Legislation Details (With Text)

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File created:	8/26/2019			**In control:**	City Council
On agenda:	9/17/2019			**Final action:**	9/17/2019
Title:	WITHDRAWN Recommendation to receive the supporting documentation into the record, conclude the public hearing, consider the appeal by William Grisolia, dba Long Beach Blues Society, and uphold the decision of the Parks and Recreation Commission to deny the City Manager's Office of Special Events and Filming Application #20-10539, for the operation of the New Blues Festival in El Dorado East Regional Park, Area III (Application #20-10539). (District 5)				
Sponsors:	Parks, Recreation and Marine				
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Code sections:					
Attachments:	1. 091019-H-3sr&att.pdf, 2. 091719-CH-23sr&att.pdf				

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
9/17/2019	2	City Council	withdrawn	
9/10/2019	1	City Council	laid over	Pass

WITHDRAWN
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~~(Application #20-10539). (District 5)~~

This hearing is being conducted in response to the appeal from Mr. William Grisolia, dba Long Beach Blues Society. The Parks and Recreation Commission denied the permit for use of El Dorado East Regional Park, Area III, for the New Blues Festival, based on prior years' negative impacts to the park, park users and surrounding communities.

El Dorado Regional Park is one of the most utilized parks in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine (PRM), providing the opportunity for passive activities, certain fee-based activities like bike and boat rentals, picnic services, and occasional special events that are open to the public. In accordance with Long Beach Municipal Code (LBMC) Chapter 5.60, special events that require the coordination of the services of multiple departments within the City of Long Beach (City) like Police, Fire, Public Works, or Health and Human Services, are coordinated through the City Manager's Office of Special Events and Filming (Special Events) to provide planning, seamless operation and oversight of a particular special event. Special Events can also issue permits for events to allow the sale and consumption of

alcohol in City parks.

Pursuant to LBMC Section 2.54.005 and City Charter Section 902, the Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) has exclusive authority over leisure activities of a recreational nature in City parks. To that end, the Parks and Recreation Commission has made a concerted effort over the past several years, to thoroughly assess applications for proposed special events in City parks to further ensure that the events do not negatively impact City facilities, existing park users and surrounding communities.

Background

For the past five years, the New Blues Festival has been held at El Dorado Regional Park on Labor Day weekend. For the past four years, Special Events, with Commission approval, has issued William Grisolia, dba Long Beach New Blues Society, a permit to operate the New Blues Festival in El Dorado Regional Park. The festival is a two-day, blues concert that includes music, exhibits, merchandise concessions, and food and beverages sales, including the sale and consumption of beer, wine, and spirits. On June 2, 2019, Mr. Grisolia submitted Application #20-10539 to conduct another New Blues Festival on November 2-3, 2019 in El Dorado Regional Park.

Two years ago, during the New Blues Festival event at El Dorado Regional Park on September 2-3, 2017, both Special Events and PRM reported that they had serious difficulty with the New Blues Festival production team, which included the following:

- Though clearly explained, parking requirements were not followed, and this created serious traffic concerns impacting park users and ticket holders for the event.
- The manner in which the New Blues Festival production team distributed parking passes to vendors, volunteers, and performers created numerous issues for PRM staff reconciling gate receipts.
- The New Blues Festival production team did not remove traffic patterns for entry lanes immediately following the event causing traffic flow impact to the park on the Labor Day holiday for other users of the park.
- The New Blues Festival production team did not comply with signage requirements. This further contributed to traffic flow challenges. Patrons were confused on how to enter and exit the park area, which caused some ticket holders to exit the park by mistake.
- Festival goers were observed parking in non-designated areas of grass.
- The event load in and out was poorly coordinated, negatively impacting park users not associated with the event.
- The event lacked reasonable sound control, negatively impacting park users in the area nearby the event.

These issues could have been avoided with better coordination and organization on the part of the New Blues Festival production team.

On June 21, 2018, the Commission approved the New Blues Festival permit for Labor Day 2018 at El Dorado Regional Park. In the process of permit approval, the Commission specifically addressed the production difficulties from the 2017 event and expressed the expectation that those issues be remedied.

Unfortunately, the 2018 New Blues Festival event was even more problematic than the 2017 event. Both PRM and Special Events experienced difficulties with the New Blues Festival production team that included:

- The failure to procure parking/entry to the park for artists, vendors, and event staff. A list of names for these individuals was not provided to City staff causing major confusion at the time of the event.
- The New Blues Festival production team's event parking plan resulted in vehicles parked in prohibited areas.
- Insufficient directional signage, which created traffic and parking challenges and resulted in several event goers exiting the venue before the event started.
- Required Emergency Exit signage was not provided at all emergency exits.
- The event load out plan was not followed, affecting a large party reservation scheduled at the park the next day.
- The clean-up and removal of spray paint in the parking lot was unsatisfactory.
- Event equipment was left at the event area for two days after the event, leaving areas inaccessible to park users.
- Traffic control equipment was improperly placed on Spring Street, which delayed park patrons from entering the park on Labor Day.

Because of these continuing concerns, on December 27, 2018, Mr. William Grisolia was informed that PRM would recommend that the 2019 New Blues Festival not take place at El Dorado Regional Park (Attachment A). Notwithstanding this, the Long Beach Blues Society promoted a New Blues Festival event at El Dorado Regional Park for 2019. The Director of PRM communicated directly with Mr. Grisolia to request that the Long Beach Blues Society stop promoting the El Dorado Regional Park as the venue for the 2019 New Blues Festival. In the course of his communications, the Director of PRM invited Mr. Grisolia to meet with City staff to explore other venues for the festival.

The Long Beach Blues Society informed City staff that it intended to hire a new event producer who is more experienced than the previous one. Nonetheless, City staff again informed the Long Beach Blues Society that PRM would recommend that the 2019 New Blues Festival not be held at El Dorado Regional Park. The size and scope of the New Blues Festival lends itself to established

waterfront venues in the Downtown Long Beach area. Alternative locations were reviewed and discussed with Mr. William Grisolia. Notwithstanding this communication, the Long Beach Blues Society requested that the Commission approve a permit for use of El Dorado Regional Park on November 2 and 3, 2019 for the 2019 New Blues Festival.

The Commission met on August 15, 2019 and the item was presented (Attachment B). The Commission listened to the comments of Mr. William Grisolia. The Commission discussed the matter and unanimously denied the permit request. Mr. William Grisolia, timely filed an appeal with the City Clerk on August 16, 2019.

LBMC Section 2.54.010 provides a process by which an “aggrieved person” may appeal an action of the Commission to the City Council. After a public hearing, the City Council may affirm, modify, or overrule the decision or action of the Commission but any such action by the City Council requires a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote. If the City Council fails to obtain the requisite votes to affirm, modify, or overrule, the action of the Commission will stand. It should be noted despite the denial of conducting the event in this location, Long Beach Blues Society will be able to apply for other sites in Long Beach that are available for use and are more conducive for the New Blues Festival event.

This matter was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney Erin Weesner-McKinley on August 27, 2019 and by Revenue Management Officer Geraldine Alejo on August 28, 2019.

City Council action is requested on September 10, 2019, to meet the requirement to conduct a hearing within 30 days of the Commission decision.

This recommendation has no fiscal impact, and no staffing impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with existing City Council priorities. There is no local job impact associated with this recommendation.

Approve recommendation.

[Enter Body Here]

GERARDO MOUET
DIRECTOR
PARKS, RECREATION AND MARINE

APPROVED:

PATRICK H. WEST
CITY MANAGER