



Neighborhood Council of Westchester Playa

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Kortley Norris, Senior Recreation Director, Westchester
Department of Recreation and Parks
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Ms. Norris,

On Sunday, June 2, 2019, a very large event was held at Westchester Park. This event was permitted for "Picnic 1,2,3 and a Jumper" and the applicant was charged \$192 for the permit. In reality, this was an event of more than 1,000 people and was promoted to have 100 vendors (at \$250 per booth paid to the event organizer), a petting zoo, waterslides, jumpers, live entertainment, a battle of the DJs, food vendors and more. The event spilled out of the parking lots; and cars and trucks were parked on the grass, parked illegally in fire lanes and spilled over onto adjacent residential streets. Not only did this cause problems for nearby neighbors, but it also created problems for the Neighborhood Council Elections that were held that day in the Westchester Municipal Building, which shares the parking lot with Westchester Park. At 6 p.m., the event quickly shut down and people fled the park because a gun was fired and at least three people were shot.

The real problem here is the reoccurrence of incidents like this. The Westchester/Playa community has experienced similar problems in past years with another event coordinator. Working with the previous director of the park, the Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa was able to influence changes so that the Labor Day event, that had been the source of problems in years past, was a more fully authorized and better-managed event going forward. Proper facilities and staffing were required. Proper sanitation was implemented. Proper notice was given to community stakeholders.

With the event on Sunday, it appears that all of that has been forgotten.

- If the park is going to allow an event of this magnitude, park staff must be present to oversee the activities. It is bad management to put the burden of oversight on community members by not proactively managing the event, especially one of this magnitude.
- Whenever the park issues a permit, park staff should be present, even on Sundays, to confirm that the permit is adhered to and be responsible for reporting problems to authorities.

- There must be consequences when a permit application is intentionally understated, as was this one.
- The applicant must be held liable for any and all damage caused to the park infrastructure.
- Events such as this must require proper sanitation/port-a-potties, ABC permit, Special Events permit, Health Department permit, Animal Control oversight, proper security, Park Rangers and LAPD notification, etc.
- Dumpsters must be provided for secure trash collection.
- The camera system at the park needs to be reviewed for operational issues and lack of thorough coverage. Should the system be found inadequate or non-operational, repairs and upgrades should be made immediately. With the recent homicide, and now this shooting, an effective and functional camera system is a necessity.

The event on June 2 at Westchester Park came one day after a large group of gang members, reported as 100 people, assembled at the Playa del Rey Lagoon Park and were causing trouble. Calls to LAPD were made by residents, and the gang members were dispersed. Our parks are a wonderful resource and our community looks to the people at Department of Recreation and Parks to properly manage them and oversee the activities in the park, permitted and not permitted, to keep everyone safe. Proper staffing is a must.

Respectfully,

/s/ Cyndi Hench

Cyndi Hench
President, NCWP

Cc: Councilman Mike Bonin
City Attorney Mike Feuer
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