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Friends of Griffith Park
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friendsofgriffithpark.org

Date: 2/25/13
Submitted in PLUBYL Committee
Council File No: 11-1403
Item No.: 2
~~Organization:~~ FRIENDS OF GRIFFITH PARK

February 25, 2013

Ad Hoc River Committee
200 N. Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012
Councilmember Ed Reyes, CHAIR
Councilmember Tom LaBonge
Councilmember Jose Huizar

RE: Los Angeles River Recreational Zone Pilot Program, 11-1403

Honorable Councilmembers,

The Map on page 12 and the Overview Section, page 3, paragraphs 1, 3, 4 and 5 listing pilot program locations neglect to mention that "North Atwater Park" is Griffith Park. This oversight is particularly conspicuous in paragraph 5 which says, "Except for North Atwater Park, the access parks are owned and managed by the MRCA."

1. We request that all mentions of North Atwater Park in the Draft be amended to read "North Atwater Park in Griffith Park." We ask additionally paragraph 5 the statement, "Except for North Atwater Park, the access parks are owned and managed by the MRCA," be amended to say, "Except for North Atwater Park in Griffith Park, which is owned and managed by the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, the access parks are owned and managed by the MRCA."

Justification for this request: Griffith Park is the City's largest park and a City of Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument in its entirety, with a special sense of place and authenticity that should not be fragmented. North Atwater Park is a part of Colonel Griffith's original grant of parkland to the City. 20th century city maps, Thomas Brothers guides and other documents, show the North Atwater area of the Park as Griffith Park. Additionally, in the Glendale Narrows area, much of the riverbed itself is in Griffith Park. It too, was part of Colonel Griffith's original grant. That North Atwater is Griffith Park has been verified also in recent years by academics and preservation professionals, and was demonstrated affirmatively in the application for Historic-Cultural Monument status that was approved by the City Council in 2009."

2. In order to protect the abundance of river wildlife, especially bird life, we request that boating regulations be imposed to restrict people from exiting boats at sandbars, islands and other habitat areas in the river bottom. Although MRCA has stressed that they desire to not attach too many rules and regulations to the pilot program, the PowerPoint says that "notification of policies and regulations will be achieved through posting on durable, mounted signage." We suggest posting, "Do Not Approach Birds and Wildlife", and "Do Not Stop at Sandbars, Islands, and Habitat Areas."

Justification for this request: This is typical practice along popular river boating routes, and ornithologists, if consulted, would agree.

We appreciate the opportunity to affect positive refinements to the Pilot Program.

Sincerely,

Gerry Hans
President

#2

Kelly Blanpied & John Sabato
4001 Verdant Street
Los Angeles, CA 90039

February 25, 2013

Councilman Ed P. Reyes
Ad Hoc River Committee
Los Angeles City Council
200 N. Spring Street, Room 410
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Date: 2/25/13
Submitted in RIVER Committee
Council File No: 117403
Item No.: 2
~~Priority:~~ PUBLIC

Re: Los Angeles River Recreational Zone Pilot Program

Dear Councilman Reyes and Members of the Ad Hoc River Committee:

As sixteen-year residents of Atwater Village, we oppose the current Los Angeles River/Glendale Narrows Recreation Zone Pilot Program dated January 15, 2013. The draft program prohibits "dogs and pets" from using the "new recreational zone." As I understand it, if implemented as is, this prohibition will likely violate the Public Trust Doctrine as well as equal protection rights guaranteed by the State and Federal Constitution. Furthermore, this portion of the LA River is encompassed by Griffith Park, donated to the City of Los Angeles with the stipulation that the park "give every person a greater opportunity in health, strength and mental power." In other words, Mr. Griffith did not donate his property for exclusive use (by picnickers, hikers, joggers, cyclists, horse-riders, dog-walkers, kayakers, etc). Certainly, there have been accommodations wherein trails and paths are designated for certain use in order to help insure the safety of others. However, horses do run, and cyclists do speed down trails and we humans hike, walk and jog the trails and paths at our own risk. I cannot imagine our pet dog to be more a safety risk to kayakers, than the polluted Los Angeles river itself.

We are not against a plan to encourage kayakers' use the Los Angeles River. However, we are against a plan to promote kayaking at the expense of walking and/or running dogs along the riverbed. The latest draft of the Los Angeles River/Glendale Narrows Recreation Zone Pilot Program prohibits dogs entirely. In essence, this prohibition restricts one form of public use to promote another. This is unfair. We have busy lives like every other resident, and the exercise that running up and down the river bank affords both us and our pet, saves both gas and money that accomplishing this kind of recreation elsewhere would require (e.g., in the past we enjoyed hiking up to Mt. Hollywood, where frequently we would encounter our Councilman, Tom LaBonge, tossing his football while jogging). Likewise for horses and their owners. Mr. Reyes has been quoted as stating that dog owners "don't clean up after themselves"; this is true that some don't (we do). However, horse owners never clean up after their horses as they ride along the paths, or to cross the river. I have seen horse manure in the new North Atwater improvement area, whereas we have not seen the leavings of dogs.

As currently worded, the new regulations prohibit dogs from the recreational zone but not horses (unless horses are considered "pets"). Currently, dogs walk and run along the river with their owners. So do horses. If the plan prohibits dogs and not horses, there are equal protection violations at issue with these new regulations. Accordingly, it would be sound to reconsider this particular prohibition.

We are appalled to say that we would not be aware of these plans were it not for the community who, by word of mouth, we learned of this pilot program, as well as other plans for North Atwater Park. We have read with excitement over the years of the plans for revitalizing the LA River with the intended purpose of bringing Los Angeles residents together. We have read that throughout the planning stages various councils and committees will "work with residents". We believe the effort to communicate specific plans affecting our neighborhood has not been adequate, and we do not feel there is a genuine desire to "work with residents" - rather, these words seem more like political lip-service.

Finally, if the issue really is that dog owners "don't clean up after themselves", the installation of more rubbish bins could be considered, as was done in the new North Atwater improvement area.

Sincerely,

Kelly Blanpied & John Sabato
Atwater Village Residents