

Communication from Public

Name: Friends of Griffith Park

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Council File No: 20-0190

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Friends of Griffith Park

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friendsofgriffithpark.org

April 13, 2020

To: Los Angeles City Council; and the Health, and Education, Neighborhoods, Parks, Arts, and River Committee

Re: CF 20-0190; LAMC section 63.41, arming City Park Rangers

Dear Councilmembers,

After carefully weighing the necessity for arming Los Angeles City Park Rangers, our Board of Directors has taken a position in support of amending the code which will allow CAPOST-certified rangers to carry arms while on duty.

Over the years, Friends of Griffith Park has often been on record supporting the needs of our park rangers and urging the City to do the same. We are strong advocates for increasing the number of rangers in our parks which, by sheer acreage, are underserved for adequate security, protection and enforcement of park rules. We look forward to the day when the ranger force increases to a reasonable number of 70, hopefully soon.

We are highly confident in the professionalism of the rangers in our parks today. They are college educated before they begin the same rigorous academy training as LAPD candidates. They participate in the same post-training regimen as LAPD. And they receive extra training beyond what LAPD receives, as critical first-responder firefighters and interpretive naturalists.

In order to build and sustain the Los Angeles City Park Ranger force, the rangers need to feel safe in their role of law enforcement and public safety within all our city parks. Loss of rangers to other agencies is the reality which City legislators must now consider carefully. Rangers need the tools to protect themselves, or they will leave for safer opportunities. Arming rangers has become even more important in recent years, as rangers are being assigned to more dangerous urban parks, in addition to city regional parks.

Some may argue that rangers are less friendly if armed with a lethal weapon. We disagree. A ranger's approach to an offending park patron can actually be friendlier when that ranger feels she/he will not be in harm's way, given an unexpected scenario. Threatening incidents can evolve rapidly. Most often there is not time to call LAPD to the scene, as response times can be especially slow within parks with no street address to report.

By protecting our rangers with the self-defenses they need, we are also protecting park patrons and other park staff as best we can. We support amending Los Angeles Municipal Code 63.41, to allow qualified Los Angeles City Park Rangers to carry firearms when on duty, in the interest of public safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gerry H.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gerry Hans
President