

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO
BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION

BOARD MEMBERS

Anthony Serna, President
Rick Rodriguez, Vice President
Valda Lewis, Secretary
Gilberto Cantu, Member
Eugene Austin, Member

Regular Meeting Minutes
(Via Zoom Conference)
Tuesday, October 13, 2020 @ 5:00 p.m.

Reported for Fissinger & Associates
By: Lisa Pena

CALL TO ORDER: 5:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

ROLL CALL: Present: Anthony Serna, Eugene Austin, Rick
Rodriguez.
Present Via Zoom: Valda Lewis, Gilberto
Cantu.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:

Approval of Minutes: September 22, 2020

Motion to approve September 22, 2020 Meeting Minutes made by
Rick Rodriguez. Second by Eugene Austin.

Questions/Comments: None.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

Approval & Signing of Payroll: October 2, 2020

Motion to approve October 2, 2020 Payroll made by Rick
Rodriguez. Second by Eugene Austin.

Questions/Comments: None.

Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
Opposed: None Motion Carries.

1 Approval & Signing of Warrant: 101320PB \$110,785.12.

2 Motion to approve Warrant Number 101320PB made by Rick
Rodriguez. Second by Eugene Austin.

3 Questions/Comments: None.

4 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
5 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

6 OLD BUSINESS: None.

7 NEW BUSINESS:

8 MR. SERNA: We'll move on to New Business. Vanessa
Hernandez-Orange, Director of Parks & Recreation.

9
10 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Good evening. Today the first
item of New Business is that I would like to have approval
for the Past Due Invoice of Fissinger & Associates.

11
12 And they are actually our reporter. And there was
an invoice that is actually three months behind. And we'd
just like to have approval to move forward with paying for
this invoice.

13
14 Motion to approve Fissinger & Associates Past Due Invoice
made by Rick Rodriguez. Second by Valda Lewis.

15 Questions/Comments: None.

16 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
17 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

18 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: The next item we have is a
19 request from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Ada Kappa Omega
Chapter. And they would like to place an honorary bench at
Washington Park.

20
21 And basically they are a Sorority that has given
back to the City of East Chicago for many years. The Chapter
Members are all from East Chicago.

22
23 And in their letter that you have enclosed in your
packet they also at one point donated to Sunnyside Park a
tree.

24
25 On the phone we have Miss Catherine Brantley who is
the Chairman of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Ada Kappa Omega

1 Chapter as well as President Cynthia Warner-Lowe.

2 They would like to say something if that's okay.

3 MR. SERNA: Sure. Go ahead. Who would like to speak
4 first? Just identify yourself.

5 MS. BRANTLEY: I will begin. This is Catherine
6 Brantley. And then I will let our President add any comments
7 and conclude with any additional information she would like
8 to provide. And then we'd open for questions if any of the
9 Council Members have questions regarding our request.

10 I want to start by thanking you, particularly
11 Mrs. Orange, for giving us the opportunity to present our
12 request before you today.

13 As she stated our Chapter celebrates its 60th
14 Anniversary in East Chicago this year. Most of the original
15 Chapter Members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Chapter
16 that was first started in East Chicago were all East Chicago
17 natives. Many of them have passed on. There are only two
18 living members who are remaining.

19 In order for us to memorialize our 60th Anniversary
20 we wanted to have some kind of permanent memorial in the City
21 of East Chicago that would acknowledge the fact that we
22 started the Chapter here and we've existed for 60 years
23 contributing to the community.

24 In those 60 years we've given over \$150,000 in
25 scholarships to high school students. We've engaged in a
number of social and educational projects throughout the
City.

Most of our Members were educators, principals and
social workers in the City throughout East Chicago and
Hammond.

And one of our target activities and impetus that
we have in our Sorority is preserving the environment. We
looked around the City and all of the improvements that the
Park Department is doing to beautify the City. We wanted to
find a way that we could compliment and support that at the
same time with providing a memorial to our Members.

As Mrs. Orange already stated we did donate a tree
and plant in Sunnyside a few years ago. We wanted to
continue in that same line and possibly receive approval to

1 place a bench in Washington Park.

2 The bench of course and any of the placement of
3 that bench would be closely coordinated and supervised by
4 your Park Department. We would work in conjunction with them
5 both on the selection and the placement.

6 And the only thing we would want to do on that
7 bench is install a plaque that would actually indicate the
8 name, the purpose of the plaque and in some way honor our
9 Members.

10 I'd like to turn it over to our President now,
11 Mrs. Cynthia Warner-Lowe.

12 MS. WARNER-LOWE: Good evening, Board. And I too want
13 to thank the Board and Miss Orange for giving us this
14 opportunity. I don't want to take up a lot of your time
15 because Miss Brantley has gotten it together as we wanted to
16 say.

17 As she said we are 60 years old as of February 20.
18 And some of the Members she didn't mention. But I am sure if
19 I threw some of these names out you would know.

20 Patty Leonard, Dorothy Henderson, Thelma
21 Coleman-Morris, Ossi Friend, Mosel Rivers, Mary Chambers, all
22 these individuals are Members of our Sorority and Members of
23 East Chicago.

24 And as Miss Brantley said we really would like to
25 do something to say, hey, this is 60 years of service to East
Chicago and also help East Chicago with their beautification
program that they're doing.

Thank you very much.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Thank you to the both of you.

MR. SERNA: Thank you.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Mr. President.

MR. SERNA: Yes, sir, Mr. Rodriguez.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: We had this before about donating a
bench. It was denied. Do you remember that?

MR. SERNA: Yes. Do we have legal counsel? I have a

1 question, Attorney Dawkins. We have another item on the
2 agenda as well in regards to memorializing a person as well
as this one, a Sorority or an organization.

3 My question is when we start to do this are we able
4 to do this legally? I've seen it at many parks, different
parks benches with plaques on them usually in memory of an
individual that has passed.

5
6 And we're also going to have a request right after
this item for planting a tree. And we've done planting of
trees.

7
8 But is there anything legally that we would have to
worry about once we start doing this because if we were to
9 approve this there's going to be more organizations to
follow. And so are we okay in allowing this to happen in the
parks?

10
11 MS. DAWKINS: Well, the Board had decided previously to
not allow it because the person that wanted to put a memorial
12 her child was killed in the park. So at that time you
decided you did not want to go forward with any memorials.

13 I think we had a resolution. I prepared a
14 resolution. But the resolution was giving guidelines on how
to permit it to be done. But it would have to have certain
limitations.

15
16 And I think the Board did not want to go that route
if I recall from the last time it was presented. So we
17 didn't go forward with the resolution because that one
request that came in was denied. We didn't want to leave it
18 open to any other people whose children were killed by gangs
or anything like that to have memorials.

19 So this is a little different. I think it still
would be left up to the Board.

20
21 If you want to revisit it, I can provide the
initial resolution that I had presented previously. And you
22 can decide how you want to streamline anyone that wants to do
what the Sorority has requested.

23 MR. SERNA: Could you have that resolution or at least a
24 draft of it if you already have it ready for the next Board
Meeting?

25 MS. DAWKINS: I have it. I was trying to pull it up

1 today. But I was not able to do it. But I know that I do
2 have the resolution on my computer. And I can print it out.

3 At that time it was suggested. I prepared it at
4 the suggestion so that we would not have to tell everybody
5 no. But at this point I do recall us telling someone else
6 no.

7 MR. SERNA: Mr. Rodriguez.

8 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Counsel, are you going to revise that
9 resolution?

10 MS. DAWKINS: I mean I can revise it based on this
11 request if this is something that the Board is interesting in
12 doing. So I don't have a problem with doing it.

13 I think the whole point is to have something in
14 writing by the Board stating what the perimeters will be. So
15 in the future if you have to say no to someone you have
16 something to support that if you're interested in going
17 forward on the presentation today.

18 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes. Because we just don't want to open
19 the door for gang members to put a memorial out there for
20 their gang members that got killed in the park or something
21 like that. So that's why we denied it the first time.

22 MR. SERNA: But also, counselor, there's two places that
23 I've been to where I've seen benches and memorials. One is
24 Whiting and the other one is in Michigan. I believe it was
25 St. Joseph. I believe it's St. Joseph. So I think that
other places do it.

But I think we have to have a process or we have to
have the ability. For example today what we have on the
agenda, we have two requests. One from a Sorority that's
rooted, got a lot of history here in East Chicago and another
one from a tragedy of a young person. And I don't know if
it's gang related or not.

But I think that they're two different things. But
at the same time the sentiment is there where a member of the
community or members of the community would like to have
somewhere memorialized in the parks and we have plenty of
benches and we have plenty of trees.

