

INFORMATIONAL BOARD REPORT

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS

March 18, 2021

TO: BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS
FROM: MICHAEL A. SHULL, General Manager
SUBJECT: VARIOUS COMMUNICATIONS



The following communications addressed to the Board have been received by the Board Office, and the action taken thereon is presented.

<u>From</u>		<u>Action Taken</u>
1) Lorraine Zecca letter regarding Ocean View Farms Community Gardens	#8883	Referred to General Manager
2) Griffith Park Advisory Board regarding Griffith Observatory Parking Rates Recommendation	#8884	Note and File
3) Demian Willette Invitation regarding Ascot Hills Park Advisory Board meeting	#8885	Note and File
4) Victoria Jesionek comments regarding LADWP truck noise	#8886	Note and File
6) John Baginski regarding Public Safety Committee Meeting regarding Venice Crime	#8887	Referred to General Manager
7) Nurit Katz comments regarding ROE permits for Sepulveda Basin	#8876c	Referred to General Manager

Prepared by Carolyn Shannon, RAP Commission Office

Sylvia Patsouras
 President
 Board of Commissioners
 Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks Department
 Office of Board of Commissioners
P.O. Box 86328
Los Angeles, CA 90086-0328

BOARD OF RECREATION
 AND PARK COMMISSIONERS
 2021 FEB 25 PM 1:22

2/19/2021

Ms Patsouras,

We have all witnessed the corruption of presidential power in the last few months. For some, a small amount of power still corrupts. I am witnessing this at Ocean View Farms Community Gardens, a 501(c)3 organization run on city owned land under contract to the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks.

There has been a long history of abuse of power at Ocean View Farms. Long term members managed to obtain 4 and 5 plots, even with a waiting list by calling potential members at home during the day (before the answering machine) three times. Since the person on the wait list was at work not home, the plot went to an existing member. These members have managed to continue to have 4 and 5 plots, while the waiting list grew. In addition to their plots, some have additional "tree plots" containing up to 7 fruit trees. These members control the board and have "grandfathered in" their plots, **while many residents in Los Angeles go hungry.**

Several years ago, I was shocked to find out that one of these members with multiple plots **ACTUALLY LIVED IN TEXAS** and was given a supervisory role at a work day during the winter holiday period, to get "community volunteer hours" so she could keep her plots. Another woman had 4 plots that she "got from her mother" even though she lived in **PARIS, FRANCE**. **Come on, this abuse of city resources has got to STOP.**

The City of Culver City restricts its community garden plots to residents who do not own single family homes and so cannot garden at home. At Ocean View Farms many members with numerous plots have large gardens at their large residential homes.

The Spanish speaking members of the garden have for years expressed feelings of discrimination by Ocean View Farms management. The membership and board meetings are in English only. The website, rules and bylaws are in English only. Communications with members are in English only. Some of these Spanish speaking members have had to rely on non household family members to help them communicate with garden management. Other Spanish speakers without such translation services available have been easily expelled from the garden. The garden plots offer a source of food for Los Angeles residents. **Expulsion from the garden can lead to food insecurity.**

A board member, and former president of the garden, was a source of anger among Spanish speaking members for his discriminatory policies. He recently left his post, after decades in control. Thinking that an opportunity existed for outreach to the Spanish speaking members, a voice was heard in a garden membership meeting for a Spanish speaking board position to lead the outreach and for meetings and garden materials to provide Spanish translations. This idea

was rejected quickly by the new board president, and probably never even made it into the meeting minutes.

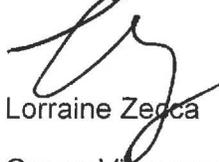
The current board has taken steps to force out members who disagree with them. At the end of 2020, all members were required to sign a waiver that they, and their heirs, would not be allowed to sue the garden and garden management for any reason. The management has quickly begun issuing false citations. They have begun terminating elderly, black, Hispanic and disabled members with these false accusations. And they have refused arbitration to these members. No Spanish or ADA assistance has been provided even when requested. No handicapped bathroom facilities are available, even though requested by members over the years. There are no parking spots allocated to the handicapped in the lot.

