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**Greater Griffith Park
Neighborhood Council**
*Your Neighborhood. Your Voice.
Your Council.*



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Certified Council #35**

May 12, 2010

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Room 340, City Hall
200 N. Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Honorable City Council Members:

At its duly noticed Board Meeting on March 16, 2010, the Greater Griffith Park Neighborhood Council voted to oppose the CLA's recommendation to the City Council's Budget and Finance Committee to initiate a fee for parking in the Griffith Park parking lot serving, among other users, visitors to the Greater Los Angeles Zoo.

While we recognize that the City is exploring new sources for revenue, we consider this to be a regressive move. It would violate one of the conditions made by Colonel Griffith in bequeathing Griffith Park to Los Angeles, i.e. that access to the Park be free, and would establish a precedent that could lead to the introduction of such fees in other Griffith Park lots, not to mention many of the 400-plus parks, museums and other properties administered by the Department of Recreation and Parks. This would visit a hardship on lower income children and their families, seniors and singles, and would decrease recreational opportunities for these groups.

The Zoo is a tenant of Griffith Park. Since its inception, the Zoo lot has not been exclusive to Zoo visitors only. It has been and continues to be used daily by other Griffith Park users. Recreationists such as hikers, runners and cyclists park there to access surrounding trails and bikeways. Furthermore, the Zoo is legally bound by the Autry National Center's lease to provide free, overflow parking for Autry visitors. These Griffith Park users should not be required to pay for access to the Park in order to increase revenues at a paid-admission facility they are not visiting.

Nor should Griffith Park visitors using other parking lots and spaces be displaced by Zoo visitors who are seeking to avoid paying the parking fee which will be the inevitable result.

We believe a cost-benefit analysis will show that levying a parking fee may depress Zoo attendance and, combined with the costs associated with fee collection, negate the hoped-for revenue gain. Zoo Director John Lewis has told us that a \$750,000 to \$1 million annual projected gross from parking fees would net approximately \$500,000. We believe that the desired net could be obtained cheaply and efficiently by raising the price of an average Zoo admission ticket from fifty cents to \$2, *without penalizing other park users.*

We also believe that the philosophy underlying this proposal is fraught with peril.

- 1) It conflates dedicated parkland currently providing parking spaces in parks with CRA/City-developed parking structures created purposely to generate revenue in congested urban areas.
- 2) It re-purposes dedicated parkland as a revenue-producing asset which will lead to the "higher" development of these communal spaces to yield a greater return.
- 3) It permits a tenant of a park (in this case, the Zoo) to pioneer new park policy in private, in a vacuum, as if it is a sovereign territory, not a tenant.

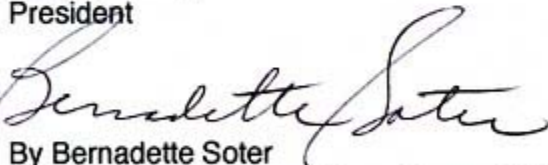
We are disturbed that the CLA's proposal was developed without stakeholder knowledge and without hearings before the Zoo, DOT and Rec & Parks Commissions and the germane Council Committees and advanced without a feasibility study and without opportunity for public comment. To wit, on page 15 of *The Report of the Chief Legislative Analyst* released to the City Council's Budget and Finance Committee dated May 11 the following direction is given:

Delete the recommendation to refer to the Arts, Parks, Health and Aging Committee the instruction to the General Services Department and City Administrative Officer to complete a study on the feasibility of implementing a parking fee at the Los Angeles Zoo. Further, request the City Attorney to prepare and present any necessary ordinance to implement such a parking charge, inasmuch as the Council has already given these instructions."

For multiple reasons, the GGPNC opposes instituting a parking fee in the Griffith Park lot serving, among other users, visitors to the Zoo and asks the City Council to reject the recommendation.

Very truly yours,

Charley Mims,
President



By Bernadette Soter
Chair, Parks, River and Open Space (PROS) Committee

Cc: John Lewis, Greater Los Angeles Zoo
Karen B. Winnick, President, Zoo Commission
Jon Kirk Mukri, Department of Recreation and Parks
Barry A. Saunders, President, Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners