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PARK COMMISSIONERS

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DEPARTMENT OF
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JON KIRK MUKRI
GENERAL MANAGER

February 7, 2011

Information, Technology and Government Affairs Committee
of the Los Angeles City Council
c/o City Clerk
Room 395, City Hall
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012-4801

Attn: Legislative Analyst Maria Espinoza

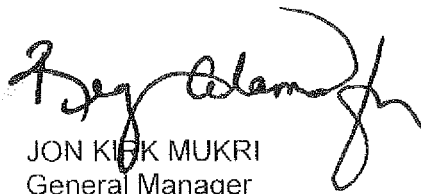
RE: COUNCIL FILE NO. 10-1187

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

Please find enclosed, a response from the Department of Recreation and Parks to the Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury regarding a Grand Jury report on Los Angeles Parks.

For additional questions or concerns, feel free to contact Assistant General Manager Kevin Regan at (213) 202-2633

Sincerely,



JON KIRK MUKRI
General Manager

JKM:sa

cc: File
Regina Adams, Executive Officer, Recreation and Parks
Kevin Regan, Assistant General Manager, Recreation and Parks
Andrea Epstein, Development and Marketing, Recreation and Parks



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JON KIRK MUKRI
GENERAL MANAGER

ANTONIO R. VILLARAIGOSA
MAYOR

December 28, 2010

Civil Grand Jury, County of Los Angeles
Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center
210 West Temple Street
11th Floor, Room 11-506
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear 2009-2010 Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury:

I would like to thank you for your efforts. I also enjoyed working with you toward the goal of ensuring that park users are being represented as best as possible in a judicial manner.

The Department of Recreation and Parks is dedicated to providing high quality service to communities through its recreational programming, various community services, and maintenance operations. We have continued this dedication to service even while weathering the current economic storm. This year alone the Department of Recreation and Parks has absorbed approximately \$38 million in budget cuts due to paying indirect costs such as utilities, pension and healthcare costs, and Early Retirement Payouts. In order to meet budgetary goals, we have had to reduce recreation programming hours, close the operations of our recreation centers on one day per week, close year round pools one day per week, discontinue sponsoring many special events, "cluster" our facilities to flatten the organization, closed our museums one extra day per week, and reduced the types of maintenance we perform to only those most critical duties. Through all of this we have continued to be the City's most comprehensive social service agency.



Civil Grand Jury, County of Los Angeles
December 28, 2010
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Again, thank you for bringing these matters to my attention. Please find attached the Department's response to the Civil Grand Jury's (CGJ) findings and recommendations. Should you need further assistance, please feel free to contact Assistant General Manager Kevin Regan or myself at (213) 202-2633.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jon Kirk Mukri", with a circled "101" to the right.

JON KIRK MUKRI
General Manager

JKM/KR:sa

cc: Regina Adams, Executive Officer
Vicki Israel, Assistant General Manager, Operations East
Kevin Regan, Assistant General Manager, Operations West
Mike Shull, Superintendent, Planning and Construction
Andrea Epstein, Development and Marketing
File

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS
RESPONSE TO FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM THE 2009-2010 LOS ANGELES COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY**

FINDING NO. 1

Staffing - Of the 29 parks visited, the CGJ found only two which were adequately staffed.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1

Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation and City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks should ensure that the parks are adequately staffed.

RESPONSE: The Respondent disagrees with the finding. The City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks staffs recreation centers with both full-time and part-time Department employees. While budget reductions have reduced the number of both full-time and part-time employees, the Department continues to make it a priority to keep facilities adequately staffed during normal operating hours. Currently, the Department uses a number of staffing formulas to provide adequate coverage at facilities that include the clustering of recreation centers and in some cases, reduced operating hours. Staffing is provided not only for the organization and supervision of recreational activities, but for safety purposes as well. The Department will continue to ensure that its recreational facilities remain adequately staffed during hours of operation.

FINDING NO. 2

Sanitation - In most parks visited, the CGJ found unsanitary, graffiti and trash-filled restrooms.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2

Ensure that restrooms are regularly inspected and cleaned.

