

**CITY OF ONTARIO
RECREATION & PARKS COMMISSION
August 27, 2018
MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT: DEAN, NELSEN, RILEY, BINNEY, SAUCEDO,
TRINIDAD, ZENDEJAS

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: MCALARY, HUISMAN, MICHALAK, BJORK,
ZICK, PEREZ, CONNER

MEMBERS ABSENT: MEDINA

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: The meeting called to order by
Commission Chair, Kenneth Dean at 6:01 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Daniel Saucedo, Commissioner

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

**M/S (BINNEY/TRINIDAD) TO APPROVE MINUTES FOR JULY 2018 CARRIED
UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENT:

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. Monthly Statistical Reports for July 2018.

**M/S (TRINIDAD/NELSEN) TO APPROVE THE MONTHLY STATISTICAL REPORT
FOR JULY 2018 CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

1. **Recreation and Community Services** – Julie Dorey, Recreation and Community Services Director narrated a Power Point presentation on department highlights of center activities that occurred in July 2018.

A copy of the department presentation may be obtained upon request from the Commission Secretary.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. No Old Business

NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Homeless and Parks Presentation** – Julie Bjork, Executive Housing Director, Officer Matthew Zick, Ontario Police Department, Roberto Perez, Assistant Parks and Maintenance Director, Judy Conner and Mercy House.
 - a. Julie Bjork, Interim Director Housing and Neighborhood Preservation presented to the Commission a PowerPoint presentation regarding our Housing Department's approach on addressing the homeless issues within the city of Ontario including statistical information of the homeless demographics. On the "2018 Time Count", there were 90 individuals recorded as homeless in the city limits of Ontario. Several years ago, we had a homeless population of over 400. Less than 1.8% of that homeless population are with children. Forty-five percent of that population have just recently been released from prison. Ms. Bjork introduced Officer Matthew Zick who shared with the Commission what our Police Department is currently addressing at our local parks, specifically James Bryant Park. Officer Zick is the liaison between Ontario Police and the Parks Department regarding issues that come up regarding all of our local parks. Officer Zick shared statistical information about code violations that occurred at that particular park. He stated that our Municipal Code is very large and has a lot of room for the Police Department to address the many issues that can occur. He stated the park was revitalized in 2017, which included the updating of the restrooms, landscaping updates and the installation of security cameras. There has been a decrease of serious crimes since the park had been re-opened. Barbeques and picnic tables were removed which has also brought about a reduction homeless in the park. Another contributing factor is our continued outreach with *Mercy House*, which has also helped, reduce the homeless issues.
 - b. Robert Perez, Assistant Parks and Maintenance Director presented the preliminary plans for the dog park, which will be built at the northeast corner of James Bryant Park. Creating this dog park will bring more families into the park, which also helps reduce crime.
 - c. Judy Conner from *Mercy House* shared that their organization began in 2005/2006. Since this time, they have served approximately over 22,000 people. They provide showers, laundry facilities, lockers for storage and daily meals. They have emergency case managers to help people qualify for housing and assist those that are looking for jobs. They perform homeless outreach services within the parks along with Officer Zick and the COPS Unit. Judy shared photos of their center and transitional housing facilities that are offered through their program. As the lead agency for the area's Homeless, they work with partners such as, Inland Valley Council of Churches, House of Ruth and Foothill Family Shelter, which is also funded by the city of Ontario. Fifteen local churches also help with

funding to assist those in need to access to the affordable housing programs. The city of Ontario has received recognition from the *League of California Cities* for this program.

COMMENTS:

BINNEY: “It’s great to meet you in person Officer Zick. I have talked with you on the phone before. All of your efforts are amazing and you can *see* the improvements.”

DEAN: “Are there typical violations that seem to dominate?”

ZICK: “Usually narcotics and alcohol and storage of their belongings within the park.”

SAUCEDO: “Are there challenges at the park because of the apartment parking? Is the parking lot closed after a certain hour?”

PEREZ: “The parking lot closes at 9 PM. We are making changes of the signage at the park that states the Municipal code and say we will tow vehicles parked past the posted hours. The gates will be closed after 9 pm.”

NELSEN: “I have gone to visit the park, especially De Anza. I do not understand why people bring food in to feed the homeless. Why isn’t it given to the official outreach programs that the city partners with?”

