



*City of Arts & Innovation*

**MINUTES  
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

Monday, April 13, 2015 6:30 p.m.  
Ysmael Villegas Community Center – Villegas Park  
3091 Esperanza Street  
Riverside, CA 92504  
951-826-2000

**Commissioners Present:**           **Whatley, Johnson, Lyles, Negron, Venegas and Elliot**

**Commissioners Absent:**       **Cardullo and Rounds**

Riverside Youth Council Present: Delgado

Staff Present:                   Adolfo Cruz, Director  
                                      Mario Lara, Deputy Director  
                                      Robin Metz, Recreation Superintendent  
                                      Andrew Emery, Park Superintendent  
                                      Randy McDaniel, Principal Park Planner  
                                      Mayra Ocampo, Senior Administrative Assistant

Public Works Staff Present:     Robert Filiar, Urban Forester

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Whatley called the meeting to order at approximately 6:35 p.m.

City Clerk, Colleen Nicol, swore in Commissioner Walter Elliot.

**1.     PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Mayor's Model Deaf Community Committee Chair, Ian Barraza, introduced himself and the committee to Commission and staff. He thanked staff for hosting the annual Deaf Awareness Week picnic, and invited the Commission to any future meetings or events.

Resident Morris Mendoza thanked the Commissioners for hosting their meeting at Ysmael Villegas Community Center and for their volunteered time.

Resident Paul Chavez returned to the Commission to request an update on Cell Tower funds allocation. He'd also like an update on when the window shades will be installed to divide the gym and banquet room, plus informed the Commission that the projector is not working at the center re-opened a few months ago.

**2.     APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Commission approved the minutes for the March 9, 2015 meeting as presented.

Motion: Johnson  
Second: Venegas  
Ayes: All

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

The following matters, presented to the Park and Recreation Commission on the consent calendar for consideration, were approved by a motion affirming the action appropriate to the item:

3. March Community Service Division Monthly Report
4. March Recreation Division Monthly Report
5. March Parks Division Monthly Report
6. Capital Improvement Projects Tracking Report
7. Public Works Department Urban Forestry / Landscape Division Quarterly Activity Report

Motion: Johnson  
Second: Venegas  
Ayes: All

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **8. GAGE CANAL**

Director Cruz introduced Trails Coordinator Alisa Sramala who presented the item.

Trails Coordinator Alisa Sramala informed the Commission that the grant is a great opportunity for the City because it will enhance the irrigation facility; it will allow the undeclared trail to be used as a multi-use trail with new paved asphalt. She clarified that the grant is only the first Phase, and she hopes the City will develop future phases of the Gage Canal trails.

After discussion a motion was made to refer the report to the Community Services and Youth Committee.

Motion: Venegas  
Second: Elliot  
Ayes: All

#### **9. REQUEST TO NAME THE VILLEGAS PARK STAGE AND PICNIC AREA "PLAZA" IN HONOR OF PFC SALVADOR J. LARA**

Director Cruz presented all background information to the Commission. He informed the Commission and Community that a handout was available of additional signatures supporting the request, submitted on July 1, 2014, by Rudy Chavez. Staff recommended that the Park and Recreation Commission, in line with the sub-committee's recommendation, choose not to move the naming request forward.

Youth Council Representative, Gabriel Delgado, entered the meeting at this time.

Resident Morris Mendoza mentioned that during a meeting with VFW 184 the naming request was on the agenda. Though a letter was not submitted to the Commission, it was agreed that naming a facility in honor of Lara is a great idea. However, he expressed the plaza area of Villegas Park is not an appropriate location, and recognition should be given elsewhere.

Community Action Group (CAG) Chair Bob Garcia mentioned that an alternative site should be named after Lara, a site that isn't already named after someone. He recommends the plaza area of the Casa Blanca Library because it is more noticeable to the community, and the kids who go there can have a hero to look up to.

Resident Paul Chavez informed the Commission that he talked to a brother of Salvador Lara and confirmed that no one approached the Lara family with original naming request. He mentioned that the brother is willing to support naming the library because, "each one needs their own identity."

Concerned Citizens of Casa Blanca member, Ed Martinez, informed the Commission that Rudy Chavez couldn't attend the meeting. He explained many people are in favor of naming the plaza area in honor of PFC Lara; Assemblyman Jose Medina highly recommends the request, plus there are 100+ signatures supporting the request. He clarified that supporters don't want to change name of Villegas Park.

Commissioner Venegas mentioned that after the first public meeting in 2014, the Subcommittee tabled the item simply to give equal representation to the request. The Subcommittee hoped the community would come to a consensus.

Commissioner Johnson feels that Lara needs something of a greater monument than just a side area of an already named park.

Commissioner Negrón mentioned that youth should have been involved with the naming request since they will inherit the park and heroes.

After discussion, a motion was made to accept the recommendation not to move the naming request forward.

Motion: Johnson  
Second: Venegas  
Ayes: All

#### **10. REQUEST TO NAME THE GYMNASIUM AT VILLEGAS PARK COMMUNITY CENTER IN HONOR OF GLEN AND MARY AYALA**

Director Cruz presented all background information to the Commission.

Resident Richard Ayala, Glen and Mary's son, informed the Commission that his parents were strong advocates for the community; they had unbelievable commitment to everyone and every race in Casa Blanca. Mary fought against schools for justice; she was the right-hand woman for César Chávez and Glen introduced Mexicans to outdoor talents like baseball.

