

The Department of Water and Power (DWP) owns the Girard Reservoir (Reservoir) in Woodland Hills, which was drained of water in the 1980s. Most of the Reservoir evolved into an open space covered with trees, brush and wetland vegetation that attracts a number of mammals and avian species. Many local residents have used the area as a place for outdoor recreation. Local neighborhood organizations, as well as environmental advocates, have organized for the past decade to turn the Girard Reservoir into a natural park to provide much needed green space in the area. Many residents involved in advocating for open space on the approximately five-acre parcel are concerned about the loss of access due to the continued encroachment of real estate development around the reservoir.

The DWP is cognizant of the interest in the property, yet the decision to sell or convert the land to a park must be weighed against their obligation as a utility to ensure that clean quality water is provided to the area, which may depend on this reservoir being activated. Serving the tens of thousands of customers in the southwest Valley remains a top priority for the Department.

The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) expressed interest in converting the reservoir into a natural park and have proposed, in the past, to enter into an agreement to manage the space as parkland for DWP, or to start a capital fundraising project to purchase the property. Also interested in creating a parkland at the site are the surrounding neighbors and property owners of Girard Reservoir, represented by the non-profit group called Save Oak Savanna (SOS). Ongoing discussions between local advocates and environmentalists, such as SOS and MRCA, and the DWP have been productive about a mutual agreement. DWP is interested in leveraging this asset for more open space in the City, as long as their utility obligations at Girard Reservoir are not compromised.

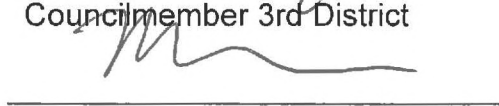
In order to realize this potential new use, the DWP needs to agree and work in partnership with the environmental advocates, neighborhood organizations and Council to effect the proposed parkland concept. Councilmember Blumenfield and the City Council urge all sides to take the next step in realizing this potential project and enter into an agreement to develop parkland at the Girard Reservoir.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council request the Department of Water and Power to report within 60 days on the status of entering into a negotiated agreement with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority to develop the Girard Reservoir as parkland.

PRESENTED BY:


BOB BLUMENFIELD
Councilmember 3rd District

SECONDED BY:




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