

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER



NO. 15-063

DATE April 01, 2015

C.D. 15

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: MONITOR AVENUE PARK – NAMING MONITOR AVENUE PARK AS WATTS SERENITY PARK

<i>for</i>	R. Adams	<u>                    </u>	V. Israel	<u>                    </u>
	*R. Barajas	<u>                    </u>	K. Regan	<u>                    </u>
	H. Fujita	<u>                    </u>	N. Williams	<u>                    </u>

  
 General Manager

Approved                                           Disapproved                                           Withdrawn                     

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board:

1. Grant approval to re-name Monitor Avenue Park as “Watts Serenity Park”; and,
2. Authorize the installation of appropriate park signage.

SUMMARY:

Monitor Avenue Park is a new one-acre park project located in the Watts neighborhood at 114<sup>th</sup> Street and Monitor Avenue. This is a park that was developed as part of the 50 Parks Initiative in partnership with the Trust for Public Land (TPL), who received grant funding through The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84) for the acquisition and development of the park. The grand opening for the park was held on January 31, 2015. The park: includes a children's playground, adult fitness zone, skate park, public art and landscaping.

TPL has been instrumental in the creation of this park. As part of the creation process, several community meetings were held regarding the design and naming of the park. Though the park had been administratively named Monitor Avenue Park in keeping with the Department of Recreation and Parks’ (Department) policy, the community expressed interest in participating in a park-naming process. After reviewing the criteria in the Board of Recreation and Park Commissioner’s (Board) adopted policy on park naming, several community meetings were held to discuss possible names for the park. Community members were able to suggest park names over a period of time and through a variety of methods. When ‘election day’ ballots were tabulated nearly fifty (50)

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of voters were in favor of naming the new park “Watts Serenity Park”. Please see the attached letter of request detailing the voting process from TPL attached hereto as Exhibit A.

Staff has evaluated the proposed naming and finds it to be in compliance with the Board adopted Naming Policy, Procedures and Guidelines for Parks and Recreational Facilities as the name “Watts Serenity Park” is neutral in connotation and is representative of the surrounding neighborhood.

Department management and staff are in support with the recommendations as set forth by the Department. This proposal was reviewed by the Facility Repair and Maintenance Task Force at March 4th, 2015 meeting at which time was recommended that the proposal be forwarded to the full Commission for consideration.

Staff has determined that the subject project is exempt from provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 11 (1), of the City CEQA guidelines, which provides for placement of signs on park property as accessory structures to recreational facilities.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

There shall be no fiscal impact to the Department for the naming of this park as the park signage will be paid for through the Proposition 84 funds.

This report was prepared by Melinda Gejer, City Planning Associate, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Branch.

## Watts Serenity Park Naming Process Summary

Community Proposed Park Name:  
**Watts Serenity Park**

### *Community Outreach and Naming Process:*

The Proposed Name was decided upon through a community election. The process for this vote began with The Trust for Public Land collecting name suggestions over a three week period. During this time, community members could suggest any park name by submitting it one of three ways: in a ballot box left at Macedonia Baptist Church, one block from the park site, on a Facebook Page set up for the Community Naming Process, or by mail sent to The Trust for Public Land. Flyers with information on the voting process and how to submit name suggestions were distributed throughout the community by key members and partners, including Councilman Joe Buscaino's Office, and were left at integral community spaces such as the local library and schools. In addition, two large banners (five feet by eight feet) were hung at the park site to inform the community of the voting process. All outreach materials were created in both English and Spanish. The Trust for Public Land received a total of twenty-one name suggestions, all of which were brought to the community to vote on.

The Park Name vote was held on Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at Macedonia Baptist Church, and was open for three hours, from 9:00 AM to Noon. Poster boards were placed outside the church to direct voters into the lobby, and a community member walked outreach flyers around the neighborhood the day before, as well as the day of, the election to remind the community to come and vote. Ballots included voting rules, including one vote per ballot and one ballot per person, were prepared in both English and Spanish, and once filled out, were placed inside a locked ballot box.

Ballots were tallied at 12:05 PM, and a total of forty-four votes were cast. No absentee ballots were counted. Out of all the votes, twenty-one were for "Watts Serenity Park". The name with the next highest number of votes was "Harmony Park", with five votes. "Watts Serenity Park" was the clear winner from the community vote process with nearly half the total votes.

### *Nexus/Appropriateness of the name to the site:*

This park means a great deal to the Watts community, and should therefore have a name that reflects their aspirations and desires for the space. The name, "Watts Serenity Park", fits with the need for the community to have a place they can retreat to and reflect in. One community member spoke of what the name meant to him, in relating the feeling of serenity that comes with visiting green spaces such as Griffith Park, filled with trees and plants, and looking forward to the opportunity to have a similar piece of nature in his neighborhood.

### *Funding source for the appropriate park signage:*

Provided by Prop 84 grant that is paying for the park construction.