

APPROVED

MAR 18 2021

BOARD OF RECREATION
AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

BOARD REPORT

NO. 21-039

DATE March 18, 2021

C.D. 8

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: ALGIN SUTTON RECREATION CENTER – NAMING OF THE PLAYGROUND AS “LATASHA HARLINS PLAYGROUND” — CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO ARTICLE III, SECTION 1, CLASS 11(5) [PLACEMENT OF A SIGN LOCATED ON CITY PROPERTY MANAGED BY A CITY DEPARTMENT WHICH HAS A SIGN POLICY ADOPTED BY ITS BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS] OF CITY CEQA GUIDELINES AND ARTICLE 19, SECTION 15311(a) OF CALIFORNIA CEQA GUIDELINES

AP Diaz _____ M. Rudnick _____
H. Fujita *Fur* _____ C. Santo Domingo *DF* _____
V. Israel _____ N. Williams _____



General Manager

Approved X Disapproved _____ Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approve the naming of the playground at Algin Sutton Recreation Center as “Latasha Harlins Playground” as more fully set forth in this Report;
2. Authorize the installation of appropriate park signage;
3. Determine that the proposed Project, consisting of the placement of a sign located on City property managed by a City Department which has a sign policy adopted by its Board of Commissioners, is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 11(5) [Placement of a sign located on City property managed by a City department which has a sign policy adopted by its Board of Commissioners] of City CEQA Guidelines and Article 19, Section 15311(a) of California CEQA Guidelines and direct Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) staff to file a Notice of Exemption (NOE) with the Los Angeles County Clerk;
4. Authorize RAP’s Chief Accounting Employee or designee to prepare a check to the Los Angeles County Clerk in the amount of \$75.00 for the purpose of filing an NOE; and,
5. Authorize RAP staff to make technical corrections as necessary to carry out the intent of this Report.

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SUMMARY

Algin Sutton Recreation Center is located at 8800 South Hoover Street in the South Los Angeles area of the City. This 16.46-acre facility provides a variety of services and programs to the community and includes baseball diamonds, a children's play area, a swimming pool, basketball courts, and a recreation center. Approximately Eleven Thousand Three Hundred and Fifty (11,350) residents live within a one-half mile walking distance of Algin Sutton Recreation Center. Due to the size of the park, and the facilities, features, and programs it provides, Algin Sutton Recreation Center meets the standard for a Community Park, as defined in the City's Public Recreation Plan.

Naming Request

In February 2021, Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson of the Office of Council District Eight (CD8) submitted a letter to the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners (Board) in support of naming the playground at Algin Sutton Recreation Center as "Latasha Harlins Playground" in recognition of Latasha Harlin and the impact that her death had on the local community, South Los Angeles, and the City as a whole.

Background on Latasha Harlins

Latasha Harlins was born on January 1, 1976 in East St. Louis. Her family moved to South Los Angeles a few years later. Latasha Harlins lived in the neighborhood immediately surrounding Algin Sutton Recreation Center. At one point her family lived on 88th Street, just east of Algin Sutton Recreation Center. They later moved a few blocks away, but still within the same neighborhood. Algin Sutton Recreation Center was Latasha Harlins' neighborhood park. She participated in the programming and activities at the park. It was the park where she, her family, and friends would play and enjoy the recreation amenities.

Latasha Harlins passed away on March 16, 1991. She was fatally shot in a store located just two blocks away from Algin Sutton Recreation Center, and a few blocks from her home. She was killed by the owner of the store in a dispute over a bottle of orange juice. The owner of the store was later found guilty of voluntary manslaughter and was sentenced to probation, community service, and a fine.

Latasha Harlins death had a galvanizing effect on the local community. The incident further exacerbated the existing tensions between the Los Angeles' African-American and Korean-American communities. Her death has been widely cited as being one of incidents that contributed to the 1992 Los Angeles riots, which had a devastating and profound impact on the City, its residents, and the nation as a whole.

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BOARD NAMING POLICY

On June 5, 2013 RAP adopted a Naming Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for Parks and Recreational Facilities (Policy) for the naming of parks, recreation facilities, park amenities, landmarks and other park assets (Report No. 13-161). This Policy enumerates the criteria and guidelines for use when evaluating proposed park names (Attachment 2). Several of the adopted guidelines applicable to this application are as follows:

- The Naming of parks after individuals shall be limited to those who are deceased and have made exceptional contributions to the park or community within which the park is located.
- The Naming engenders a positive public image which does not unduly commercialize the park or recreational facility.
- The proposed name for the park or recreational facility, and/or contributor, must be compatible with the Mission of RAP.