Years ago a woman with a walker actually fell to her death in her plot! Garden management responded that the woman died doing what she loved – gardening. I hardly believe the dying woman's last thoughts were how happy she was to lay injured and dying in her plot all alone.

Black, elderly and the Spanish speaking members are noticeable gone from the garden.

Assistance from the City is needed immediately. The City of Los Angeles needs to take over this garden and correct these massive civil rights violations.

Sincerely,



Lorraine Zerca

Ocean View member since 2004



Rap Commissioners <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

Griffith Observatory Parking Rates -- GPAB Recommendation

1 message

Jason Greenwald < > Fri, Mar 5, 2021 at 4:24 PM
To: "rap.commissioners@lacity.org" <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>
Cc: Michael Shull <michael.a.shull@lacity.org>, AP Diaz <ap.diaz@lacity.org>, Stefanie Smith <stefanie.smith@lacity.org>

Hello Commissioners & RAP Leadership,

The Griffith Park Advisory Board is recommending a temporary reduction in parking rates at and near the Observatory, as outlined in the attached letter.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jason Greenwald

Chair, Griffith Park Advisory Board

 **Griffith Observatory Parking Letter, 3.5.21.pdf**
84K



Griffith Park Advisory Board

Community Stewards of LA's Largest Park & Great Urban Wilderness

Department of Recreation and Parks, City of Los Angeles

www.laparks.org/griffithpark/advisory

March 5, 2021

LA Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners

Dear Commissioners,

In view of COVID-19 closures, we are writing to request a temporary reduction in parking rates at and near the Griffith Observatory. We recommend that these rates, currently \$15 per hour, be lowered until such time as the DASH Observatory and Parkline shuttles can safely resume operations.

During the pandemic, the passive recreation of Griffith Park is more essential than ever, and the current pay station rates for the Observatory parking lot and nearby roads place an undue burden on local residents. As you know, one of our board's primary roles is to assist RAP leadership in understanding the concerns of local stakeholders – and many of those stakeholders have spoken out on this issue. In recent months, we have heard from many Angelenos who have expressed equity concerns about the current parking rates. A year ago, parking at or near the Observatory cost \$6 per hour; now, as a result of the 2020 rate increase and a new definition of “moderate” demand, it is \$15. Yet the Observatory is closed and transit is not running. While we appreciate the unique budgetary pressures of the COVID pandemic, it is worth noting that the paid parking program was specifically intended to reduce traffic congestion, increase equity & accessibility and promote public transit. None of these goals is well-served by the present situation.

In addition to requesting the parking rate reduction, we would also ask for RAP staff to share both historical and ongoing financial information for “Special Fund” revenue and the use of proceeds. This request includes annual figures that will allow our board and members of the public to review the manner in which funds have supported transportation, transit and other improvements in Griffith Park. When the paid parking program launched in 2016, numerous community groups supported it based on the promise that all funds would remain in Griffith Park. It is important to be able to show stakeholders exactly where those funds have gone, and where they continue to go. As a related point, it may be helpful to enhance signage at the pay stations to let park-users know what their parking fees support.

*BOARD MEMBERS: Chair – Jason Greenwald; Vice Chair – Michelle Cramés; Secretary – Bryan Mercke;
Past Chair – Ron Deutsch; Gene Gilbert; Mike Hain; Chris Laib; Alex Phillips; Karen Thornton*

Finally, we would like to express the policy view that the funding of public transportation to and from a great urban wilderness park ought to be a budgeted, comprehensive program to support transit as a primary transportation method, rather than being funded exclusively by revenue from 285 pay-station spaces. While the current model has provided a valuable revenue source in recent years, the objective of reducing private passenger vehicles in the park calls for bold approaches and more robust funding in the years ahead. Once pandemic-related budget pressures ease, we look forward to working with RAP staff and city policy-makers to better align Los Angeles with international best practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.

