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Title: Approve the Mayor's Appointments to the Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission established by Measure P

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REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

April 28, 2021

FROM: JERRY DYER, Mayor
Office of the Mayor & City Manager Department

BY: MATTHEW GRUNDY, Deputy Mayor
Office of the Mayor & City Manager Department

SUBJECT

Approve the Mayor's Appointments to the Parks, Arts and Recreation Commission established by Measure P

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend Council confirm nine (9) appointments to the Parks, Recreation, and Arts Commission pursuant to the mandates of the Measure P Initiative.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This appointment is a requirement of the City of Fresno Resolution No. 2018-188, section 7-1409(a) (see attached), and as amended (Ordinance No 2021-005, see attached), whereas a new Parks, Recreation and Arts Commission consisting of nine (9) members was created and to be appointed by the Mayor, with approval by the City Council in accordance with Article IX of the Fresno City Charter.

Appointments recommended are as follows: Jon Dohlin (resides in District 3); Maiyer Vang (resides in District 4); Dr. Francine Oputa (resides in District 7); Kimberly McCoy (resides in District 1); Scott Miller (resides in District 1); Mona Cummings (resides in District 6); Harman Singh (resides in District 2); Jose Leon Barraza (resides in District 5); and Sarah Parkes (resides in District 6).

BACKGROUND

On July 18, 2018, the City Clerk received an Initiative Petition proposing the Fresno Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Tax. The Fresno Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks tax ordinance called for a 3/8 percent increase in sales and use tax, estimated to generate \$37.5 million annually for 30 years. The resolution was adopted by City Council at a regular meeting held on the August 9th 2018. On October 12, 2018 resolution No. 2018-188 was ratified.

Per section 7-1419 (3), the measure would be effective upon determination by the City Clerk that it had been approved by two thirds of the electorate, voting in a regularly scheduled election. While receiving a majority vote (51.17%), the measure failed as it did not receive two-thirds of the votes as a result of the November 6th 2018, general election. Subsequently, the issue of whether a two-thirds majority or a simple majority vote was needed to pass the measure went through the court process, including appeals. On February 18th, 2021, the Fifth District Court of Appeal's determined a voter-initiated special sales tax measure required only a simple majority vote to pass. Thereafter, the Council certified and declared Measure P passed (Resolution 2021-010, see attached). The matter was appealed to the California Supreme Court which denied review, therefore the measure was deemed passed with the majority vote.

Under §7-1409(a), Fiscal Oversight and Budget Accountability, a new Parks, Recreation and Arts Commission consisting of nine (9) members was created, to be appointed by the Mayor with approval by the City Council in accordance with Article IX of the Fresno City Charter. Section 7-1409(c) requires membership of the commission reflect the 'cultural, demographic, and geographic diversity of the City of Fresno, with at least one-third of the Commissioners residing in highest need-areas' as defined in Section 7-1408, using Cal Enviroscreen 3.0. Furthermore, Section 7-1409(d) stipulates the Commission must include members with demonstrated expertise in the areas of:

1. Community parks and open space management;
2. Youth development or recreation programs;
3. Trails and San Joaquin River Parkway development an programming; and/or
4. Arts and culture programming

After conducting a thorough screening process, and ensuring compliance with the aforementioned requirements, the administration recommends the following appointments:

Jon Dohlin (District 3): Mr. Dohlin serves as the CEO of the Fresno Chaffee Zoo. Mr. Dohlin previously held managerial positions in the Bronx Zoo, NYC Aquarium, and other NYC parks. Although he has only been in Fresno for the last 2 months, he is very experienced in the areas of community parks, open space management, youth programs, and cultural programs. He is passionate that the parks are "the people's parks", and believes all parks should be accessible. He currently serves on the Board of Directors of Storyland/Playland. In his current position, he is required to review the use of and application of Measure Z monies, and has a good grasp of the issues presented to a Commission which has the responsibility of oversight of taxpayer dollars.

Maiyer Vang (District 4): Ms. Vang is very active in the preservation of Laotian culture and Laotian arts. In her current employment at FUSD, she oversees the Cultural Diversity programs, and has interest in ensuring all cultures are represented in arts and cultural programming. She is very involved in community activities and believes parks are community “meeting places”, and need to be nurtured. Her experience and passion is in cultural arts and establishing programming that meets the needs of the youth, and that preserves cultures and cultural arts.

