY

The Los Angeles Parks Foundation (LAPF) established a Park Forest Initiative that involves the solicitation of donations to support the planting of clusters of new trees within existing parks that act as micro forests. These site-specific projects align with the goals of the City of Los Angeles' Green New Deal by providing multiple environmental benefits such as air quality improvements, increasing biodiversity and wildlife habitat areas, increasing tree canopy coverage and shade, mitigating urban heat island effect, and supporting groundwater recharge. The size of each forest and associated elements is tailored to the needs and conditions of the park in which they are planted and the species and size of the trees have been vetted by, and coordinated with, RAP's Planning Division and Forestry Division.

The Hancock Park Garden Club (Donor) through the Los Angeles Parks Foundation (LAPF) has offered to fund the improvements described herein at Bette Davis Picnic area of Griffith Park in a fenced 1,000 square foot area. The Project consists of the installation of tree saplings and native plants (understory layer, shrub layer, mid-sized tree layer, large tree layer) with a center decomposed-granite walkway, designed and installed using the "Miyawaki" method that is being implemented globally by local groups and governments for habitat restoration, surface temperature reduction, carbon sequestration, air and noise pollution mitigation, wildlife support and the many other benefits. This may be the first "Miyawaki" native forest in California and will provide important information about best practices for implementation of compact forests in a Mediterranean biome.

The Project will be installed and maintained by volunteers from the Hancock Park Garden Club. Maintenance for two years will include weekly deep watering, weed and pest abatement until the trees and understory plantings are established. The Hancock Park Garden Club will monitor and measure the growth rate of the plants and prevalence of weeds over time, while also the monitoring wildlife interaction with the plants, and ongoing maintenance needs over time. This is being done because this will be the first Miyawaki Forest in California, thereby requiring that the method be observed for its adaptability to California's Mediterranean climate. All information will be shared with RAP and the public through the LAPF.

After two years, the fence around the forest will be removed. RAP hopes this pilot project will help RAP determine the viability of native landscape plants for improved restoration of native habitat, support of native wildlife, potential reduced maintenance and irrigation costs, and other benefits.

BOARD REPORT

PG. 3 NO. 21-055

The value of the donation, including the trees and maintenance over two-years is approximately Fifteen Thousand Dollars (\$15,000). LAPF coordinated with RAP's Forestry Section to prepare a design plan which has been approved by RAP's PMC Branch and which is included herein as Attachment 1. Attachment 1 also shows the location in Griffith Park where the trees will be planted. LAPF coordinated all necessary approvals with PMC staff and also conducted outreach to the community via the Griffith Park Advisory Board and obtained support for the proposed Project. LAPF will have the lead in implementing the Project, including the maintenance of the planted trees and related data collection for two years.

TREES AND SHADE

Seed grown native plants and tree saplings (understory layer, shrub layer, mid-sized tree layer, large tree layer) will be planted in a 1,000 square foot circular area as part of the scope of the proposed Project.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed Project consists of planting of new trees and placement of minor structures accessory to existing institutional facilities. Therefore, RAP staff recommends the Board determines that this Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 4(3) and Class 11(6) of City of Los Angeles CEQA Guidelines, and Article 19, Sections 15304(b) and 15311 of California CEQA Guidelines. RAP staff will file a Notice of Exemption with the Los Angeles County Clerk upon the Board's approval.

FISCAL IMPACT

The installation of the improvements will not have any fiscal impact on RAP's General Fund, as associated costs will be funded entirely by LAPF through funds provided by the Donor. The first two years of tree maintenance will be performed by volunteers through the forest maintenance plan. Beyond that, future maintenance of the improvements will be addressed through Griffith Park's existing maintenance budget and the annual budget process.

This report was prepared by Joel Alvarez, Senior Management Analyst II, Partnership Section.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Park Forest location and Design Plan

Bette Davis Picnic Area Griffith Park

Park Forest Location and Design

