

Director's Highlights

Parks, Recreation, Marine and Animal Care Services

March 2023 Highlights

Prepared by Director Brent Dennis

1. The City of Long Beach Proclamation of an Emergency to Address Homelessness has become a top priority for our Parks, Recreation, Marine, and Animal Care Services team. The plans to establish an additional Winter Shelter at Silverado Park gymnasium has been withdrawn following a community meeting at the park that brought significant opposition to the proposal. The Multi Services Center created a warming center to help address the needs of some of the unhoused during the current cold weather nights. Other locations are being studied for temporary winter sheltering after the decision to forego Silverado gymnasium for that purpose. Our Marine Bureau maintenance team has been assisting Public Works in developing a Safe Car Parking Area at Queensway Bay near the Queen Mary by painting containers that are defining the parking lot.
2. Congratulations to Stephanie Perez, Community Recreation Services, who was recognized as the Department's Employee of the Month at the March 7, 2023, City Council meeting. We are very proud of Stephanie for this citywide recognition.
3. The ribbon cutting celebration for the newly renovated futsal soccer mini-pitch courts at DeForest Park was held on Friday, February 17th at 3:30pm. Mayor Richardson and District 9 Councilwoman both delivered great messages of appreciation and inspiration in the program. We are appreciative of the support of LA Galaxy Foundation, Herbalife, and US Soccer Foundation for the improvements. A soccer clinic for area youth was conducted as a fun dimension of the celebration for area soccer team players.
4. Park Planning & Partnerships continues to lead an array of important park vision plans that include: Martin Luther King Park, 14th Street Park, Shearer Park, Ramona Park, and aspects of Houghton Park.
5. Both of our tennis centers have set up morning blocks of time available for pickleball play seven days a week. Pickleball facilities being advanced in Long Beach will increase the original single pickleball court to sixty-six (66) courts in the coming year. Court improvements are underway currently at Somerset Park, El Dorado Park West, Veterans Park, and DeForest Park.
6. A long-awaited groundbreaking celebration is being planned for the new Admiral Kidd Park playground later this month. Once the plans are finalized,

details will be shared with all our supporters, Partners of Parks, Commissioners, and the broader community.

7. I participated in the recent Gray Panthers Board meeting and Long Beach Senior Citizen Advisory Commission to provide updates on our planned community engagement, surveys, and exciting potential for the new senior center located at 125 Elm Street, in Council District 1 in the downtown area.
8. A collaboration meeting to bring together interested groups to help envision an El Dorado Park Universal Playground was held in early March. Play Long Beach, Playmakers, Citizens Advisory Commission on Disabilities, and Parks, Recreation, and Marine Department's Park Planning and Partnerships discussed the history of the project, status, the City design process, playground themes, and community engagement. The proposed location of the playground would be adjacent to the Duck Pond and in the general footprint of the existing, older playground equipment.
9. The recent Job Fairs held by the Department have attracted several interested young people to fill a significant number of summer part-time positions, primarily in Community Recreation Services. All job opportunities are posted on the City of Long Beach HR website. Other part-time and seasonal jobs are available in areas of lifeguards, park maintenance, and animal care services.
10. The Junior Leagues of Long Beach invited me to participate in a Community Forum to develop networking and share opportunities in community programming. Representatives of Long Beach Unified School District and 4 Girls were present to offer many important partnership opportunities that our Department can contribute to and benefit from in areas of youth programs and mentorship.
11. The Department's Management Team met again to continue the Strategic Planning Retreat progress that began in January. The further definition of bureau and department goals, priorities, and action plans were the primary focus. Feedback from the series of Community Budget Meetings for FY 24 was discussed in terms of alignment with our Strategic Plan.
12. The ASK Foundation is developing a video documentary series that focusses upon the importance of skateparks in a community and the transformative nature of positive activities in our parks. A special thanks to Mike Donelon for his leadership of the ASK Foundation and their continued efforts to improve skate parks throughout Long Beach. My interview was set for Saturday, March 11th at McBride Park Community Center.