Dr. Francine Oputa (District 7): Dr. Oputa has been a Fresno resident for 42 years, and just retired from CSUF. She remembers using neighborhood parks in her youth and her vision is to close the gap of the concept of "the tale of two cities" within Fresno. She believes in equality and equity which includes equal access to recreational activities and programs, arts, and cultural opportunities for all Fresno citizens. Her passions and expertise are in youth development, youth programs, and arts/cultural programming. She strongly believes in maintaining the City's existing parks, and upgrading the older City parks. She personally has used her own home as a quasi park for the neighborhood children as she has the only pool in the neighborhood during what she calls 'fun Fridays.'

Kimberly McCoy (District 1): Ms. McCoy is a lifelong resident of SW Fresno. She is a grass roots community organizer who worked on the Measure P Initiative, and provided community input for the Parks Master Plan. She has extensive experience working on issues affecting Fresno parks, including the BMX Park, Romain Park, Mary Ella Brown and Camp Pashayan. Her experience is in the areas of community parks, and youth and recreational programs.

Scott Miller (District 1): Mr. Miller is the owner of Gazebo Gardens. He has a passion for community green space and equal access to green space. He has turned Gazebo Gardens into the neighborhood park and allows free access to everyone. He has a passion for youth, including youth development and programs. His areas of expertise include maintenance of community parks and green space, irrigation, plant species, and recreational programs. In his community work, he has had interaction with the San Joaquin Parkway Board and is aware of their mission and work on the preservation of the river.

Mona Cummings (District 6): Ms. Cummings' is the executive director of Tree Fresno. Her varied experiences utilize her biology degree and include working in forestry, working for environmental causes and educational opportunities for youth in Zimbabwe, and partnering with the Fresno Grizzlies to advance the Farm Grown initiative. In her current work with Tree Fresno she has interacted with the San Joaquin Parkway. She is passionate that community parks should meet community needs, with equal access for all citizens. She has expertise in community parks, green space, trails, and the development of the San Joaquin River Parkway.

Harman Singh (District 2): Mr. Singh is a current UCLA graduate and is working in the rental assistance program. Mr. Singh has been interested in the Measure P Initiative since 2018. He participated in youth programs in the Fresno parks as a youth, and has a passion to develop youth programs in the parks. He is a member of the Jakara Movement that strives to preserve cultural programs that represent the diverse cultures in Fresno. Mr. Singh has passion for and would represent the “youth” viewpoint in the areas of youth development and recreational programming.

Jose Leon Barraza (District 5): Mr. Barraza is the head of SEFCEDA. He previously worked for the County of Fresno, and provided oversight for the budgets for County departments, including public works and parks. He has extensive experience in developing capital projects and calculating

operating expenses for County projects. Mr. Barraza has a passion for youth development and youth programs, including aligning participation in sports with excellence in schools. Mr. Barraza was involved in the development of the City's Parks Master Plan and has a strong belief that parks should be accessible to all citizens, and the programs should include everyone. While involved in the development of the Parks Master Plan, Mr. Barraza partnered with the Fresno Arts Council to insure the Plan included and represented the diverse cultures in Fresno.

Sarah Parkes (District 6) Ms. Parkes has been employed by the San Joaquin River Parkway Trust for the last 15 years. She is a lifelong Fresno resident who spent much of her youth walking to and enjoying Cary Park. She worked with the Measure P focus group to form the parameters of the Ordinance, and on signature gathering for the Measure P Initiative. Her vision for the City's parks includes creating useable green space, and creating a mosaic of trails that link together all of the City Parks. In her work at the Parkway, she developed youth summer programs and designed the learning materials for the programs. She is passionate about creating an operations and maintenance plan for the City's existing parks, insuring the use of Measure P dollars complies with the provisions of the Ordinance, and that these decisions are communicated in a transparent manner to the community. Her expertise is in trail development, youth programming, and the San Joaquin River Parkway Trust.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

Not applicable.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

Not applicable.

FISCAL IMPACT

No impact

Attachments:

- Resolution No 2018-118
- Ordinance No 2021-005
- Ordinance No 2021-010