So on one half of my brain it says we've got a lot
of trees and a lot of benches. But the other half of my

1 brain says we have to be careful.

2 So we have to have some kind of guidance. So maybe
3 if we have that resolution to review and we can talk about it
4 and maybe vote on it at our next meeting.

5 Do you think you can have that for us at our next
6 meeting?

7 MS. DAWKINS: Certainly.

8 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: And I think, Miss Dawkins, one
9 thing that I think I'm hearing from the Board is there's two
10 different words that are being used in this, commemorative
11 which is what the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority is trying to do
12 is give a commemorative bench. And then the other is a
13 memorialization or memorial.

14 And I think that's where the concern more so lies
15 because of the fact that we've had many tragedies and deaths
16 and are we going to memorialize something that is negative.
17 That's what I am hearing and correct me if I'm wrong, Board.

18 But I think when we discuss the resolution we
19 probably need to kind of define those words a little bit more
20 and see if there's a separation of both.

21 Board, I don't know how you guys are feeling with
22 that.

23 MR. RODRIGUEZ: I understand. That's why I wanted to
24 bring it up to the counselor to see if we're going to revise
25 it, put something like that in there because we can't have
everybody that wants it.

MR. SERNA: Because otherwise it would be like our own
judgment. And I don't want to go by ours because we might
think everything is fine. Then we'll find out a year later
you approved something that -- so if we did have some kind of
a resolution or guidelines.

And I do like what I hear in the explanation from
Alpha Kappa Alpha that they're looking for a plaque on a
bench and they would work closely with you. That was one of
my concerns.

But if they're working directly with the Park
Department, it's not going to be something that's going to be
totally different from every other bench. So everything is

1 going to be in taste and everything like that.

2 I think for me I think it's time that we consider
3 like you said the difference between memorialization and
4 commemorating something, that may be we look to if there's a
5 way that we can commemorate organizations with I think
6 benches. And plaques on benches are nice.

7 As a matter of fact at Wicker Park they just
8 dedicated a First Responders Memorial. But they have
9 different levels. They have like a platinum level. You can
10 buy a whole bench or you can buy plaques even down to bricks
11 that you can buy.

12 So I think not so much for a fundraiser for us.
13 But I think that we do have beautiful parks. And I think
14 that it's something that I think as a Board that we should
15 start considering for commemoration and even for
16 memorialization because that's what I've seen at other parks
17 in Michigan and in Whiting, Indiana.

18 They're memorializing family members or someone
19 that passed way. And it's there. All the plaques are the
20 same size. And they all go on the benches. I think it's
21 something that we should start looking to.

22 Mr. Austin, did you have a question or a comment?

23 MR. AUSTIN: Yes. I'd like to have one statement on
24 that. I would like to know what would you all like to have.
25 Because see if we go forth and do this and maybe they don't
like what we set up for them, one thing they would do they
would just pull out. And now we're stuck with what we
thought they wanted.

26 So I would like for them -- I think the Board would
27 go along with this. You all bring us a proposal of what you
28 all would like to have. Then we would go through the legal
29 part to see could we perform or set up a system so that you
30 all could have what you want because we wouldn't be
31 disappointed.

32 We would sit down and put all the legal stuff
33 together while you all would not say that we did something
34 that you all didn't like.

35 MR. SERNA: I understand. I understand what you're
saying.

1 MR. RODRIGUEZ: It's got to be uniform.

2 MR. SERNA: I understand what you're saying. And I
3 think the Sorority addressed that when they said that they
4 would work closely with the Park Department. And they
5 basically said with the direction of the Park Department
6 which would be the Director, currently Vanessa.

7 So I am not so much worried about it. If there's
8 good cooperation, any organization, this Sorority or any
9 organization, would appreciate being able to put -- I mean I
10 belong to a bunch of organizations. And any organization
11 would appreciate being able to commemorate something on a
12 bench in a park.

13 So I don't think they would be too demanding. I
14 don't think they would be disappointed. I think as long as
15 they know the rules going into the game. As long as you know
16 what to expect.

17 I just feel like we need to consider. I think we
18 need to really seriously consider this and doing things like
19 this because we've got tons of benches. We've got a ton of
20 trees.

21 Like I said the next item has to do with planting a
22 tree. So I think these are things that we need to consider.

23 Attorney Dawkins, if you could have that for us in
24 our packet before next meeting, then we can discuss it.
25 Because in the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority letter they did say
they wanted to know as soon as possible. So if we can have
that soon, Attorney Dawkins.