Jason Greenwald
Chair, Griffith Park Advisory Board

cc: Mike Shull
AP Diaz
Stefanie Smith
Sarah Tanberg



Rap Commissioners <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

Re: IMPORTANT*LADWP NOISE COMPLAINT SLRC

1 message

Rap Commissioners <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>
To: Victoria Jesionek >

Fri, Mar 12, 2021 at 11:30 AM

Good morning,

Thank you for contacting the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners Office. Please contact LADWP at: <https://www.ladwp.com> for further inquires into this matter.

Thank you.

On Mon, Mar 8, 2021 at 3:04 PM Victoria Jesionek > wrote:

Good Afternoon Department of Commissioners for Parks and Rec,

I'm a resident and stakeholder near the silver lake reservoir and I'm fed up with the incessant back up trucks.

Every morning I am rudely awakened by the trucks and the drone of constant beeps has become more than a nuisance, it is degrading our quality of life here.

It is necessary that ALL the vehicles used at SLRC for construction are fitted with OSHA approved white noise back ups as this noise pollution needs to stop.

I know this will take some effort on your part but it is completely necessary for us to live in harmony. Please do not forget you are surrounded by a residential area and school, not only that but the sound reverberates across the water and smacks into our homes.

We want to make our voices heard and assert our rights under [California Health and Safety Code 46000](#), which says that "All Californians are entitled to a peaceful and quiet environment without the intrusion of noise which may be hazardous to their health or welfare."

Though I know maintenance on the reservoir is necessary, the neighborhood wants to know why we are putting a [filtration system in the water](#) if the reservoir is not connected to the water supply and insufficient for drinking. Why spend all of our taxpaying dollars doing this? We have a right to know.

I also totally understand wanting to make the space more usable and enjoyable for your LADWP employees but it doesn't isn't right or legal that it is at the cost of SL stakeholders.

I look forward to your response and appreciate you taking the time to read this. Please know we are ready to organize and have our voices heard.

Concerned Citizen,
Victoria Jesionek

--

victoria jesionek
rosebud explorations LLC, 2020.

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City of Los Angeles
Office of the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners
Figuroa Plaza
221 North Figuroa Street, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Telephone: (213) 202-2640
Fax: (213) 202-2610

3/12/2021

City of Los Angeles Mail - Re: IMPORTANT*LADWP NOISE COMPLAINT SLRC

Mail Stop: 625/15

Website: www.laparks.org



Rap Commissioners <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

Unofficial LAPD Crime Stats from 3/3/2020 Public Safety Committee Meeting VENICE CRIME IS WORST IN PACIFIC DIVISION AND GETTING WORSE

1 message

John Baginski <j...>
 To: "rap.commissioners@lacity.org" <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

Fri, Mar 12, 2021 at 12:41 PM

RAP Commissioners,

I am sure you are flowing the dramatic increase in crime in Venice. Venice has the highest levels of violence in the Pacific Division. See report from LAPD to Venice Neighborhood Council Safety Committee below.

Please help support cleanups of Venice. We need to change the trends and help Venice heal. What has happened here in the last few years is awful.

I hope that you look at the crime statistics below with the understanding that at least 50% of this crime involves the homeless population. This is a fact directly from LAPD.

- Please acknowledge that Venice can not be turned into a containment zone for any and all homeless. The huge numbers that we are seeing continue to damage the city and its residents.
- Please work to clean up Venice boardwalk area of all homeless and unhoused.

It is such a sad situation. You are ignoring Venice businesses, citizens and visitors. It really is getting awful to live here.

John Baginski

30 Year Venice Resident

Below are unofficial stats from the LAPD presented during the Public Safety Committee meeting on 3/3/2021.

