



# REPORT

## THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO TO THE PARK AND RECREATION BOARD

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DATE ISSUED: June 11, 2018

REPORT NO: 105

ATTENTION: Park and Recreation Board  
Agenda of June 21, 2018

SUBJECT: Re-naming of 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park' (formerly 'Elizabeth Rabbitt Neighborhood Park on Del Mar Mesa').

### SUMMARY

Issue – Should the Park and Recreation Board re-consider its vote to re-name 'Elizabeth Rabbitt Neighborhood Park on Del Mar Mesa' to 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park'?

Staff Recommendation – Consider community input and the naming recommendations of the advisory groups made to date and make a final determination on the name of the neighborhood park. Staff will consider the Park Board action of the June 21, 2018 meeting to be final to either:

1. Name the neighborhood park 'Elizabeth Rabbitt Neighborhood Park on Del Mar Mesa', or;
2. Name the neighborhood park 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park.'

Other Recommendations – The following groups have recently reviewed and considered the proposed action.

- On November 26, 2017, the motion to return the Park to the name of 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park' failed to get a second. Thus, no action was taken to recommend approval to re-name 'Elizabeth Rabbitt Neighborhood Park on Del Mar Mesa' at the Ocean Air Recreation Council. (Minutes Attached, Attachment 1)
- On January 3, 2018, the Community Parks I Area Committee voted 7-0 (with 6 abstentions) to deny recommending the request to re-name 'Elizabeth Rabbitt Neighborhood Park' on Del Mar Mesa to 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park'. (Minutes Attached, Attachment 2)

- On April 19, 2018, the Park Board voted 3-3, with the chair voting to break the tie, to re-name 'Elizabeth Rabbitt Neighborhood Park on Del Mar Mesa' to 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park'. (Draft Minutes Attached, Attachment 3)

Fiscal Impact – None. Signs with both names have been ordered and paid for within the park's construction budget; the action considered will not require any additional expense.

Water and Energy Conservation Status – The proposed action would not have an impact on any water and energy conservation guidelines contained in Council Policy 200-14.

Environmental – No Impact.

## BACKGROUND

Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park (as it is currently named based on the action of April 19, 2018) is located south of State Route 56 on Carmel Mountain Road at the corner of Del Vino Court and Little McGonigle Ranch Road. It is on top of the Del Mar Mesa and is adjacent to the Duck Pond Development and the Del Mar Mesa Reserve. This 3.76 acre passive use park was opened to the public on May 11, 2018 and is maintained by the City of San Diego Parks and Recreation Department's Community Parks I Division. Park amenities include: a children's play area, picnic areas, open turf, a half-court basketball facility, a comfort station/restroom, a parking lot and accommodations for equestrians using the Del Mar Mesa trail system.

The original request to re-name the park from its original name of 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park' to 'Elizabeth Rabbitt Neighborhood Park on Del Mar Mesa' was initiated by Dan O'Rourke, neighbor of Ms. Rabbitt and a Del Mar Mesa Resident. The naming was meant to recognize the numerous contributions made by Ms. Elizabeth Rabbitt to the Del Mar Mesa community.

On May 21, 2018, Parks and Recreation Department Director Herman Parker requested that the Park Board re-hear the naming item based on feedback from some residents in the Del Mar Mesa community regarding the April 19, 2018 Park Board decision. The residents indicated they felt there was mis-information presented about the naming process for this park. In the spirit of transparency and for the item to be fully vetted by the public and Park Board,

the request for the Park Board to re-hear the item was approved and the item was placed on the June 21, 2018 agenda.

Following is a history of the park's development and naming process:

- **September 2004:** The Del Mar Mesa Planning Group (DMM Planning Group) authorized a letter of support to the Carmel Valley Recreation Council (CVRC) for the proposed General Development Plan (GDP) for Del Mar Mesa Park. At this time, the CVRC was the recreation advisory body for this area. The Ocean Air Recreation Council had not yet formed. The GDP was presented to the planning group as an information item; the planning group is not the recognized advisory body for park development processes, unless there is no recreation council.
- **October 5, 2004:** The CVRC voted unanimously to approve the GDP of Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park.
- **November 3, 2004:** The Community Parks I Area Committee voted unanimously to approve the GDP for Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park.
- **February 17, 2005:** The Park Board approved the GDP for Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park.
  - There was no specific recommendation for the park name in the Park Board report. When the GDP was approved, the name of the park was listed as 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park', as that was the name of the community. However, the Park Board report did note that the signage information was not included in the GDP "because the community may wish to rename the park." (report attached, Attachment 4)
- **2005-2006:** Construction documents prepared.
- **2006-2013:** Project waiting for funding for construction.
- **2012:** Ocean Air Recreation Council (OARC) formed. Del Mar Mesa (future) Park placed within the OARC boundaries.
- **September 2013:** Project transferred to Public Works Department to initiate construction.
- **August 2016:** Groundbreaking event/start of construction.
- **October 2016:** Email from Dan O'Rourke to Council District 1 to propose naming in honor of Elizabeth Rabbitt.
  - Mr. O'Rourke also sent an email to the DMM Planning Board notifying them of the intent to name park after Ms. Rabbitt and indicating that he would follow the Park and Recreation outlined process. (Email string attached, Attachment 5)