MS. DAWKINS: I will have it for the next meeting. I'll
try to get it out as soon as possible in fact.

But when I looked over the agenda and I saw the
request, I was trying to find it before the meeting. But I
could not. When I saw what the request was for because I
remember the incident and I remember the resolution. But it
wasn't needed because of the vote that the Board had made.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Mr. President.

MR. SERNA: Go ahead, Rick.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Counselor, if you're going to revise it,
can you put on there that if it gets vandalized the Park

1 Department is not liable.

2 MS. DAWKINS: Mr. President, posing that question to me?

3 MR. SERNA: Yes.

4 MS. DAWKINS: I didn't hear it clearly. I'm sorry.

5 MR. RODRIGUEZ: If you're going to revise that policy,
6 can you put on there that if it gets vandalized the Park
7 Department is not liable for it?

8 MS. DAWKINS: For certain. We didn't have the language
9 to that effect. But I think once we make a resolution and if
10 we want to have some kind of liability issue resolved the
11 President or whoever would sign off for the Sorority or
12 whoever would be granted an opportunity to put a bench in any
13 of the parks, they could sign off on that.

14 That would be separate from the resolution. But
15 that would be a part of the Park Board records.

16 MR. RODRIGUEZ: So we're just doing this for
17 organizations then, not individuals?

18 MR. SERNA: I think we need to consider individuals as
19 well. I would start with organizations because for example
20 this Sorority like I said being as rooted as it is in East
21 Chicago you're probably not going to have any issues.

22 What I would see happening is that every other
23 organization is now going to say, well, I want two benches or
24 I want a monument.

25 If we have the rules in place that this is open for
organizations and things like that that everybody is getting
the same thing because that's what I've learned because I was
part of the initial committee that started that in Wicker
Park for the fallen heroes.

And it was a fundraiser. They needed to pay for
it. So that's why they did a platinum 5,000.

We don't need to do that here. So it could be more
uniform. We don't want anybody to be offended if we do it
with this Sorority, get a plaque, and then the next
fraternity they get a monument or something bigger. We would
have to make it fair. That's all.

1 So I think we need to have those rules of the game
2 like written out because I think there's so many
3 opportunities to recognize great organizations like this
4 Sorority Alpha Kappa Alpha and other organizations.

5 But also too when we're talking about human beings
6 and individuals someone might want to dedicate a tree. We
7 know ourselves from being involved in little league that
8 sometimes you name fields like that field in East Chicago was
9 named after Little Joe Zarnak because he was always taking
10 care of that field. So the league named it after him, not
11 necessarily the Park Department.

12 So these are the kind of things that I think we
13 need to look at both individuals and organizations. But I
14 would just ask that if we could have something in writing
15 that is fair and streamline.

16 That is a good point you brought up about
17 liabilities.

18 If somebody tears up the bench, would the Park have
19 to pay? Those kind of questions do have to be answered
20 beforehand.

21 Miss Lewis, did you have a question?

22 MS. LEWIS: Yes, I do. Will the Sorority be providing a
23 bench and a plaque or just a plaque to go on an existing
24 bench?

25 MR. SERNA: Vanessa, can you answer that?

 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Yes. So when I spoke to
Miss Brantley, the conversation was basically they would
provide everything that is included for the bench to be put
inside Washington Park.

 So in other words it will be the bench. Usually
you have to put the concrete down so the bench could stay on
there so no one is able to move it. All that would be part
of what the Sorority would bring including the plaque.

 MR. SERNA: We're asking them to provide the bench and
the concrete?

 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: It's in the letter that they
would provide everything that was needed in order to bring it
in, yes.

1 MR. SERNA: Now, to me here's the problem with that. So
2 it's like anything. You get three quotes. That's what we
3 have to do with the City. We have to get three quotes. So
4 you go to the lowest quote on laying the concrete and it
5 sinks in a year. You know what I mean?

6 MR. RODRIGUEZ: They would be liable for it.

7 MR. SERNA: What I am saying is that I don't know if
8 that's necessarily fair that they have to come up with
9 everything.

10 Don't we have enough park benches where we can just
11 allow them to put a plaque. I mean they would save a lot of
12 money.

13 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I mean we could further discuss
14 that if they would like to use one of the park benches that
15 are out there.

16 Washington Park has one of the older park benches.
17 We just recently put new ones out there. Those have been
18 there for a decent amount of time.