3/3/2021 @5:09p LAPD crime report [[LINK TO VIDEO/AUDIO](#)]

- SLO Updates / Trends
 - Acosta / stats:

▪ 21 divisions in lapd

1. #21 is pacific division in crime (7.7% increase in part 1 crimes -- violent and property). Venice is the worst w/ crime stats. Best is west valley (28.1% reduction)

- 1. Violent crime up 46% YTD, YoY
- 2. 3.7% property crime up YTD, YoY

2. Upcoming focus is going to be:

- 1. Robbery
- 2. Aggravated assaults

3. Oakwood car:

- 1. Numbers flattening out
- 2. Up aggressive increase in aggravated adults
 - YTD last year: 1, this year 10
 - Total Violent crime: last year 3, this year 16
 - Leading cause of violent crimes is robberies

1. Last year: 1, this year YTD: 5

3. Property crime:

- Burglary: flat
- GTA: flat

4. Robberies:

- West of 4th, south of rose, and south of venice. Series of street robberies. Cell phones and jewelry taken
- Coincides with more people in area of AK as things open up (post-covid lockdowns). Are finding more street robbery
- Really no info as to whether it is just 1 ring or many (different suspect descriptions)
- No alerts sent to AK merchants assoc because criminals are targeting AK itself.

5. With changes in DA and sentencing recommendations, how has it changed officers' job in LAPD and pacific division?

- AA: hasnt changed their job. Going to still make arrests

6. Violent crime arrests: up 41%. Overall arrests up 20%

o Contreras:

- GTA: 7 this year 2020, 19 YTD 2021
- Robbery: 3 YTD 2020, 2020 this year: 11
- Aggravated assaults: 18 last year, 36 this year
- In past 4w: 72 ADWs, 17 in past 4w in contreras car.
- Pacific aware many crimes occurring in venice
- 76 yo elder male who died:

- 1. Undetermined death
- 2. No crime reported when incident took place
- 3. Public number to call for incident: (213) 382-9470

- w/r/t robberies: be vigilant. Dont walk alone, dont keep things out/visible, dont keep earphones on, increase awareness, limit jewelry
- w//rt incident w/ german shepherd dog taken and reward:

- 1. A lot of things getting reported on social media (SM). This incident not reported to LAPD
- 2. Detectives reached out and no one responded to detectives about filing a report

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Rap Commissioners <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

RE: Response requested- ROE permits for Sepulveda Basin

1 message

Katz, Nurit <nkatz@facnet.ucla.edu>

Wed, Mar 3, 2021 at 5:06 PM

To: Rap Commissioners <rap.commissioners@lacity.org>

Cc: "Michael.A.Shull@lacity.org" <Michael.A.Shull@lacity.org>, MURIEL KOTIN <Muriel.Kotin@lacity.org>, Patricia Bates <Patricia.Bates@lacity.org>, Bill Neill <Bill.Neill@lacity.org>, Glenn Bailey <Glenn.Bailey@lacity.org>, Glenn Bailey NC <Glenn.Bailey.NC@lacity.org>, Barbara Heidemann <Barbara.Heidemann@lacity.org>, Cesar Lomeli <Cesar.Lomeli@lacity.org>, David Troy <David.Troy@lacity.org>, Diana Zogran <Diana.Zogran@lacity.org>, George Waddell <George.Waddell@lacity.org>, Joe Phillips <Joe.Phillips@lacity.org>, Kris Ohlenkamp <Kris.Ohlenkamp@lacity.org>, Paola Monzon <Paola.Monzon@lacity.org>, Therman Calloway Jr <therman.callowayjr@lacity.org>, Steve Dunlap <Steve.Dunlap@lacity.org>, cathie.santodomingo@lacity.org <cathie.santodomingo@lacity.org>, Matthew Rudnick <matthew.rudnick@lacity.org>, Jonah Glickman <jonah.glickman@lacity.org>, Babcock, Linda C SPL <Linda.C.SPL@lacity.org>, Margot Griswold <Margot.Griswold@lacity.org>, Melanie Winter <Melanie.Winter@lacity.org>, Paola Jaramillo <paola.jaramillo@lacity.org>, Paola Jaramillo <paola.jaramillo@lacity.org>, Robert Buenrostro <robert.buenrostro@lacity.org>, Ruth Doxsee <Ruth.Doxsee@gmail.com>, Shelly Backlar <sbacklar@folar.org>, Steve Hartman <Steve.Hartman@lacity.org>, Terrie Brady <Terrie.Brady@lacity.org>

Thank you. We appreciate the response. There is some time sensitivity due to seasonality and we hope for a timely decision.

