

Director's Highlights

Parks, Recreation, Marine and Animal Care Services September 2021 Highlights

Prepared by Director Brent Dennis

1. Labor Day holiday weekend marked the end of summer for PRM with Community Recreation Services pivoting to after school programs seamlessly. Our beaches and parks were both busy and beautiful to the credit of our maintenance teams' great work.
2. Highlight of August was clearly the return of the Municipal Band and the community's energized support of our new conductor, Kurt Curtis with enjoyable music returning to our parks. The abbreviated concert season was well received and attended each of the four performances. City Council approved the "Conductor Larry Curtis Concert Park" to designate an area of Marine Stadium to honor the former conductor who died last year. A dedication event will be scheduled in the coming month on a date and time yet to be determined.
3. The destruction of the Admiral Kidd Park Playground by a suspicious fire has generated a lot of community interest in seeing the playground rebuilt in an even better state with universal accessibility feature and play elements. Partners of Parks launched a \$1.0 million campaign with an appealing array of donor opportunities and naming rights for a leadership gift or grant. City resources were identified to address the removal of the remnants of the battleship-themed, popular play structure. Community Recreation Services has introduced fun recreational activities in the cleared footprint space until the new playground construction begins later this year.
4. Council District 9 has requested a feasibility study for a North Long Beach pool. An internal study team has been assembled and will be expanded to include key team members from Public Works. Ramona Park was suggested as a potential pool site. Additional new funding news regarding Ramona Park was \$1.5 million for a signature playground. These new park elements would likely prompt a master plan or vision plan with community engagement for Ramona Park.

5. The City of Long Beach is requiring weekly COVID testing for all employees who have not attested that they have been vaccinated before they can report to work schedules. PRM has realized significant challenges within our part-time and seasonal workforce in their compliance with these important health requirement protocols. Disciplinary measures will be enacted for any City of Long Beach employees who fail to comply which could have an impactful effect upon PRM operations and programming. We are working closely with Occupational Health and Human Resources to address our department's situation fairly and reasonably.
6. City Council approved a \$3.0 Billion City of Long Beach FY22 Budget with a Parks, Recreation, and Marine Department budget of \$65,422,325 with proposed revenues of \$40,405,473 and proposed FTE of 432.59. Thanks to all supporters of PRM who attended budget hearings and provided positive public comments.
7. Artist/Sculptor Katherine England has been selected to create artwork to be installed within the Red Car Greenbelt in Council District 3. Ms. England is a creative SoCal artist known for her incorporation of colorful mosaic tiles within whimsical sculptors inspired by nature and human activities.
8. Director Dennis is leading the formation of a Long Beach Pickleball Consortium that would represent pickleball nuclei of passionate players of this rapidly growing court sport across the city. This new brain trust of passionate stakeholders will help provide valuable input for helping PRM address the best short term and long-range improvements and capital investments.
9. PRM celebrated the years of service and upcoming retirement of Park Planning and Partnerships Bureau team member Leslie Hunsaker. We wish Leslie personal enjoyment and many years of happiness in her retirement.
10. Important reminder: Mark your calendars and hopefully attend the Partners of Park annual fundraiser "Sowing Seeds of Change" to be held at the El Dorado Nature Center on the evening of Saturday, September 18th.