19 I don't know if maybe you want to do the green that
20 we have out with the pink to recognize their colors on the
21 side. I'm not sure.

22 MR. SERNA: It's going to be a color? It's going to be
23 a colored one?

24 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: We haven't discussed that all the
25 way. But what was told was we were going to work together to
26 decide what was going to be on that bench as long as it was
27 approved.

28 MR. SERNA: That's what I'm getting at. The other
29 benches that I've seen like at Whiting they're all the same
30 benches. The only thing that's different is the writing on
31 the plaque.

32 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I've seen those. I've seen it
33 where it's different where I've seen sororities actually have
34 like their logo on the benches. Again that's something we
35 have to discuss.

36 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Miss Orange, aren't these the different
37 benches that they could in the middle --

1 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: They definitely can. The ones
2 that we have in the parks right now, yes, they can. Again
3 that's something that we would have to further discuss. I
4 don't know if they would want something brand-new.

5 Me personally I would like to have something right
6 in front of the zoo because we don't have anything there.
7 That's a big showpiece from Washington Park. I thought that
8 would be nice in that area. But that's just my thought.
9 Again that's something we would have to discuss with them.

10 MR. SERNA: There's definitely going to have to be some
11 discussion. All I was thinking was what I seen which is
12 uniform benches and the plaques are different with different
13 writing.

14 If you're talking like the colors of -- so there
15 could be an organization that, I don't know, their colors are
16 red, white and blue. So it would look like a red, white and
17 blue bench. I see what you're saying.

18 That's what you're thinking, Vanessa? You're
19 thinking something like along those lines?

20 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Well, the only reason I thought
21 about Washington Park and the possibility of allowing them to
22 use their colors is because that park right there actually
23 has green. It's not the ivy green. But it's the green. And
24 on the sides it's a different color. It's like a cream. So
25 I'm thinking maybe we could have done the pink there. Again
something that we can discuss.

Obviously that would more expensive on them, not on
us. It's all up to them.

MR. SERNA: Right. Right. But not just the cost, it's
the look. You know what I mean.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: True.

MR. SERNA: The look has to work.

MR. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: To work.

MR. SERNA: Exactly. Rick, do you have something else?

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Yes. If we're going to do memorials for
individuals, Miss Orange, can you work with the Police
Department to see if this person was a gang member?

1 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I have already. From the
2 situation that happened, yes, I have. I can. I checked into
3 this already because I know that me personally I wouldn't
4 want to memorialize something that has some type of gang
5 relation afterwards.

6 I mean I want to make sure that my parks are safe,
7 our parks are safe, our community parks are safe. So when it
8 comes to the death of someone's anniversary I don't want
9 everyone kind of showing up and having something like that
10 happen where any type of retaliation could happen.

11 Our parks are supposed to be safe. That's what
12 it's for. I checked into the situation. I checked into the
13 names.

14 Again this is new to me. I checked to see if there
15 was absolutely anything that I could go off of. And there
16 was no -- all I was told is have someone give me a request of
17 what was needed and what they would like. And that's what I
18 did. And I'm just bringing it before you guys.

19 MS. SERNA: Well, I think definitely we'll have to have
20 more discussion. And we'll start with the resolution from
21 counsel for next our meeting. And then we're going to have
22 to talk.

23 Obviously what I had in my head is different than
24 what you had in your head and which the Sorority might have
25 something totally different.

I do appreciate that they're saying, hey, we're
working with the Director. In other words they're not going
to try and tell you. It's going to be working
collaboratively to get something done.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct. That's 100 percent.
Miss Brantley when she made the phone, very nice woman to
speak to. And just hearing all the background of the
Sorority, what they've done in the City of East Chicago.

The fact of the matter is that they want to find a
way to also continue to beautify. And what is important is
they said that it was based on what we in the City would
allow. And I think that was very important because they want
to make sure they leave their staple with the approval of
what we have within the Park District.

So I thought that was important because sometimes

1 other people might want to just take it how they want it, do
2 whatever they want to do. But they are working on our terms.
3 So I thought that was a good idea.

4 MR. SERNA: I think this is a good start for us. Now we
5 would have a template how we would work this out with Alpha
6 Kappa Alpha Sorority. We would have a template for all
7 future organizations or anything.

8 So it's just for me that's a lot of cost for even a
9 2 foot by 4 foot concrete pad and what if it sinks in two or
10 three years. It almost seems like we should be providing
11 that. But then again you have to find that in your budget to
12 do that. So we just need to discuss it more.