I hope you and your team are safe and well.

Nurit

From: harold.arrivillaga@lacity.org <harold.arrivillaga@lacity.org> **On Behalf Of** Rap Commissioners

Sent: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 4:10 PM

To: Katz, Nurit <nkatz@facnet.ucla.edu>

Cc: Michael.A.Shull@lacity.org; MURIEL KOTIN <Muriel.Kotin@lacity.org>; Patricia Bates <Patricia.Bates@lacity.org>; Bill Neill <Bill.Neill@lacity.org>; Glenn Bailey <Glenn.Bailey@lacity.org>; Glenn Bailey NC <Glenn.Bailey.NC@lacity.org>; Barbara Heidemann <Barbara.Heidemann@lacity.org>; Cesar Lomeli <Cesar.Lomeli@lacity.org>; David Troy <David.Troy@lacity.org>; Diana Zogran <Diana.Zogran@lacity.org>; George Waddell <George.Waddell@lacity.org>; Joe Phillips <Joe.Phillips@lacity.org>; Kris Ohlenkamp <Kris.Ohlenkamp@lacity.org>; Paola Monzon <paola.monzon@lacity.org>; Therman Calloway Jr <therman.callowayjr@lacity.org>; Steve Dunlap <Steve.Dunlap@lacity.org>; cathie.santodomingo@lacity.org; Matthew Rudnick <matthew.rudnick@lacity.org>; Jonah Glickman <jonah.glickman@lacity.org>; Babcock, Linda C SPL <Linda.C.SPL@lacity.org>; Margot Griswold <Margot.Griswold@lacity.org>; Melanie Winter <winter@theriverproject.org>; Paola Jaramillo <paola.jaramillo@lacity.org>; Paola Jaramillo <paola.jaramillo@lacity.org>; Robert Buenrostro <robert.buenrostro@lacity.org>; Ruth Doxsee <rudoxsee@gmail.com>; Shelly Backlar <sbacklar@folar.org>; Steve Hartman <Steve.Hartman@lacity.org>; Terrie Brady <Terrie.Brady@lacity.org>

Subject: Re: Response requested- ROE permits for Sepulveda Basin

Good Afternoon and thank you for your message. The Department is in receipt of their request and that staff is evaluating. As soon as the Department makes a decision, you will be notified.

On Fri, Feb 5, 2021 at 5:31 PM Katz, Nurit <nkatz@facnet.ucla.edu> wrote:

Dear Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks Leadership,

The purpose of this letter is to request an explanation of why the Los Angeles City Department of Recreation and Parks has not responded to requests for right of entry (ROE) permits which would allow weed mitigation projects in the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Area Reserve, and further, to expedite such requests. It is important to note that there have been multiple fires in the area, last summer destroying at least 200 acres of habitat, destroying most of the wildlife lake area, and resulting in the death of a homeless person living in the dense brush. It would be unfortunate to miss the opportunity to control flammable weeds that spread the fire and were temporarily reduced by the fires.

On December 29, 2020 there was a special meeting of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee (Steering)¹ regarding issues in the wildlife are. One specific discussion was a mitigation project involving invasive weed remediation in the interior area west of Haskell Creek, generally bounded by Woodley and Burbank Boulevards and the Cricket fields. As we all know, that area has had a severe annual fire hazard with invasive vegetation harboring encampments, illegal activity, and occasional evacuation alerts to the surrounding community. The project to eliminate rampant growth of weeds will require controlled application of herbicides, a herd of goats, and volunteers. The project was endorsed by Steering. The project is also time sensitive; we have now had some rain, the weeds are emerging, and the goats need to be scheduled for mid-April. This somewhat late start is to avoid the season when the possibility of Sepulveda Basin flooding is a serious concern.