The Policy notes that the Board can consider “[n]aming proposals to use a major historic event and/or unique significance of a specific place or person, as the basis for the proposed Name; again with the requirement that there be compelling and impressive substantiation demonstrating how the interests of City and its residents were served or impacted”.

RAP staff has determined that the criteria and guidelines of the Policy have been met.

As previously noted, Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson of CD8 is in support of the proposed name. Additionally, CD8 has discussed the proposed naming with local community members, stakeholders and organizations; including the local block club, Project Islamic Hope, and the Vermont Village Community Development Corporation. Letters of support from those organizations are attached to this report (Attachment 3). Finally, it should be noted CD8 had also reached out to the local Neighborhood Council to present the proposed naming to them for their support, however their meeting was cancelled due to a lack of quorum.

CONCLUSION

Latasha Harlins' life story, and the circumstances surrounding her death, continue to reverberate in the local community. And her story has been noted and mentioned in popular music, literature, and film.

The naming of the playground at Algin Sutton Recreation Center as “Latasha Harlins Playground” would memorialize an individual whose life and death had a profound impact on the City and its residents. Latasha Harlins had a direct connection to the neighborhood, local community members, and Algin Sutton Recreation Center. The proposed naming would serve as a way for Angelenos to continue to remember her and the impact her life and death had on the local community.

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For all the reasons stated in this Report, RAP staff recommends the naming of the playground at Algin Sutton Recreation Center as "Latasha Harlins Playground".

Upon approval of this report, RAP staff would purchase a standard redwood facility sign that would say "Latasha Harlins Playground" and install it adjacent to the play area.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed Project consists of the placement of a sign located on City property managed by a City department which has a sign policy adopted by its Board of Commissioners. As such, RAP staff recommends that the Board determine that it is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 11(5), of City CEQA Guidelines as well as to Article 19, Section 15311(a) of California CEQA Guidelines. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption with the Los Angeles County Clerk upon Board's approval.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

There will be a minor fiscal impact to RAP's General Fund due to the cost to purchase and install the new signage at the playground.

This Report was prepared by Darryl Ford, Superintendent, Planning, Maintenance and Construction Branch.

LIST OF EXHIBITS

- 1) Letter of Support from Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson
- 2) RAP Naming Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for Parks and Recreational Facilities
- 3) Local Stakeholder Letters of Support



MARQUEECE HARRIS-DAWSON

LA City Councilmember, The Eight District



February 22, 2021

Attachment 1

Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners
221 N. Figueroa St. Suite 300,
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: LATASHA HARLINS PLAYGROUND DEDICATION

On behalf of the constituents of Council District 8, I would like to express my support in the dedication and naming of Algin Sutton Recreation Center's playground after the late Latasha Harlins.

Latasha Harlins lived on 88th street, on the cul-de-sac adjacent to the Algin Sutton pool. Latasha was a regular participant at the park and attended Manchester Elementary School and Bret Harte Middle School, both of which are less than 3 blocks away from Algin Sutton Park.

The murder of Latasha Harlins is one of the darkest moments in South LA history and it is crucial that she is memorialized in the very community where she grew up. Remembering Latasha Harlins at her home park will be a resounding message that our city is working to ensure the safety of our children and it will reinforce our commitment to investing in their lives by providing them high quality and safe green spaces.

Latasha Harlins and her family never saw true justice in the judicial system and it is our duty now to remember and heal the wounds that at one point ruptured our communities. Thank you again for considering this proposal.

For more information or questions you may email albizaeldelvalle@lacity.org or call me at 213.485.7616.

Sincerely,

Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson

City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks
Naming Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for
Parks and Recreational Facilities

The mission of the Department of Recreation and Parks (“RAP”) is to enrich the lives of the residents of Los Angeles by providing safe, welcoming parks and recreational facilities and affordable, diverse recreation and human services activities for people of all ages to play, learn, contemplate, build community and be good stewards of our environment.

One of RAP’s objectives under the Mission is to enhance and expand recreational programs, services, and significant financial support and contributions through public and private collaborations.

