

**APPROVED**

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

NO. 14-054

DATE: March 5, 2014

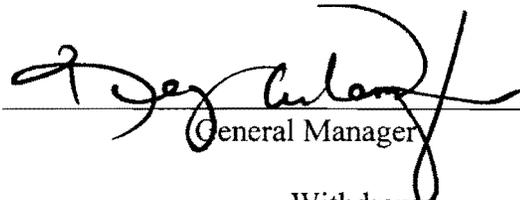
**MAR 05 2014**  
**BOARD OF RECREATION**  
**1 PARK COMMISSIONERS**

C.D. 12

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: OAKRIDGE RESIDENCE - FRIENDS OF OAKRIDGE – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ESTABLISHING ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND RELATIONSHIP TO RESTORE, PRESERVE, AND SUPPORT THE OAKRIDGE RESIDENCE AND ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

R. Adams	_____	*V. Israel	_____
R. Barajas	_____	K. Regan	_____
H. Fujita	_____	N. Williams	_____

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 General Manager

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board:

1. Approve a proposed one-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), substantially in the form on file in the Board Office, between the City of Los Angeles and Friends of Oakridge (Friends), a California 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, setting forth the terms and conditions for Friends' use of park property at Oakridge Residence, a Los Angeles Historical-Cultural Monument, in accordance with the Department of Recreation and Parks' (RAP) Partnership Policy, to fundraise for the preservation and restoration of the Oakridge Residence, subject to the approval of the Mayor and of the City Attorney as to form;
2. Direct the Board Secretary to transmit the proposed MOU, to the Mayor in accordance with Executive Directive No. 3, and concurrently to the City Attorney for review and approval as to form; and
3. Authorize the Board President and Secretary to execute the MOU subsequent to all necessary approvals.

SUMMARY:

The 9.47-acre Oakridge Residence (Oakridge) located at 18650 Devonshire Street, Northridge, CA 91324, is one of the few remaining traces of the San Fernando Valley's popularity as a rural

## REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

PG. 2

NO. 14-054

getaway during the golden age of Hollywood. In 1937, a thoroughbred breeding and training venture was formed among famous actress Barbara Stanwyck, her agent Zeppo Marx of the Marx Brothers, and Kentucky horse trainer Harry S. Hart. They purchased the original 130 acres of general crop land between Devonshire Street and Lassen Street, which they aptly named Marwyck Ranch. Hart designed and managed the thoroughbred operations which included barns, paddocks, crop fields, employee residences and a six-furlong training track. Although both Stanwyck and Marx built residences on the original property, Stanwyck sold her home and adjoining acreage to another notable figure, Jack Oakie, in 1939. Oakie provided the residence its current name, evoking not only his own name but also reflecting upon the numerous oak trees growing on the property. Today the only remaining evidence of the Marwyck Ranch is Stanwyck's original two-story, 6,000 square-foot Tudor style home and adjacent tennis court, swimming pool, and garden.

The Oakridge Tudor style home was designed by famous "architect to the Hollywood stars," Paul R. Williams, and was designated Los Angeles Historical-Cultural Monument No. 484, in March 1990. In 2008, the residence was put on the market by then owners of the property, the University of Southern California (USC). Concerned for the protection of the historic monument and looming sub-division plans, former Los Angeles City Councilmember, Greig Smith, moved to have the City of Los Angeles purchase the residence after the escrow between USC and a real estate developer fell through. The Board allocated a total of \$3,817,962.41 in Quimby funds for the Oakridge project (acquisition and renovation), in anticipation that the Oakridge history and special features would attract visitors from outside the immediate neighborhood, thus leading to the designation as a community park as defined by the Public Recreation Plan (Board Report No. 08-208 and 09-234).

The purchase price of the home and additional adjacent vacant land was \$3,357,686.04. The house was almost completely in its original condition, including the four fireplaces, eight bathrooms, five bedrooms, three-car garage, the original plumbing, electrical, and septic tank. Although the home survived the Northridge earthquake in 1994, the house, outdoor tennis court, pool, and landscaping are in need of repair and refurbishments. RAP has jurisdiction over the property and maintains the exterior as the house is not inhabitable. Since the City's acquisition of the property, RAP established and appointed several community members and stakeholders to the Oakridge Park Advisory Board to make recommendations for the future uses of the property. The Friends of Oakridge, a California 501(c)(3) non-profit group (Friends), was formed in 2011 and has taken the place of the Oakridge Park Advisory Board, which was dissolved in December 2013.

The mission of Friends is to restore, preserve, and support Oakridge and its historical significance. Remaining from the purchase allocation, \$460,276.37 in Quimby funds was allocated to help rehabilitate and improve Oakridge and grounds. Current projects include the renovation of the caretaker quarters, plumbing and electrical work allowing for the immediate

## REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

PG. 3

NO. 14-054

placement of a caretaker for the property. To date, \$210,029.69 has been expended on the residence upgrades and associated consultant reports. RAP expects to fully expend the remaining \$250,246.68, to complete more planned residence upgrades. However, RAP shall rely on Friends to contribute additional funds for the significant needed repairs, and also to provide historic research, exhibit materials, and docent assistance, which RAP is not able to provide.

The term of the proposed MOU is one (1) year from the date of execution. Its purpose is to establish roles, responsibilities, and the relationship between the City and Friends to restore, preserve, and support Oakridge and its historical significance. Friends will be allowed to use the grounds of the Oakridge at no-charge to conduct Friends' activities, including cultivation and fundraising events, tours, and educational events, subject to City approval and in support of Oakridge. Any monies collected will be exclusively used for the preservation, maintenance, restoration of Oakridge. Out of pocket expenses such as staff fees, rental fees, supplies, and catering expenses shall be paid by Friends.

City and Friends will continue to collaborate in support of Oakridge. The MOU enables RAP time to prepare a more formalized Agreement, which contemplates the Friends operating and maintaining Oakridge, and authorizing Friends to potentially generate additional funds by issuing permits to third-party groups for meetings, receptions, and other one-time private events at the residence. In the future, a shared rates and fees schedule similar to that for other historic sites and museums owned and operated by RAP will be developed. Such details will be determined in the future and stipulated in a future Agreement.

Should the proposed MOU be approved, Friends will submit their annual financial statement reflecting Friends' past fiscal year and will maintain appropriate insurance coverage listing the City as an additional insured. They will coordinate all activities at the property with RAP staff.

Staff has discussed the proposed MOU with the Superintendent of the Valley Region, the Principal Grounds Maintenance Supervisor of the Valley Region and Council District 12. Each supports the MOU and concurs with staff's recommendations.

### FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

The proposed MOU will have no adverse impact on RAP's General Fund as operations and program costs associated with Friends' use and support of park property will be paid for by Friends' at no cost to the City.

This report was prepared by Joel Alvarez, Senior Management Analyst and Leslie Richter, Senior Recreation Director I, Partnership Division.