RESPONSE: The Respondent partially disagrees with the finding. While the City's early retirement incentive program, furloughs, hiring freeze, and budget reductions have reduced the overall number of maintenance personnel over the last two years, the Department continues to make grounds maintenance and facility repair one of its top priorities. The Department has initiated several innovative strategies to provide maintenance at the 415 parks throughout the City, which, includes the routing of maintenance personnel and directed efforts at problem facilities. For example, the Department operates its own graffiti removal crews which, while reduced in number, continue to address graffiti in all City of Los Angeles parks within 24 to 48 hours of the graffiti being reported. At facilities known to have severe graffiti problems, crews are dispatched on a routine basis without graffiti having to be reported. Currently, Department maintenance staff thoroughly cleans park restrooms once a day. During that cleaning, restrooms are sanitized, re-stocked with products, and completely cleaned. Periodically throughout the day, if maintenance staff is available, litter and trash are removed from restrooms as needed. The Department will continue to ensure that restrooms are regularly inspected and cleaned.

FINDING NO. 3

Security - Some parks require heightened security due to their location. Yet the CGJ noted that security cameras were inoperable or non-existent. Some parks had infrequent security patrols. Some were unreasonably permissive of homeless and others using the parks for illegal purposes.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3

Coordinate with law enforcement which provides security; ensure existing security cameras are operable.

RESPONSE: The Respondent agrees with the finding. While some City of Los Angeles parks have had security cameras installed that are operating, not all City of Los Angeles parks have security cameras. The Department supports the concept of security cameras in parks. However, security cameras require substantial funding for installation and on-going monitoring in order to be effective. Security and policing of City of Los Angeles parks is the responsibility of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and the Department of General Services Office of Public Safety (OPS) police. The Department will continue to coordinate with both of these agencies to ensure that park facilities remain safe and well monitored.

FINDING NO. 4

Repair - the CGJ visited some parks where maintenance equipment was not operating. This diminished the attractiveness of the park. Equipment needed for the maintenance and attractiveness of the park was not operating. For example, in one nature park the pumps circulating the water had been out of operation for a long period. Parking areas were unpaved.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4

Maintain equipment; blacktop and mark parking areas.

RESPONSE: The Respondent partially agrees with the finding. The Department will ensure that maintenance equipment is in working condition. When appropriate, the Department will work towards paving parking areas. However, some facilities have unpaved parking areas because it contributes to the facility's natural environment. The Department has been diligently working to ensure that its facilities, when renovated, use green building standards. In particular, the parking area at Augustus Hawkins Nature Park was intentionally left unpaved to provide a permeable surface, to reduce the heat island effect, and assist in ground water re-charge.

FINDING NO. 5

Signage - Some parks have no signs indicating the park office.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 5

Provide signs that clearly identify park offices.

RESPONSE: The Respondent disagrees with the finding. City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks recreation centers have park offices that are both easily accessible to the public and clearly marked.

FINDING NO. 6

Staffing - Some employees did not wear the issued identifying nametags. This could lead to unauthorized persons misleading park visitors.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 6

Employees should wear employee identification nametags.

RESPONSE: The Respondent agrees with the finding. Employees of the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks are issued identification badges with the City seal,

employee name, and position title. The Department will remind employees to wear their City-issued identification badges during working hours.

FINDING NO. 7

Volunteers - Parks need volunteers, from community organizations and businesses.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 7

Enlist community businesses and residents to contribute resources and volunteers.

RESPONSE: The Respondent agrees with the finding. The City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks administers a citywide volunteer program that facilitates residents' involvement, provides many different volunteer opportunities, and ensures a safe and healthy work environment for volunteers and patrons who participate at Department facilities.

Currently, there are 25,000 registered volunteers assisting the Department throughout the City. These volunteers have gone through the Department's required registration process and have been approved for a volunteer position that fits the needs of the volunteer and the Department. All volunteers are also cleared through a Department of Justice fingerprint background check.

Many Department programs depend on the assistance provided by volunteers such as: sports program coaches, museum exhibition docents, Park Advisory Board members, and summer day camp junior counselors. The Department also utilizes an additional 1,500 plus volunteers who help support the Department's maintenance needs. These volunteers include; court referrals, various community groups, and local businesses. Some of the jobs performed by these volunteers include: sandbagging, weeding, trash pick-up, planting, washing, and raking.

This concludes our response.