Policy:

RAP recognizes that parks and recreational facilities are an essential and integral part of the communities they serve, and that the names of parks and recreational facilities, and park amenities within them, play a significant role in fostering identities in the surrounding communities. This Naming Policy (“Policy”) establishes the criteria and requirements, and sets forth the guidelines and procedures, for the naming and renaming (collectively, “Naming”) of parks, recreational facilities, landmarks and any other assets determined appropriate by RAP (collectively referred to herein as “Park Assets”), which are owned, managed or controlled by RAP.

Pursuant to this Policy, the initial name of a new park or recreational facility, which may be temporary for purposes of administration and accounting, shall be administratively assigned by RAP staff in the traditional manner utilized prior to the establishment of this Policy, based on geographic features such as street and community names or prominent features. In addition, the Naming of existing Park Assets, pursuant to a RAP recommendation relevant to a Naming proposal received from a private or public entity, shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners (“Board”), as described herein. In accordance with this Policy and pursuant to RAP recommendations, the Board shall consider the following two types of Naming proposals. The first type encompasses situations in which RAP receives or is offered a donation, gift, sponsorship, and/or other contribution from an outside entity that presents a decisive benefit and shows a direct connection to a Park Asset and serves the interests of the City and its residents. This type of Naming proposal would require a Naming Agreement to summarize the terms and conditions necessary to effectuate the financial or other benefits connected to the Naming proposal with a term (time period) recommended by the GM and approved by the Board, depending on the scope or nature of the agreement, and value, visibility, and lifespan of the donation, gift, sponsorship and or other contribution. The second type comprises Naming proposals to use a major historic event and/or unique significance of a specific place or person, as the basis for the proposed Name; again with the requirement that there be compelling and impressive substantiation demonstrating how the interests of City and its residents were served or impacted. The key in both types of Naming proposals is the importance of demonstrating direct connections to the Park Asset and clear community benefits as a foundation for considering any Naming proposal.

For purposes of this Policy, and with the exception of the temporary Naming of new Park Assets, the authority to approve the Naming of existing Park Assets shall be solely with the Board. Any exceptions to this Policy shall be subject to the prior approval of the Board.

Criteria and Guidelines for Evaluating Park Asset Naming Proposals:

For purposes of this Policy, the following shall be considered when evaluating the appropriateness, feasibility, and implementation of Naming proposals:

- The Naming of parks after individuals shall be limited to those who are deceased and have made exceptional contributions to the park or community within which the park is located.
- Parks shall only be named after living persons under circumstances requiring such naming as a condition precedent of a grant deed or covenant.
- The Naming of a park after a major historic event must be based on a direct connection between the park and such event.
- The Naming engenders a positive public image which does not unduly commercialize the park or recreational facility.
- The proposed name for the park or recreational facility, and/or contributor, must be compatible with the Mission of RAP.
- Park Assets that are held by RAP through a lease or use agreement may be considered for Naming under this Policy, subject to any requirements or restrictions contained in such document.
- RAP reserves the right to limit the duration of time a Name will be in place and/or in effect.
- No specialized signage or advertisement containing a commercial message to purchase a good or service shall be authorized for use on park property.
- All forms of signage placed on or within a Park Asset shall meet RAP's graphic and sign standards.
- There shall be no religious symbols included on Naming signage.
- Park Assets not under the operation of RAP (shared or exclusive), although under the ownership or jurisdiction of RAP, shall not be subject to this Policy; such as for example, the Los Angeles Zoo in Griffith Park.
- Parks should not be subdivided for purposes of Naming, unless there are readily-identifiable physical divisions in the park (major roads, waterways, hillsides, etc.) which facilitate or warrant a subdivision; or there exist other compelling reasons for having more than one name connected to a park. This should not prevent independently Naming a recreational facility or amenity located within a park, as long as the selected name will not cause confusion for park patrons.
- RAP shall seek to inform the public with regard to the Naming of a park in their community.
- Any exception to the above shall be subject to the Naming criteria contained herein, and the Board's prior approval.

Procedures:

The Board retains the authority to name or rename Park Assets situated on park property. The following shall be the protocol for evaluating, considering and denying or approving Naming proposals:

1. A written proposal for the Naming of a Park Asset must be initially submitted to the RAP Board Office, to the attention of the Board Secretary. In accordance with this Policy, the Board Office shall forward the proposal to the RAP General Manager (“GM”) for consideration.
2. Prior to any form of Naming Policy being implemented, sponsorship proposals shall be evaluated by RAP staff, with recommendations to the GM for possible consideration.