13 Any further questions, Mr. Austin?

14 MR. AUSTIN: Well, the only thing that I am just
15 thinking about is to make sure that we don't get caught up
16 into a frenzy that we didn't tell you do this.

17 Now, something else just popped in my mind. Why
18 don't we just maybe make a big, draw up a big wall like they
19 got in other places. And then everybody, they can put things
20 on the wall. You know what I'm saying.

21 I'm just bringing that up. I am not saying it's
22 what we would do.

23 Most cities as you go in they have a wall as you go
24 into the city, background to let you know what we have did
25 and what our plan is in the future, we're going stay here for
East Chicago. Nobody can take the wall.

MR. SERNA: I hear what you're saying. A wall for all
organizations. I got you. I think it's something worth
discussing further.

Vanessa, if you wouldn't mind us calling you or
talking to you between now and the next meeting so that way
we can move this along?

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Yes. Absolutely.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Is this time sensitive to the
organization?

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: I know that the second item was
time sensitive.

1 Miss Warner, Miss Brantley, is this time sensitive
2 for your organization?

3 MS. BRANTLEY: Well, the reason we put it that we would
4 like to see it resolved quickly is because 2020 is our 20th
5 Anniversary year. And we would just try to get it installed
6 by the end of 2020.

7 But as Mrs. Orange has said and I'd like to
8 reiterate we are willing to work with the City. And so as
9 long as it takes to work with the City. And as we understand
10 now you've got to develop some guidelines and those won't be
11 presented to you until the November meeting. We will
12 continue to just wait until we can work collaboratively
13 together to see if we can have the bench installed.

14 MR. SERNA: Thank you.

15 MR. AUSTIN: Thank you.

16 MR. SERNA: Vanessa, do you want to move on to the next
17 item?

18 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Sure. The next item would be a
19 request from Dora Zepeda to plant a tree in commemoration or
20 the memorialization of her son Nathan who experienced a
21 tragic -- he passed away tragically in front of his house.

22 And in her letter it states that he was one who
23 frequented Kosciuzko Park very often and that he played with
24 the students. And he was a good individual and that mom
25 found an organization that I guess plants ashes in the tree
with the trees. So this is why she wanted to do this at
Kosciuzko.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: There's no plaque on the tree, right?
It's just a tree.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: She did not ask for a plaque, no.
It just said that she wanted to plant the tree and put some
of his ashes in the tree.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Did you look into the background of this
individual?

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Yes.

MR. SERNA: I think that's the one she was talking about
earlier.

1 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct. Yes.

2 MR. SERNA: With this one the ashes would be -- it's
3 almost like you could visit it everyday because you know how
4 some people feel about those that have passed on whether it's
5 at a cemetery or whether you keep the ashes somewhere close.
6 So this would be something where she would have a piece of
7 her son there.

8 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Correct.

9 MR. SERNA: That one is a little bit tougher. To name a
10 tree after someone to say, hey, but to put the ashes down
11 there, that would almost give someone to feel like they have
12 the right to put candles there or to have dinner there.

13 I am not trying to make light of it. I could
14 imagine if my son's ashes were there I would feel like if I
15 wanted to go there 2:00 in the morning when the park is
16 closed, but I am going to go there because of the emotions
17 that would be involved in that. That's a tough one, Board
18 Members.

19 MR. AUSTIN: That's real tough.

20 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: And I think that's why I said
21 commemoration and memorialization, that's two different
22 topics. Because like you said if someone from my family's
23 ashes are there, it would be probably more often that we're
24 going to go and visit and stay and whatnot. And I think
25 those two are very different.

MR. RODRIGUEZ: Birthdays.

MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: And maybe, Miss Dawkins, when we
draw up an agreement I guess to have this done if that's what
we're going to do we state that if this individual has ashes
there we probably don't need -- you know, what can and can
they not do within our park.

Can they come with the candles. They can come, you
know, have a party. That's probably something we have to
establish if something of memorialization happens.

MS. DAWKINS: If we want to look into that regarding the
ashes and also I want to keep in mind the Board's reasoning
behind the initial request that was made last year.

And it came to me that possibly we could have

1 bricks or something, some kind of brick path or something for
2 people that want to have some kind of memorial where it
3 wouldn't matter if it was gang related or not.