Resident Anthony Ayala, Glen and Mary's grandson, informed the Commission that his grandfather was the director of Villegas Park for 18 years. He can provide any justification requested in order for the Commission to move the item forward. He already has the approval of CAG and the Villegas Park Advisory Board.

Resident Morris Mendoza informed the Commission that his grandfather helped raise Glen and Mary because both were orphans. Glen and Mary helped the community, all minorities felt comfortable with them because they knew Glen and Mary were trying to bring peace at a time when peace was unheard of in Casa Blanca. Yes, Glen was an employee but his devotion to the community was his real job 24/7.

Resident Paul Chavez informed the Commission of many City facilities are named in honor of employees because the communities understood that they went above and beyond their job duties. The council chamber is named after ex-mayor Art Pick, and former Riverside Mayor, Ron Loveridge has a street named after him in Downtown Riverside.

Community Action Group (CAG) Chair, Bob Garcia, retold that Glen and Mary were always assisting the community, and they deserve the gymnasium to be named in their honor. He informed the Commission that libraries also have rooms named in honor of past employees.

Resident Juanita Ayala, Glen and Mary's daughter-in-law, said that rejecting the request means, "you don't know Glen and Mary. They made people feel safe in the park when the City said it wasn't safe to be in Casa Blanca."

Resident Bonnie Rodriguez, Glen and Mary's adopted daughter, said there are many reasons why the gymnasium should be named after Glen and Mary. They befriended "black" and "white" communities, they introduced Ted Orosco to the community, and they gave their own money so all kids in the neighborhood could have the same opportunities. Glen and Mary "saved my life."

Chair Whatley asked CAG Chair Bob Garcia why a letter of support was not submitted.

CAG Chair Bob Garcia Bob confirmed that a letter can be submitted; he can simply refer back to the minutes and do so.

Commissioner Venegas mentioned that his family knows the Ayala family and feels it will be a great honor for Riverside to have Glen and Mary recognized.

Commissioner Negrón told the Ayala family that stories like theirs are what keep communities alive, and informed the family that requesting justification or documents is simply a policy. She said that Mary Ayala sounds very inspirational to all young ladies, and is glad that a woman will be recognized. She thinks requests should be forwarded immediately.

After discussion, a motion was made to table the item to give the Ayala family the opportunity to get all backup documentation in order properly forward to the Community Services and Youth Committee

Motion: Johnson  
Second: Venegas  
Ayes: All except Negrón

Oppose: Negron

A second motion was made to move the May 11, 2015, Park and Recreation Commission meeting to the Ysmael Villegas Community Center.

Motion: Elliot  
Second: Negron  
Ayes: All

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS, MEETING DATES, AND COMMISSION REQUEST**

Commissioner Negron

- Informed the Commission that Sherman Indian High School will have their annual Pow Wow on Saturday, and also the Tamale Festival will be held on Saturday at White Park.

Commissioner Johnson

- Requested a report regarding the Department's water conservation strategies.

Director Cruz

- Informed the Commission that the Department is presenting to the Community Services and Youth Committee on Wednesday, April 15, and they can bring that report, showing a 12% reduction, to their meeting in May.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chairperson Whatley adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:10 p.m. The next meeting will be held on Monday, May 11, 2015 at the Ysmael Villegas Community Center at Villegas Park, 3091 Esperanza Street, Riverside, CA 92504.



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# Park and Recreation Commission

**TO: HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS** **DATE: APRIL 13, 2015**

**FROM: PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT** **ITEM NO:**

**SUBJECT: REQUEST TO NAME THE GYMNASIUM AT VILLEGAS PARK COMMUNITY CENTER IN HONOR OF GLEN AND MARY AYALA**

## **ISSUE:**

The issue for Park and Recreation Commission consideration is a request to name the gymnasium at Villegas Park in honor of Glen and Mary Ayala.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Park and Recreation Commission choose not to move forward the request to name the gymnasium at Villegas Park Community Center in honor of Glen and Mary Ayala.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On January 30, 2015, a request to name the gymnasium at Villegas Park Community Center in honor of Glen and Mary Ayala was received.

This request is almost the same as, or is closely related to one that was previously considered by the Park and Recreation Commission and the Community Services and Youth Committee which was to name the band shell at Villegas Park in honor of Glen and Mary Ayala.

On August 8, 2011 the Community Services and Youth Committee considered the request to name the band shell at Villegas Park in honor of Glen and Mary Ayala and after discussion unanimously continued the item because there was insufficient documentation and justification to move forward.

The Park Naming Resolution provides the Park and Recreation Commission with the following key guidelines:

- 1) Preference will be given to names relating to geographical location, historic significance or geologic features.
- 2) A park facility can be named for a person only in limited situations as outlined in Section 2 of the Resolution.
- 3) The Park and Recreation Commission (in its advisory capacity) are responsible for the selection of names for parks and recreation facilities, subject to the approval of the City Council.
- 4) A public meeting indicating that there is significant justification and support by the community is required prior to changing the name of a park or recreation facility.

The procedures outlined in the Naming of City-owned Land, Buildings and Facilities Administrative Policy states that the Commission/Review Body may choose not to move a request forward.

Since this request is substantially the same as one that was previously continued, due to lack of sufficient documentation and justification, the recommendation is that the Park and Recreation Commission choose not to move this request forward.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by: Mario E. Lara, Parks Recreation and Community Services Deputy Director  
Approved by: Adolfo Cruz, Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director  
Approved by: Stephen H. Badgett, Interim Assistant City Manager

**Attachment:**

1. Naming/Renaming Application 01/30/2015
2. Minutes of Community Services and Youth Committee 08/08/2011