- **November 15, 2016:** The OARC voted unanimously recommending approval to name Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park to "Elizabeth Rabbitt Park". (Minutes attached, Attachment 6)
- **March 1, 2017:** Community Parks I Area Committee voted unanimously to change the name of Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park to "Elizabeth Rabbitt Neighborhood Park". (Minutes attached, Attachment 7)
- **April 2017:** City Council adopted Policy 900-20: Naming of City Assets (attached, Attachment 8)
- **May 18, 2017:** The Park and Recreation Board approved, on consent, the re-naming of 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park' to 'Elizabeth Rabbitt Neighborhood Park on Del Mar Mesa'. (Minutes attached, Attachment 9)
- **October 2017:** A letter (dated October 19<sup>th</sup>) from the DMM Planning Group was sent to Director Parker stating that the park re-naming process was flawed. (Attached, Attachment 10) Gary Levitt of the DMM Planning Board also made presentation to Park Board at their meeting on October 19th.
- **November 13, 2017:** Staff sent a response letter to the DMM Planning Board regarding the naming process; the letter was also presented to Park Board at its November 16, 2017 meeting. (Attached, Attachment 11)
- **November 26, 2017:** The DMM Planning Board requested that the OARC return the park name to 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park'. The motion failed to get a second. No action taken to re-name park 'Elizabeth Rabbitt Neighborhood Park on Del Mar Mesa'.
- **January 3, 2018:** Community Parks I Area Committee voted 7-0 (6 abstentions) to deny the request to change the park name from 'Elizabeth Rabbitt Neighborhood Park on Del Mar Mesa' to 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park'.
- **April 17, 2018:** The Park Board voted 3-3, with Chair Kinney making deciding vote to return the name to 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park'.

If the Park Board returns the name of the park to Elizabeth Rabbitt Neighborhood Park on Del Mar Mesa, there will not be any need to change the signage at the park site with the new name. The signage for the name 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park' was ordered after the April 19, 2018 Park Board action, but has not yet been installed at the park site. All signs were ordered at the expense of the construction project.

#### FURTHER DISCUSSION

As stated in the original naming effort in honor of Elizabeth Rabbitt, Ms. Rabbitt is the former CEO of Sharp Medical Group and is known as one of the

early pioneers of the Del Mar Mesa Community. When she first moved to Del Mar Mesa, there were just six homes with dirt roads. Now that number exceeds 160 residents and the roads are paved. When development started in 2001, Elizabeth accepted her new neighbors with open arms; her farm, "Hooterville", became a central meeting point in the Del Mar Mesa Community. The proponents stated that Ms. Rabbitt epitomized the meaning of living 'on the Mesa'; these factors were central to the effort to name the park in honor of Ms. Rabbitt. As stated above, the request to name the Park in honor of Ms. Rabbitt was first approved by the Park Board in May of 2017.

The process followed by all of the proponents in their efforts to name the park has followed the process outlined by Council Policy 900-20 "Naming of City Assets" Policy and the attendant Park Board policy.

#### OPTIONS

Take no action. This would result in the name of the park remaining 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park'.

Take an action to re-name 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park' to 'Elizabeth Rabbitt Neighborhood Park on Del Mar Mesa'.

With either determination, Parks and Recreation staff will consider this to be the final naming action for this park.

Respectfully submitted,



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Herman D. Parker,  
Parks and Recreation Director

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Prepared by: Kathryn Ruiz,  
Deputy Director  
Community Parks I Division

#### Attachments:

1. Minutes for the Ocean Air Recreation Council meeting held November 26, 2017
2. Minutes for the Community Parks I Area Committee meeting held January 3, 2018
3. Minutes for the Park Board meeting held April 19, 2018

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Re-naming of 'Del Mar Mesa Neighborhood Park' (formerly 'Elizabeth Rabbitt Neighborhood Park on Del Mar Mesa').

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4. Park Board report dated February 7, 2005
5. October 2016 Email String
6. Minutes for the Ocean Air Recreation Council meeting held November 15, 2016
7. Minutes for the Community Parks I Area Committee meeting held March 1, 2017
8. City of San Diego Council Policy 900-20 – "Naming of City Assets" (with attendant Park Board Policy)
9. Minutes for the Park Board meeting held May 18, 2017
10. Letter from the DMM Planning Board to Herman Parker, dated October 19, 2017
11. Letter from Herman Parker to the DMM Planning Board, dated November 13, 2017

cc: Council District 1 Office