4 If they ask, I mean it's not anything I think we
5 should advertise. But we could possibly have where if they
6 wanted to purchase a brick. One of the parks could be chosen
7 for that.

8 I don't know. I'm just throwing that out there.
9 But I definitely have to look into the fact about the ashes.
10 I need to look into the legal ramifications of that.

11 MR. SERNA: I believe with ashes I believe that might
12 cross the line in this sense. I've never ever heard of on
13 public property being allowed to bury ashes.

14 But I've heard many many times people spread ashes
15 in an ocean, in a lake, across a football field. But they
16 don't necessarily officially do it in tandem and partnership
17 with that organization.

18 You know, you sneak ashes in. And you do it
19 because -- I don't know. I don't know, Board Members. I
20 kind of feel like if my son's ashes were in a tree in the
21 park I'd feel like I owned that.

22 I would feel like you're not going to tell me the
23 park is closed. As much as I would want to respect it if I'm
24 feeling any kind of way I am going to go there whether it's
25 me and my wife or me and his brother. And so that's the
tough part about the ashes.

And even to name a tree, even to name a tree after
an organization or after -- when we get into people if
somebody hates me and there's a building named after me they
can throw a bucket of paint on it. If it's a tree, they can
chop it down.

But if it's your ashes in there and somebody chops
it, I mean you're going to lose your mind. You're going to
be very upset because those are actually the remains of your
loved one there.

So I think that's why putting ashes might be
crossing the line.

MR. AUSTIN: I would suggest we just don't deal with
that because that's a real touchy thing.

1 MR. SERNA: Very touchy.

2 MR. AUSTIN: Yeah. No.

3 MR. SERNA: So this one is definitely going to take some
4 further discussion. I don't know. What do you think, Rick?

5 MR. AUSTIN: I ain't going there.

6 MR. SERNA: You have no comment on that one?

7 MR. RODRIGUEZ: No.

8 MR. SERNA: Leave that one alone. Miss Lewis?

9 MS. LEWIS: It's really difficult. You know how your
10 personal feelings are. But you can't always put your
11 personal feelings into business. So maybe once our attorney
12 looks into it and we get more information we can make a more
13 better decision.

14 MR. SERNA: You're right. Well put.

15 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Miss Orange, just work with the
16 counselor and see what you guys come up with. Then we'll
17 just pick at it and go from there.

18 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: Sounds good.

19 MR. SERNA: Thank you. Do you have anything else,
20 Vanessa?

21 MS. HERNANDEZ-ORANGE: That's it.

22 MR. SERNA: Thank you.

23 PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

24 * Next Regular Meeting Date: Tuesday, October 27,
25 2020 @ 5:00 p.m. City Hall Council Chambers.

1 Motion to adjourn was made by Rick Rodriguez. Second by
Eugene Austin.

2 Questions/Comments: None.

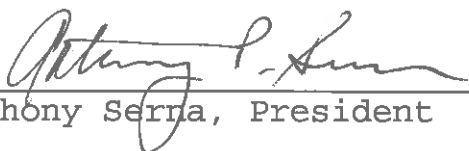
3 Roll Call: "All in Favor": All Abstain: None.
4 Opposed: None Motion Carries.

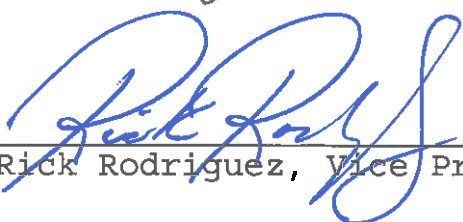
5 * Meeting ended at 5:41 p.m.

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Approval of the Meeting Minutes of
Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Approved and Signed October 27, 2020

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5 
6 Anthony Serra, President

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9 Rick Rodriguez, Vice President

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11 _____
12 Valda Lewis, Secretary

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14 _____
15 Gilberto Cantu, Member

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18 Eugene Austin, Member

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21 Ateria Allen, Recording Secretary


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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Lisa Pena, a competent and duly qualified court reporter, do hereby certify that I did report in machine shorthand the foregoing proceedings and that my shorthand notes so taken at said time and place were thereafter reduced to typewriting under my personal direction.

I further certify that the foregoing typewritten transcript constitutes minutes of said proceedings taken at said time and place, so ordered to be transcribed.

Dated at Portage, Indiana, this 22nd day of October, 2020.



Lisa Pena
Notary Public Porter County
Certified Shorthand Reporter
License Number 084-003483.



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