



# CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION & MARINE

**C-15**

2760 N. Studebaker Road, Long Beach, CA 90815-1697

September 20, 2005

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www.lbparks.org

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
City of Long Beach  
California

## RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the name Grace Park for the new park being developed at the intersection of Plymouth Street and Elm Avenue. (District 8)

## DISCUSSION

Eighth District City Councilwoman, Rae Gabelich, has requested the City name the new park being built at Plymouth Street and Elm Avenue, Grace Park (Attachment #1). The North Long Beach Redevelopment Project Area Advisory Committee (North PAC) also recommended this name. An aerial photo showing this site (Attachment #2) and conceptual plans for the proposed park (Attachment #3) are attached.

Pursuant to Administrative Regulation (AR) 8-7, the City Council referred the request to the Parks and Recreation Commission for consideration of the proposed name. The Parks and Recreation Commission considered the action on August 18, 2005, concurred in the recommendation to name the park Grace Park, and is forwarding their recommendation to the full City Council for adoption.

AR 8-7 applies to the naming of all public land, buildings and facilities, and also provides several policies to guide the consideration of a naming request.

- The name should incorporate Long Beach whenever important for civic recognition or identification.
- A name in honor of a recognized geographic area, a topographic feature, or a historically significant event may be appropriate.
- A name in honor of persons or families who have donated the land or a substantial portion of the improvement costs may be appropriate when applicable.
- A name in honor of a person or persons who have served the nation, the State of California, and/or the City of Long Beach in an exceptional or distinguished manner may be appropriate if warranted by service of major significance.
- A name in honor of a living person, or of a deceased person within one year of their death, is not appropriate unless the significance of that person's contribution is worthy of an exception to the policy.
- A name in honor of a person is not appropriate when a name in honor of another person has been given to the same site, building, or facility in the past.

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- A name in honor of a person is not appropriate, if that person has been overly recognized in the past.
- A name may be selected through a competition or a contest.

The name, Grace Park, was recommended to Councilwoman Rae Gabelich by the North PAC. The Redevelopment Agency, on the recommendation of the North PAC, funded the acquisition of the site and is contributing approximately one half of the construction cost for the park. The North PAC has an ongoing research project into the largely forgotten history of North Long Beach and is seeking to recall that history in multiple ways, including the naming of facilities.

In that context, the name, Grace Park, has been suggested for two reasons. The first is the prior use of the site as a church. For 70 years, from 1930 to 2000, a church was located on the site. Although the word "grace" is not associated with the name or denomination that was located on the site, it does pay tribute to the long time use of the location.

The second reason is to honor Grace Olive Wiley who lived nearby at 34 Market Street from 1939 to 1946. Ms. Wiley was significant as a nationally known herpetologist (scientific study of reptiles and amphibians). She was one of the first women in her field and served for 13 years as the curator of the Museum of Natural History of the Minneapolis Public Library, before coming to Long Beach. Specializing in the treatment and training of snakes, she was published in several scientific journals.

While living in Long Beach, she collected snakes, other reptiles, and amphibians and formed the Long Beach Zoological Society, based around her collection. With this, she educated and entertained thousands of Long Beach residents. She also provided members of her collection for use in several motion pictures. Her approach to her collection, and in her published research, was a pioneering orientation to what would now be considered the ethical treatment of animals. After moving from North Long Beach, she tragically died from a bite from a poisonous snake in her collection. Additional information on Grace Wiley is Attachment #4.

Referring to the naming policies in AR 8-7, the name of Grace Park is appropriate, as it reflects the history of the geographic location in which it is located. Not only does it honor the historical use of the site in a non-denominational manner, it also honors an admirable person who reflects a historical period and brought national attention to North Long Beach.

This letter was reviewed by Senior Deputy City Attorney Donna F. Gwin on September 8, 2005, and Budget Management Officer David Wodynski on September 12, 2005.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action on this matter is not time critical.

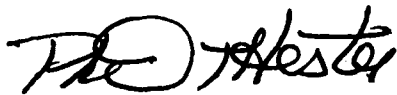
FISCAL IMPACT

The recommended action will have no fiscal impact.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



PHIL T. HESTER  
DIRECTOR OF PARKS, RECREATION AND MARINE

PTH:DLE:lr  
Attachments

APPROVED:



GERALD R. MILLER  
CITY MANAGER