

APPROVED
JUL 12 2006

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

NO. 06-197

DATE July 12, 2006

BOARD OF RECREATION
and PARK COMMISSIONERS

C.D. 11

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: VENICE RESERVOIR SITE – LANDSCAPE BEAUTIFICATION PROJECT

J. Combs _____	J. Kolb _____
H. Fujita _____	F. Mok _____
S. Huntley _____	K. Regan _____
B. Jensen _____	*M. Shull _____

[Handwritten signature]

Robert H. Jensen (for)
General Manager

Approved _____ Disapproved _____ Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board:

1. Approve the proposed improvements to the two dirt strips extending along Grand View Boulevard outside the fenced sports area operated by the North Venice Little League; and,
2. Direct staff to provide guidance and technical advice to the non-City personnel who will implement the project.

SUMMARY:

Since 1967 the Department has had a license agreement with the Department of Water and Power to provide youth sports and other recreational activity on 14.30 acres known as the "Venice Reservoir Site" (DWP File W-18448; APN 4248-015-900). At that time, the Department sublicensed part of the site to the North Venice Little League (NVLL). In the mid-1970s the Department sublicensed the rest of the site to a community garden group now known as Ocean View Farms (OVF). Both organizations have formal, non-profit 501 (c) 3 tax-exempt status.

In the spring of 2005 these two organizations and the Grand View Field Subcommittee of the Hill Top Neighbors Association proposed a beautification project along the eastern boundary of the site, just outside the fence enclosing the sports fields. The project involves installing an irrigation system and native plantings for two dirt strips, each approximately 13-feet wide, that extend for 1,075 feet on either side of the sidewalk along Grand View Boulevard; the strips begin south of Stanwood Drive and end south of Indianapolis Street. Currently, the strips are dusty and overgrown, often becoming littered with trash.

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On April 19, 2005, staff from Recreation and Parks and the Architectural Division of the Bureau of Engineering (BOE) met at the site with representatives of the aforementioned groups in order to discuss landscape improvements. Subsequently, BOE drafted design recommendations with alternatives and cost estimates. The project team then selected a final design that was reviewed and approved by both BOE and the Senior Park Maintenance Supervisor for West Region. Design elements include a drip irrigation system, stabilized decomposed granite, mulch, weed cloths, drought-tolerant ground cover and small shrubs. A mow strip or other acceptable weed barrier is planned for placement just outside the Little League fence in order to separate the project site from that area. The controller for the new irrigation will connect to the existing system for the Little League fields NVLL has agreed to pay for the water used at the project site.

OVF members, the Little League and the neighbors will supply the estimated 700 hours of volunteer labor needed to install the landscape improvements. This work will be done with guidance from the Department's field personnel; this participation will ensure that the installation and materials used meet Department standards and that the volunteers benefit from the Department's expertise. The President of OVF estimates that site preparation and installation will take twelve weekends.

The proposed project has adequate funding. On January 13, 2006, the project team received a grant of \$10,000.00 from the Office of Community Beautification of the City's Department of Public Works. Earlier, the Mar Vista Community Council had granted \$5,000.00 for the project on September 13, 2005; they granted an additional \$5,000.00 on May 9, 2006. The treasurer of the Hill Top Neighbors Association has agreed to serve as treasurer for the project and a checking account has been opened to track receipts and expenditures. In addition, the Association has raised \$4,000.00 in cash donations for the project. A private arborist who supplies OVF with free mulch has agreed to increase the supply in order to have a sufficient amount for the project site. Taken together, the hard costs for project materials are estimated to total \$20,000.00; this sum includes 20% for contingencies. To date, the project team has collected \$24,000.00.

The President of OVF has sent correspondence indicating that they will maintain the improved site at no cost to the Department. After the initial installation, they have agreed to perform weeding, repairs to the drip irrigation and renewing of the plantings and mulching. OVF is well suited for this maintenance role, having approximately 300 members. Their by-laws require members to perform twelve hours of OVF-related service each year for each plot that they garden. Many members typically volunteer additional hours. For example, during the first five months of 2006, OVF members contributed 3,300 hours of volunteer, community-service work. Their Board has approved dedicating a work crew to the project site on each of their twice-monthly "garden work days." In addition, their Board will schedule an annual clean-up day modeled after the Mayor's spring 2006 "Big Sunday" event. This annual clean-up will probably occur in February or March so as to minimize disruption to the Little League.

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Staff determined that the proposed irrigation and landscape improvements are exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 3 (9) and Class 4 (3) of the City CEQA Guidelines.

The Department's Risk Manager verified with the Administrator of the Public Works' Community Beautification Grant that non-City personnel participating in this project are covered under insurance arranged by that office. No separate "hold harmless" agreement is needed.

The Department of Water and Power was informed of the proposed project and has expressed no objections. The Office of Council District Eleven, the Assistant General Manager of Operations West and the Superintendent of West Region concur with staff's recommendations.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

There is no anticipated impact to the General Fund except for staff time for field personnel guiding the non-City personnel who will install the landscape improvements.

Report prepared by Joan Reitzel, Senior Management Analyst in Real Estate and Asset Management.