BJORK: “When we meet with churches we are trying to get them to participate and support the official outreach programs. We want to work with them to help people get into the housing programs. We are constantly working on that relationship.”

OVITT: “There are a number of halfway houses for mental health issues and alcoholics. Do we find that some of the people who leave those programs seek assistance from our homeless programs?”

ZICK: “I don’t believe so. Usually the one’s we have encounters with are the ones we deal with chronically.”

NELSEN: “We had a presenter at our Kiwanis Club from “Front Sight” a group that helps Veterans. It is a Military Outreach program. They are located off Holt and Maitland. They raised funds to help Veterans who have returned from front line duty suffering from PTSD. The speaker stated they really look to the city of Ontario for support with their programs and thanked you for assisting some of them to find housing and help them get on their feet. Some have lost their families due to their mental issues and addiction. It would be wonderful if you could partner with them.”

BINNEY: “I’ve seen some negative posts on Social Media about Bryant Park. Is there any way we can combat that with positive media to talk about all that we’ve done to clean up that park?”

BJORK: “We will talk to the City’s Public Information Officer to see if we can address that.”

TRINIDAD: “Is there a way to install a “sharps” container out in the park? I would not want it to appear that we are enabling. I am concerned about the children who play out in the park. Is that something you’ve thought about installing?”

PEREZ: “We have considered in the past but the idea was shut down by the Fire Department due to the potential of theft of the used needles. What we have now are safe needle disposal boxes that our Parks Maintenance Staff carry around with them in their trucks where they dispose of any needles that are found and the staff turns them in to the Fire Department on a regular basis.”

ZENDEJAS: “Do you think lack of good lighting in the park may have something to do with the illegal activity?”

ZICK: “If I had my way, everything would be lit up like a football stadium. We want officers to go through the parks, drive through and make sure no one is hiding in dark corners. The majority of the time, our officers are driving past the parks on their way to other calls. If that park was lit up and they could see it clearly as they drive by, it would be just as good if they actually drove through the park. If there was a way to do so, we would prefer that.”

DEAN: “One of the problems at Gibbs park on 5th street, the neighbors were complaining that there were drug activities going on and other crimes but they didn’t want the lights turned up because they didn’t want to be bothered by it.”

ZICK: “One of the things we have today is LED’s so you don’t get the intrusive brightness like the Halogens put out.”

COMMENTS:

WAPNER: None

SAUCEDO: “Thank you for your presentations. When we are out and around, we see homeless in need. Having information to give out will be so helpful. All of the statistical information you provided was very interesting. We need to have compassion for those in dire straits.”

RILEY: None

OVITT: “The information you shared is very interesting and helpful. One way to avoid is not give the Homeless any cash. Give to the organizations that can help them instead.”

TRINIDAD: “Thank you for your presentations. The efforts are positive things for those I need. I am a Veteran myself. I participated in National Night Out; I did not get many questions from the public. The areas closer to Eastvale had many questions. Keep in mind sharing resources and flyers out in that area to keep people informed.”

BINNEY: “Safety is the number one priority. Everything you all are doing makes me feel enthusiastic. Kudos to you. Anything that I can do as a volunteer please let me know. Also, the 211 cards will be most appreciated Ann.”

ZENDEJAS: “Thank you for the information and taking time to talk to those in need to let them know about the resources available to them.”

NELSEN: “We have the best resources and incredible Council. This year, I was the *Ontario Night Out* Chairperson for our mobile home park. Over 90 participants! It was a miracle that so many people showed up. The Fire Department/Police and Swat teams came by. Residents got to see their vehicles. It was an impressive sight. A big thank you to all of our presenters tonight.”


DEAN: “Thank you for your amazing presentations. I have given out “211” cards to those that appeared to be in need the Anthony Munoz Park. On another note, I personally, along with Marty attended the Luau at Munoz this past month. My granddaughter who drove me to the event was recognized by her Tiny Tot teacher! That was a nice surprise!”

M/S (BINNEY/TRINIDAD) MEETING ADJOURNED IN MEMORY OF MAYOR PAUL EATON, CITY OF MONTCLAIR. THE NEXT RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING WILL BE ON SEPTEMBER 24, 2018 AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT: 7:58 PM


Ann Huisman, Recording Secretary

APPROVED:

Kenneth Dean, Chairperson