VERMONT VILLAGE

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Corporate Officers	March 1, 2021
Angela M. Evans	Board of Commissioners Los Angeles Recreation & Parks 221 N Figueroa St., 3rd Floor, Suite 300, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Secretary Barbra Byndon	
Treasurer Loretta Jackson	
Board of Trustees	
Attorney Duane E. Bennett	Dear Commissioners,
Consultant Renee` Bizer	As a Public Safety Commissioner for the 64 th Assembly District, Mike Gipson and Committee member for the New Park design, I support the Southeast Neighborhood Council's Board members and family of Latasha Harlin's to name the playground at Algin Sutton Recreation Center the "Latasha Harlin's Playground" in her memory.
CEO-The Bedford Group-Charles Quarles	I protected in 1991, after she was shot and killed in a liquor store by a Korean store owner, Soon Ja Du. The fatal shots came after being accused of stealing a \$1.79 bottle of orange juice. LAPD concluded the teenager was not shoplifting. Harlin's death also helped to ignite the 1992 civil unrest, (riots in Los Angeles,) while her family fought for justice for decades. The store merchant was convicted for Latasha's murder but served no jail time and was sentenced only to probation.
Attorney Keith A. Sharp	A harsh reminder for the Black community that racial injustice; among Afro-Americans in this Country is not dead! I support the other community groups on this mission that include the SCLC, Community Build, Project Islamic Hope and Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson.
Staff	
Trustee & Executive Director Robert E. Rubin	I attended Manchester Elementary, Bret Harte and learned to swim at the once named "Manchester Park" as a youth. Latasha lived in our community, and was murdered not far from home. She lived on 88th and Figueroa (right behind the swimming pool), then they moved to 91st between Figueroa and Hoover street, residing there over 25 years. Latasha played at the park every day. She also attended Manchester elementary, went to Bret Hart and Westchester High School. See the contrast, yet I am 65 years of age.
Case Manager Eric Jones	
Outreach Consultant Charles Carter	
VVCDC A California Non-Profit	I truly support the tribute, in her honor to remind us that life can be short for some, but we are a resilient people and the playground in her memory gets this point across.
Advisory Board	
Founder of VVCDC Dr. Betty Price	Respectfully,
Crenshaw Christian Center Faithdome	
Founder/Apostle Dr. Frederick K. C. Price	
	
	Robert Rubin Executive Director

February 17, 2021

To: Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners.

My name is Najee Ali, I am currently a Chaplain in Mayor Garcetti's office and member of the Mayor's Crisis Response Team (CRT) I am also a close friend and spokesman for the family of Latasha Harlin's.

On behalf of the family of Latasha Harlin's who was only 15 years old when she was tragically murdered on March 16th, 1991 by a Korean liquor store owner over a dispute concerning a bottle of Orange juice. This letter is a request to have the playground at Algin Sutton Recreation Center designated the Latasha Harlin's playground with a sign erecting denoting that. This is the park and playground that Latasha grew up playing at as a child.

This request has wide-spread support from community residents, stakeholders, and community organizations that include Project Islamic Hope, The Rodney King Foundation, Justice for Murdered Children, and our Councilmember Marqueece Harris Dawson

By naming the playground in Latasha's memory we believe this is a fitting tribute to a youth from our community that was unjustly murdered. It sends a message that her legacy will be not be forgotten. Her murder nearly 30 years ago made national news; it is a murder our community unfortunately will always remember. Netflix currently is streaming "a documentary" called "A Love Song for Latasha Harlin's" that was just nominated for an Academy Award. Latasha's murder and the aftermath has been covered at some point by every major media outlet in the nation from CNN to Time magazine. The Los Angeles Times just published a front-page story on her murder and a new mural of her which was recently unveiled at the Algin Sutton Recreation Center and sponsored by Netflix.

I am including links to news articles concerning the importance of Latasha Harlin's to South L.A. residents and our efforts to honor her memory and legacy. Thank you for considering this request.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-02-01/latasha-harlins-memorial-south-central-30-years-later>

https://abc7.com/latasha-harlins-mural-park-a-love-song-for/9358428/?ex_cid=kabcsppds

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killing_of_Latasha_Harlins

Najee Ali

Director Project Islamic Hope