The project will be funded by the California Native Plant Society and possibly in part by other organizations, to use goats to eradicate the invasive mustard and thistle. Application of small and precise amounts of herbicide would also be required, by a licensed professional applicator, along with volunteers to search out and remove the weeds manually in lightly infested areas. The ultimate result would be an oak savannah populated with spaced out trees, pathways, and native vegetation. To briefly summarize, the herd of goats would be brought in for about a month in the Spring to devour the invasive weeds before they can go to seed. The goats come with fencing, goatherders, a night-time containment pen, and water. The grazing would probably be repeated for a couple years, reducing the seed load of the invasive weeds to a negligible amount which can then be controlled by weeding. It is Steering's opinion that allowing this remediation project would be a big plus for the city and especially the San Fernando Valley, showing an innovative solution to a problem, which is funded by the community at no cost to the city, and which results in an enduring community asset. In fact, it could provide a blueprint for improving other vegetative management areas in the Sepulveda Basin and beyond, and could be incorporated into the new Master Plan.

ROEs have been requested for the project, and as of over two months ago it appears to be stalled at some point in the approval process. Mr. Bill Neill, representing the LA/SMM Chapter of the CA Native Plant Society (CNPS), on November 10, 2020 submitted a ROE application from

Sage Environmental Group to allow goat grazing of unburned dead weeds at the south end of Sepulveda Wildlife Reserve. Because he did not receive approval during November or December, that initial plan was abandoned and advanced to the second, larger phase which is goat grazing of green annual weeds during April and May 2021 throughout much of the Sept. 6, 2020 burn areas. The attached documents are the same as submitted on Nov. 10, 2020 except the project map is revised (with more hatching lines) and the term on the ROE questionnaire is changed to April-May 2021. Although this later proposed project will not start for another two or three months, we request approval much sooner so that member organizations of Steering will have sufficient time to arrange funding to pay for the service and contract for the services.

Further, on September 30, 2020 Mr. Neill requested a renewal of the ROE permit from last spring (2020) to conduct herbicide applications in the Sepulveda Wildlife Reserve as a contractor for the CNPS chapter. The proposed herbicide treatments will target perennial weeds throughout the reserve and annual weeds where not controlled by goat grazing or volunteer work teams. The applications will be precisely targeted using minimal effective amounts, as has been done in previous years. The four-month delay in issuing the ROE renewal had not been a problem due to drought conditions until late December; but now that a few inches of rain has fallen, weed growth will be rapid, and we want to control perennial weeds during January and February, before the goat grazing project commences to control annual weeds in April

We all understand that this may not be a usual set of facts for proposed Recreation and Parks projects, however that does not explain the failure to respond to valid proposals from advisory groups and ROE permit requests, including responding to inquiries about why there is absolutely no response to inquiries. We anticipate receiving some clarification of why there has been no communication from the department regarding the project and ROE requests, and we hope this project is moved along. If there is additional information needed please let us know.

Sincerely,

Nurit Katz, Chairperson

1. The **Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee** is an advisory alliance comprised of the following organizations (as of 12/29/2020):

Environmental Groups:

- California Native Plant Society
- Friends of the Los Angeles River
- Los Angeles Audubon Society
- Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains
- San Fernando Valley Audubon Society

- Sierra Club, Angeles Chapter
- Sierra Club, San Fernando Valley Group
- The River Project

City Affiliated:

- Department of Recreation and Parks, City of Los Angeles
- Encino Neighborhood Council
- Lake Balboa Neighborhood Council

NAME, PURPOSE, AND MISSION STATEMENT

- This organization shall be known as the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee (the Committee).
- The purpose of the Committee is to advise the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks (the Department) concerning the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the existing wildlife areas and any future expansion thereof. The Committee may also make recommendations on matters concerning flora, fauna, and other natural resources in other areas within the Sepulveda Basin, such as the Los Angeles River and its tributaries, park land, and open spaces.
- The mission of the Committee shall be to oversee, in its advisory capacity, the wildlife refuge areas and other areas of present or potential natural value within the Sepulveda Basin, as well as to support policies and programs that ensure their long term preservation, protection, and enhancement.

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City of Los Angeles

Office of the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioners

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